



STEPPING

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STONES

Newsletter of the Holly Lodge Centre

Mr Palmer's Chymist opens at the Holly Lodge Centre



This picture shows Alex Mulholland celebrating the Open Day with Mike Fitt, who was Outer Parks Manager when Alex made his generous donation to the Centre

We are now celebrating the completion of the work to install Mr Alex Mulholland's Victorian pharmacy in the new educational facility. The pharmacy is named after Mr Philip Palmer who first opened the shop in Sheen in 1865.

The building work was completed, the furniture installed and the artefacts placed in position ready to welcome around 1,000 visitors during the Richmond Park Open Day on Sunday 19 September.

Stewart Perkes started a programme of pilot sessions with visiting schools led by members of the project team, which were enthusiastically received. During 2011 other volunteers will be trained and will run the educational activities.

There will be an official opening in January for a small group of invited guests and a series of events to show the facility to other interested parties.

We are truly grateful to all the people who have helped us bring the pharmacy back to life and to everyone who has generously donated gifts and funds, especially the Wellcome Trust. *David Foster, Volunteer/Project Manager*

The Four Seasons project

In the autumn of 2009 we started a project with West Hill School in Leatherhead, a special school with a particular focus on science.

The Year 7 class, led by their class teacher Sarah Duffay, needed to learn how to take measurements using scientific equipment. They made four visits to the Holly Lodge Centre, one in each season, using mapping skills to find their way around the site and taking a whole range of measurements to do with weather, temperature, sun, wind, etc. Tricia Calfe, Isabel Scott and Nigel Cowlin volunteered to become involved, with lots of meetings and early starts! Without their input, this whole programme would certainly have floundered.

The school had decided that, in the week following each visit to the Holly Lodge Centre, all Year 7 teachers would focus on the current season, giving their students a real understanding of how the seasons change and affect our lives. This included planning packed lunches for each visit, writing poems, doing artwork and, to round it all off, designing their own PowerPoint presentations



with the photos and data they had collected.

Over the course of the four visits we saw this lovely group develop from a rather disparate bunch into a well-adjusted, pleasant and co-operative group. We could see just how much they were benefiting from being more settled and focused, thanks to some great work at West Hill.

For the winter visit the weather was just about as bad as it gets this side of Antarctica – and it doesn't rain there like it did for us that day! The group coped with everything really well. By the summer the

children were familiar with all the tasks so Steve and Sandra gave us a lovely session with the Shire horses, Billie and Massey.

We'd planned a final presentation ceremony at the Centre in July, when we could let the class show off their work and receive due recognition for what they had achieved – and it was a great

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'special needs in a special place'



The Victorian Kitchen Garden in 2010

This year we have really benefited from the additional two raised beds made towards the end of last season. As intended, these proved to be excellent for the fast-growing salad crops that visiting groups can sow and subsequently pick and enjoy so much more easily. More unexpected was the visual benefit of bringing larger plants closer to the eye, made possible by the extra raised bed space. The shiny red-veined crumpled leaves and red stems of the ruby chard became even more apparent when grown at a higher level – beautiful and positively glowing when the sun shone through them. The cucumbers ('Crystal Lemon' variety) also enjoyed their elevated position, producing numerous uncucumber-like yellow spherical fruits and proving to be quite a talking point at the Open Day in September.

A small plantation of native shrubs was established at one side of the garden. 'Whips' of native species such as hawthorn, wild rose and privet were planted, including the all-important anti-rabbit protective collars. Lots of watering over the summer months seems to have sustained most of them and we are looking forward to removing their plastic collars and revealing this new corner of native habitat.



Yonas Temelso happy with his nasturtiums after a session in the garden

Two classes from Paddock School have continued to visit the garden each month and a great team of regular volunteers helps to support all the different activities. Planning for the visits starts with a list of jobs, so, according to the season, we may be planting seeds, watering, clearing plants and taking the waste to the compost, sweeping leaves or, most importantly, harvesting the wonderful fruits, vegetables and flowers. The children regularly take produce back to school where they use it to make delicious soups. We have seen them enjoy the garden and grow in confidence as they become accustomed to the various tasks and the equipment.

We all like tasting the fruits of our labour! The vegetables are not only washed and tasted as they are picked out in the garden, but we have tasting sessions back in the classroom where fresh salads or sandwiches, soups and other foods made in advance with the produce are enjoyed. Some more gardening concludes the visit – maybe planting some broad beans to overwinter in the greenhouse, potting up a tub for a summer display or using some of the flowers to make an arrangement to take home.

