

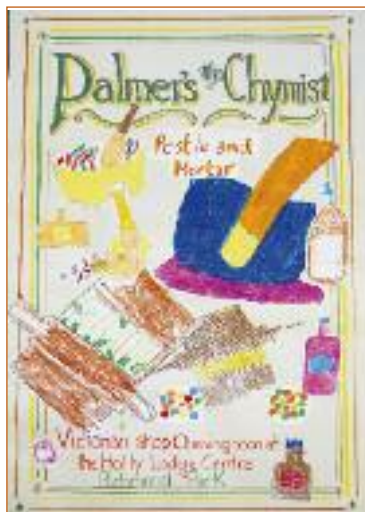


STEPPING

ISSUE TEN
2009

STONES

Newsletter of the Holly Lodge Centre



Second prize in Terry Denton de Gray competition

Another highlight was when Whitton CRC won second prize in the Terry Denton de Gray competition organised in Richmond by Liz Carran. This involved designing a poster in Victorian style for our Victorian Chemist shop, which will have pride of place in the shop when it is opened.

The Centre also participated in the Children's Art Day, which is a countrywide programme organised by 'engage', the National Association for Gallery Education, whose aim is to encourage children, young people, families and teachers to engage with visual art. Mark Parker from Kitevibe kindly gave up his time to display some kites and show the children from St Ann's School in Hanwell how to make them. They really enjoyed their time at the Centre – especially flying the 'kites' they had made along with the balloons.

The year that art took off at the Holly Lodge Centre

Art sessions have become a regular feature of the Centre's activities during 2009 and virtually every week new paintings or drawings are to be seen on the walls of the classroom – invariably as a result of the Monday afternoon activities led by our volunteer artists.

It was wonderful to have recognition for these activities. Particularly memorable was the art exhibition held at Queen Charlotte Hall opened by Vince Cable, MP. The exhibition marked the *UN International Day of People with Disabilities*, showing work by most of the disabled groups in the area, including our visitors from the Whitton Community Resource Centre. The Holly Lodge Centre art volunteers take them on walks in Richmond Park during all four seasons of the year, and this provides them with inspiration for a wide variety of paintings. Zara's picture of rutting deer was magnificent as were Sally's bright bold shapes and colours of a mother hen and her young chicks in springtime. Raymond's depiction of bracken and toadstools was another piece of work with great impact.



Zara's picture of rutting deer

Rolf Harris entertains



Rolf Harris and Barry Booth kindly donated their time to entertain a very appreciative audience at the annual fundraising dinner held in The Belvedere Pembroke Lodge on 11 November. Among the guests were residents from the Royal Star and Garter Home and Whitton Community Resource Centre.



Visitors from Whitton Community Resource Centre enjoyed an art session in the Victorian kitchen garden

Contents... A new activity at the Holly Lodge Centre... Since our last newsletter...
Project update... Fundraising activities... Dr Pat's Casebook... and lots more...



'special needs in a special place'



Since our last newsletter...

A visit by Shooting Star Children's Hospice

In August the Holly Lodge Centre hosted the first ever 'Great Big Picnic' for parents and children from the Shooting Star Children's Hospice in Hampton. The event was sponsored by Aramco Overseas Company, and their team, together with Holly Lodge Centre volunteers, worked hard to make the event a great success.

The afternoon saw everyone enjoying the sunshine and the picnic in the mural garden, where activities included skittles, Punch and Judy and a nature trail. Jodie Prenger, who played the part of Nancy in the West End musical 'Oliver' after winning the BBC reality show 'I'd do Anything', joined in the fun too, displaying a surprising turn of speed in the egg and spoon race!

An effervescent DJ supplied music and also orchestrated party games and dancing of every description. One abiding memory must be of Malcolm Childs and me, wearing our high visibility jackets, trying to keep up with the choreographic routine of the children's song 'Big Fish, Little Fish' with the lyrics 'We're all raving mad!' Slick it wasn't, fun it certainly was!

Marguerite Parkinson, a Shooting Star parent from Twickenham, said she and her family couldn't have had a better day. 'The activities and atmosphere were outstanding. I can't think of another time when our children had so much fun and when we felt so calm and relaxed. It gave us a chance to get to know some of the other families supported by Shooting Star and the kids talked about it all evening.'

Nigel Cowlin

Congratulations to Margaret Bourner – with us since the beginning

Margaret Bourner's work as a volunteer was honoured at a Volunteering Award Ceremony in Kingston Guildhall in February this year. Margaret said, 'I could not possibly have imagined when I went for my first meeting with Pat Ealey in July 1995 that the Holly Lodge Centre was going to become such an integral part of my life'.

'I have always had a great affection for Richmond Park, and when I read that an administrative assistant was required to help Pat, I thought that the opportunity actually to work in the park and to be part of this wonderful resource on our doorstep was too good to miss. Ever since then I have helped with the organisation of groups and got to know a great number of people – and the sheer pleasure of doing it is something I look forward to every week.

'The Volunteer Award Ceremony at the Guildhall in Kingston, held in February 2009, was a real eye-opener. There were over 200 volunteers from dozens of varied charities in the Borough and listening to the roll call of names was quite amazing. I am sure that there are other volunteers who have done over 100 hours at the Centre, but I am the only one living in the Borough of Kingston.



Tom Pink enjoying Summer Fun

Fun in Summer

This year the Holly Lodge Centre 'Summer Fun Fortnight' programme was ably led by Gina Martin, an environmental artist.

Each session began with a walk around the nature trail, looking for ideas to discuss and to sketch and providing an opportunity for everyone to get to know each other better. Flowers, butterflies, pond creatures, frogs and creepy crawlies were in abundance, and the new horses in the field proved particular favourites with many. On the way back we gathered a wide variety of leaves, returning to base with lots of ideas to develop into exciting masterpieces.

Gina encouraged some groups to do wax crayon rubbings of their leaves and then to design collages. Later she showed everyone how to make prints from their sketches, a colourful and rather messy process which produced some amazing artwork and was masses of fun for us all. Print-making is a totally absorbing technique and no-one wanted to stop! One picture of a horse in the field was so similar to a Neolithic cave painting that it could almost have passed as the real thing, while a print of a rabbit was certainly good enough to be a children's birthday card. Some groups then went on to create clay models, again inspired by their sketches, working under Gina's skilful direction and with evident enjoyment.

At the end of the sessions each visitor went home with a fine collection of treasures and, hopefully, happy memories of a great day in Richmond Park. Thank you, Gina.

Elizabeth Foster



Students from Paddock School during a gardening session

Project Update...

Green Fingers and Healthy Treats

As a relatively new volunteer at the Centre, I would say 2009 has been a rewarding and productive year.

Paddock School students with special needs regularly attend gardening sessions. Our sessions with them, and with other students, are spent weeding, thinning, tying and harvesting, and visits are usually rounded off with small feasts of freshly picked salads, fruit, vegetables and even the occasional soup, garlic bread or carrot cake – all made with our own produce. Needless to say, this usually proves to be the highlight of the day!

This year has seen the planting of a central herb garden to complement the activities in the forthcoming chemist shop. The provision of more raised beds has also enhanced the enjoyment of many students, especially wheelchair users, who find the plants more accessible; they are able to sow seeds, remove weeds and harvest. Hard work planting seeds, seedlings, potatoes and onions in the winter and spring was rewarded with bumper crops during the summer.

The Centre's garden is a fantastic teaching resource. Youngsters learn at first hand the connection between growing plants and eating good food. They have the opportunity to try new and delicious tastes and textures and discuss healthy eating. Students also experience the pleasure gardens can give through scents, tastes, touch and visual beauty, as well enjoying the peace and birdsong. Multi-sensory learning is so effective for young people, especially those who face enormous challenges.

As we clear the grounds and sweep up the leaves in the garden this autumn, we are already saving seeds and planning our crops for next year. That said, there's probably just enough left for a few snacks to round off the gardening year in style!

Anne Rendell

Good News – Funds for the Victorian Chemist Shop

The year 2009 ends with us having seen 'concrete progress' (literally) on building the new home for the Victorian Chemist shop, plus quite a few challenges, and it ends full of optimism for the project's completion.