Barbara Lindsey and Clare Langford

(The Four Seasons project continued)



day. All the group were in school uniform (which we hadn't seen before, of course), and Sarah brought along a wonderful display of their poems and artwork.

David Dalley judged the artwork and Nigel Lawrence did the same for the poems. Pat Ealey judged the presentations and Simon Richards rounded it all off by awarding each child a certificate.

The project was a great success and, as always, the children gained a huge amount from being at the Holly Lodge Centre. The school was delighted with the results as well.

Goodbye to the armoured horse



In mid-summer we decided to find a new home for our armoured horse. However, as John Buckle of the Royal Parks' contractors had acquired it for us from the Tower of London we felt that it should go to a good home and we found one – a disabled riding centre in Carmarthen.

The fun started when the contractor sent to collect it arrived in a transit size van with a fridge in it. However, Malcolm Childs and Stewart Perkes came up with a solution! The sight of this on the motorway will no doubt have surprised many motorists.



Prof John Allen with his creation, together with Malcolm Childs and Margaret Bourner

The Enigma evening

I was taken by surprise when Pat asked me to design a model aircraft to fly one evening during a charity event, the Enigma evening, at John Lewis Kingston. I was even more perplexed when told all I could use would be plastic drinking straws, paper and Sellotape! My only previous effort at making a flying model aircraft was 75 years ago when a friend and I flew a rocket-propelled aeroplane at a school open day. The rocket performed well but the wings fell off when it reached a height of 100 feet. In the interim I did become an aircraft designer: 175 missiles and spacecraft for AVRO and 35 fighters for Hawker, one of which was the Hawk, as used by the Red Arrows.

I set about my new job with gusto, but the use of drinking straws was a distinct challenge. To glide a long way demands very efficient aerodynamics with complex curves – as in the Concorde – and how do you do this with straws? I was starting to design an aircraft in a totally different way from all my experience. The anxiety, thoughts of failure (again), and only four days for the job! The Concorde took 19 years...

After some terrible moments during the design stages, it was finished and I am glad to say it was judged the best design. But I could not have achieved this happy result were it not for Margaret Bourner who cleverly provided the smaller straws, two of which fitted inside the larger ones. Without this contribution all my efforts would have failed! Some luck as well as knowledge does come in handy at times, does it not?

John E. Allen

Young people advise on improving accessibility in the Isabella Plantation

On 24 March a group of intrepid young people took part in the YPIAD (Young People's Inclusivity Access Day) at the Isabella Plantation. Representatives who all use the Centre regularly, from Linden Lodge, Paddock School and Whizz-Kidz followed a route around the Plantation to discover ways in which accessibility could be improved for disabled people. This formed part of the consultation process for an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund by the Royal Parks for improvements to the Isabella Plantation. Paths, signage, bridges and seating were all scrutinized to see if they would be suitable for visitors with a range of special needs. There were activities to take part in along the route as well.



The Monday art group proudly show their totems

Dream time at the Holly Lodge Centre

Summer Fun this year took a different path from the traditional arts and crafts workshops. Instead, with help from David, Piers and Steve from Native Eyes Bushcraft, groups learned how to make waterproof shelters in the open, how to recognise and read animal tracks, and other survival skills including how to make liquid soap from horse chestnut leaves. (I'll never have to buy a bar of soap again!)

Each member of the group also made a 'totem' – a small branch of the 'magic rowan tree' to which they attached various things they'd found on the nature trail, together with feathers, cones, grasses and leaves supplied by Steve. The end results were often amazingly artistic and, as Steve told the groups, they were bound to give them 'magical dreams'.

However, the highlight for me was Piers's talk about Australian Aborigines – culminating in a fantastic rendition on the didgeridoo! One sight I will never forget is of one of the young women who came. She had been sitting in her wheelchair, half-asleep, for much of the day, but the look of sheer delight on her face at the sound of the didgeridoo was wonderful to see.

Thank you, Native Eyes Bushcraft – please come back another year!

Isabel Scott



Testing the wheelchair path during the YPIAD day

Small discussion groups talked about their findings after lunch. The young people were supported throughout the day by volunteer helpers who wrote reports and presented their findings. The application has now been submitted. The young people were delighted that they had actually been consulted on what they would like and what would help them.