We have successfully finished the first part of the building conversion as shown in the photograph of the interior. The new ceiling and floor have been installed, the door moved to allow for the access



Work in progress

ramp to be added and the initial part of the electrical installation has been undertaken. The building work was interrupted when there was a lengthy debate over Building Regulations. The recession slowed down the rate of donations but fortunately we do have sufficient funds, after a recent bequest, to restart and complete the building conversion.

The furniture donated by Alex Mulholland is partially restored and the artefacts from his shop have been catalogued. We have also benefited from two additional gifts of artefacts. The first was from the now closed Department of Pharmacy at the Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh. This means that Alex (and indeed our visitors) can once again handle the very items that he first used when he was a pharmacy student in Edinburgh. The second gift is from Robert Wesley who has generously donated items from the pharmacy that his father ran from 1935 to 1978 in Downham Market, Norfolk.

Thanks to the generosity of the Mercers' Company and the Gannett Foundation, we now have the funding to equip and commission the teaching facility.

The work done so far looks good, and we now feel confident that we will have the chemist shop in partial use in 2010 and are looking forward to organising the official opening when the total project is completed.

Finally a big thank you is due to all the people on the team who have helped get us so far and to all the people who have so generously donated funds or helped raise them.

David Foster

Star Supporters

We are very grateful to everyone who has given funds, equipment, encouragement and time to the Holly Lodge Centre during 2009. Some of these supporters are mentioned in various articles but we would also like to thank:

- ★ HRH Princess Alexandra, Royal Patron
- ★ Gailene Stock, Pippa Hogg, Diane van Schoor, Melanie Brice and all the staff and pupils of the Royal Ballet School for their support
- ★ The Hearsam family for their generosity and help during the year
- ★ Simon Richards and all staff and contractors of the Royal Parks, the Metropolitan Police based in Richmond Park and the Friends of Richmond Park
- ★ Andrew Harvey for making the raised flower beds in the Victorian Kitchen Garden and Stewart Perkes for making the pigeon holes for children's lunch boxes and the coat hangers in the new reception area
- ★ The family of the late Doreen Childs for their generous donation in her name
- ★ Malcolm Childs, Michael Gregory and Russell Scrase for fundraising and running in the Royal Parks Half-Marathon
- ★ Media.com, Breakaway and GlaxoSmithKline for their practical help during the year
- ★ The White Lodge Golf Club, the Simon and Philip Cohen Charitable Trust, the Rind Foundation, the Rotary Club of Richmond, Waitrose Putney, Richmond and Sheen, Mortlake MCC, Richmond Park Charitable Trust, the Hospital Saturday Fund, Wimbledon Village Stables, the True Volunteer Foundation, Currie Motors, and Phil Swallow for their generous donations

'set in the natural environment of Richmond Park'

Fundraising Activities...

'Ding Dong Merrily on High'

On Wednesday 3 December 2008 the annual Christmas Concert was held in Richmond Parish Church. It was a truly memorable and enjoyable event and we were delighted that HRH Princess Alexandra and the Mayor of Richmond were able to attend.

The audience was greeted by the splendid chiming of bells before GMTV presenter Ben Shephard began the evening's proceedings, with June Whitfield, Clive Francis and Christian Roe also taking part. There was hardly a dry eye in the church when Paddock School, frequent visitors to the Holly Lodge Centre, sang 'Ding Dong Merrily on High' and 'Silent Night'.

The Centre is grateful to all the participants; the St Peter's Singers and their Director, Duncan Aspden, and organist, Christian Wilson; and the then Rector, Canon Julian Reindorp.

Words and Music

Once again we are indebted to Paddy Hughes for organising a marvellous evening of music and poetry for everyone lucky enough to attend Richmond Park Reflections on 2 June. Pre-performance champagne and a delicious buffet supper were enjoyed in glorious evening sunshine on the terrace of Pembroke Lodge. A group of student dancers from the Royal Ballet School, beautifully turned out in character costume, kindly sold a huge number of raffle tickets during supper.

A very appreciative audience was treated to a wonderful variety of entertainment, from the hilarious prose of Nigel Lawrence to the exceptional operatic voices of Kathryn Hide and Emma Selway. We are very grateful to all the performers for making the event so successful. The evening was rounded off by long-standing supporter of the Holly Lodge Centre, Rolf Harris, with some reliably witty words and a promise to be involved in our forthcoming fundraising dinner (see page 1).

Karen Heron



HRH Princess Alexandra with the performers after Richmond Park Reflections



Ben Shephard introducing the concert with the St Peter's Singers

Grand Slam

The Centre is extremely grateful to Independent Charity Events (ICE) for once again organising a bridge lunch at Pembroke Lodge. The lunch had been planned for a day in January but as everyone woke up on the designated morning to several inches of snow a hasty rescheduling took place and the event was held in February. Over £3000 was raised, which is paying for the main wheelchair access ramp to the Victorian Chemist Shop.

Sparkling Success

Although the evening of the Gala was somewhat chilly, guests received a very warm welcome in the grand entrance hall of the Royal Ballet School on 17 June. Bubbly was served in slender glass flutes getting this year's Gala Performance at White Lodge off to a sparkling start.

It was a gentle stroll through the gardens from the beautiful salon and terrace, with stunning views over Richmond Park, to the modern Margot Fonteyn Theatre where the performance was held. The programme was varied, with classical pieces from 'Sleeping Beauty' and 'Coppelia' interposed with folk dancing from Ireland and the Ukraine, and a lively Tarantella from southern Italy as a finale. The degree of professionalism made it hard to believe that these young dancers were still novices, for their grace and ability was truly amazing. All of them came from Years 7 to 11, and the proportion of male dancers was noticeable, apparently now acknowledged by the staff of the school as the 'Billy Elliott effect'.

HRH Princess Alexandra was the guest of honour for the evening and delighted the children by spending a long time chatting with them and posing for group photographs with the dancers. TV presenter Ben Shephard was very popular after the performance being surrounded by a cloud of pink mini-ballerinas.

June Whitfield, another of our guests, wrote after the event, 'What a wonderful evening. It was a privilege to be there to see all the talented, charming pupils. ... The knowledge, discipline and good behaviour taught at the school will stand them in good stead whatever they do in later life. Thank you so much.'

Patricia Calfe

A Message from Richmond Council Leader, Serge Lourie



Serge Lourie

place to live in London...if not the country.

Sited at the heart of Richmond Park, the Centre is a wonderful

It has been my pleasure to watch the Holly Lodge Centre develop since its opening in 1994 by Rolf Harris. The Centre has become an important part of life in Richmond for children and adults with special needs as well as for local mainstream schools.

Partnerships with community organisations like the Holly Lodge Centre are one of the many things which have made Richmond upon Thames the best

resource and an asset to everyone, but it has a special meaning for Richmond residents. Nearly half of the groups and visitors to the Centre every year come from within the borough, and it is excellent to see that so many local residents have now discovered the Holly Lodge Centre.

Special thanks must also be given to the Royal Parks and the Centre for hosting the borough's annual Junior Citizenship Scheme for all Richmond's schools for two weeks every spring.

I have been delighted to support the Holly Lodge Centre by running the auctions at various fundraising dinners.

The people who dreamed up what could be done at the Holly Lodge Centre – Mike Fitt, the then Park Manager, and John Corless, President of the local PHAB, can be very proud of what they, the staff and all the volunteers have created... and the borough is proud of it too.

Serge Lourie

Happy Days at the Holly Lodge Centre



Megan's class in front of the mural at the Centre

I am a group leader at a holiday play scheme called 'interAKtive' for autistic children. It is my task to plan activities for ten children each day of the two-week scheme, ensuring that the children are safe, have fun and experience new and exciting activities. A visit to the Holly Lodge Centre is now an integral part of our itinerary, enjoyed not only by the children but also by staff.

We have participated in nature walks, clay work, printing, drawing, message from Mars (a particular favourite) and have been lucky enough to spend entire days with visiting artists and Creeping Toad. The children love the mix of the outdoors and artwork, and the freedom to create their own masterpieces with helpful and enthusiastic volunteers. I have to confess that on one occasion the children were in tears when we had to leave Creeping Toad and all the fun involved. He made quite an impact on the group!

As a group leader I have been frequently amazed at the talent, knowledge and personalities of the children within the groups. The environment at the Holly Lodge Centre encourages them to shine: we had budding artists (seriously worthy of the Tate Gallery!) and sculptors, while the use of imagination during the message from Mars day had everyone quite astounded. The general chatter among the children and the volunteers is so lovely to watch, and the groups enjoy all the attention and quite frankly thrive on it.

Even a picnic outside, sitting on the benches facing the Centre's wonderful mural, or looking at the view, is an event itself. The space is great for eating, sitting, playing and photo opportunities with the aforementioned mural – although keeping ten children still for that is a challenge in itself!

The fact that the groups who come to the Holly Lodge Centre are made to feel so very welcome, have the chance to explore, create, ask questions (and lots of them), be helped and supported and generally allowed simply to be themselves, makes it the most wonderful place to be.

'interAKtive' would like to thank all the volunteers at the Holly Lodge Centre for making visits such a great experience and ask Pat for...any spaces for summer...PLEASE!

Megan Garrett
Group leader at interAKtive



Visitors from Linden Bridge school during a tree trail activity

'a hidden gem in a magical place'

Dr Pat's Casebook 2009

Who's the wisest one here, do you think?? The owl, of course! This was taken in Syon Park in May when the Holly Lodge Centre was helping at the Syon Park Estate Day. Not the warmest of May days, as you can see! Hundreds of children came to learn about the countryside and we were taking them to look at the wild flowers in the meadow. Most of them knew very little about these flowers, some of which have wonderful names like Common Mouse Ear, Bird's Foot Trefoil and Beaked Hawk's Beard.

It reminded me that lots of people of all ages are deprived of regular access to the outdoors. The little knowledge they do have of animals and plants may come from sitting on the couch watching TV or surfing the internet. There's really nothing like seeing things at first hand – touching, hearing and smelling a horse is a whole new world compared to looking at a picture. Learning through the senses is very effective but lots of our visitors are unable to do this, so we have to think of new ways of getting the message across. Someone who is visually impaired can learn about a horse, for example, by feeling its warm coat, listening to it walk or standing inside a smelly stable. Everyone learns in different ways and here



Who's the wisest one here?

at the Holly Lodge Centre we like to help as much as possible by adapting our activities to suit the groups or individuals who visit us.

Which brings me back to the owl. Always alert, watching, feeling the wind, listening and learning. If you are fortunate enough to be able to get outdoors easily then do so – and try to become wise like the owl!

Pat Ealey
Project Manager



Richard depicted on the mural

A Volunteer's View of the Holly Lodge Centre

I have been a volunteer at the Holly Lodge Centre almost from the beginning. I used to help quite often, but now do less because I go to classes and work part time. I like helping children with learning disabilities because I have Down's Syndrome and understand what is difficult for them. Body language is important. I liked helping blind children too, and working with elderly people.

My favourite things at the Centre are pond dipping and Victorian Christmas. I'm not too keen on mini-beasts. I like art, making things, especially with Creeping Toad. At Christmas carol concerts I like collecting money in a bucket for the Holly Lodge Centre. At Pembroke Lodge I once helped sell plants for the Centre – that was

fun. I am in the mural in the picnic area outside the Holly Lodge Centre with my nephews Alex and Jamie hidden in the pram.

We go to Richmond Park a lot and see people walking round and looking for deer. I like a walk to see nice trees and flowers and then get lunch. When I was a child I played Billy Goats Gruff on the bridges in Isabella Plantation and on the stepping stones. Sometimes I got wet feet!

I received the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards. In June we celebrated my fortieth birthday. On Mondays I go to Sutton OT Department to clean equipment. Mencap Pathway finds jobs for people like me. I go to lots of classes at SCOLA (Sutton College of Learning for Adults). This year I'm doing cultural studies, performing arts and self-sufficiency. I have a girl friend, Rebecca, who is a Christian like me. I help Mum at home and with the shopping. I like to watch TV and DVDs, and play games on my computer, and I enjoy travelling to other countries.

With the Holly Lodge Centre I have met HRH Princess Alexandra, Prince Philip, Rolf Harris and Edward Davey MP. I haven't met the Queen yet! But in South Africa I had my photo taken with Archbishop Tutu.

Richard Bowers

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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