'set in the natural environment of Richmond Park'

We would like to thank everyone who participated in our various fundraising events during the year:



Samantha Bond and Anthony Calf arriving to participate as host and reader at the annual Christmas Concert



HRH Princess Alexandra with Paddy Hughes and the performers during the interval of Richmond Park Reflections at Pembroke Lodge on a lovely June evening

Fantastic support from John Lewis

The Holly Lodge Centre is extremely grateful for the support it has received this year from John Lewis Kingston as part of their programme of building long-term commitments with the local community.

During the last 6 months the Holly Lodge Centre has been greatly helped by a John Lewis partner, Françoise Normand, who has been seconded to the Centre to help with the management of the volunteer programme. In addition, John Lewis have supplied and fitted blinds in the Victorian Pharmacy and refurbished the volunteers' room with new



flooring, a refrigerator and various other items, such as curtains. Walkie-talkies and a digital camera have also been generously given to the Centre, as well as several prizes for raffles at fundraising events.

Françoise Normand during her secondment to the Centre

Notes for your 2011 diary

Classical Concert – 19 March 2011, St Mary's Church, South Ealing

Gourmet Dinner – 7 April 2011, The Belvedere, Pembroke Lodge

Richmond Park Reflections – An evening of music and poetry – 7 June 2011, The Belvedere, Pembroke Lodge

The London Duathlon, 11.9.2011 and the Royal Parks Half-Marathon, 9.10.2011 – Free places are being offered for both these events for people who can raise sponsorship of £200 and £250 respectively

For further information on all events -
www.thehollylodgecentre.org.uk

Star Supporters

We are very grateful to everyone who has given funds, equipment, encouragement and time to the Holly Lodge Centre during 2010. Some of these supporters are mentioned in various articles but we would also like to thank:

- ★ *HRH Princess Alexandra, Royal Patron*
- ★ *Our Patrons*
- ★ *Pippa Hogg-Andrews and Melanie Brice and all the staff and pupils of the Royal Ballet School*
- ★ *The Hearsurn family*
- ★ *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*
- ★ *Alex Mulholland, David Foster, Stewart Perkes, Brian and Faith Bowers and all the other volunteers and contractors involved in finalising the Victorian pharmacy project*
- ★ *Michael Gregory, Linda Scrase and Russell Scrase for running the Royal Parks Half-Marathon*
- ★ *Robert Orr Ewing, Hugo May, Lorna North, Tom Penfold, Dominic Rohan-Gates and Christopher Sanders for running in the Richmond Park Duathlon*
- ★ *The Worshipful Company of Mercers, the Gannett Foundation, the Childs' family, Winter Scott Solicitors, Kaye Pemberton Charitable Trust, M Meinhardt, Epsom MGOC, Perry Hay & Co, the White Lodge Golf Club, the Rotary Club of Richmond, Joan Braune, Lucy Morris, Robert Holmes & Company, Robert Scalzo, Phil Swallow, East Sheen Lawn Tennis Club, Mortlake with East Sheen Team Ministry, Waitrose Richmond, Putney and Sheen, Kingston Riding Stables and Wimbledon Village Stables for their generous donations*
- ★ *Glaxo Smith Kline, the Women's England Rugby Football Management Team, BBC Radio 6, Breakaway, Axa Insurance, Media Com. and Ministry of Justice for supporting us with team days and making important contributions to the maintenance of the Centre*
- ★ *Independent Charity Events (ICE) for organizing a very successful bridge lunch in January, which funded Summer Fun*
- ★ *Last but not least our dedicated team of volunteers*

'enabling access to fun and learning for everyone'

Message from Pippa Hogg-Andrews



Pippa Hogg-Andrews with some of her students

I am delighted to write the message this year for the Holly Lodge Centre newsletter. Eight years ago, during my first year as Head of the Royal Ballet School – Lower School, I was invited to visit the Centre by the ever-resourceful and wonderful Dr Pat Ealey. From that moment we established a bond and the Centre became an important part of the lives of the 126 students who reside at White Lodge.

They understand the significance of this 'special place' and there is no shortage of volunteers for the occasions when we support the charity's fundraising events. These have included dancing at the never-to-be-missed 'Reflections' evening, waiting and waitressing at fundraising dinners and selling raffle tickets at the other events. We were also able to host two successful open-air summer concerts by the fabulous Tenors Un Limited and to present our own two classical ballet Gala Evenings.

Along the way we have met many dedicated and generous Holly Lodge Centre staff and supporters. The Centre needs all our continued support to maintain the huge range of activities, projects and enrichment opportunities that it offers to all young students, particularly those with special needs, in our area.

There is, also, no shortage of ideas for the future which will only be realised with secure funding and volunteer help. I am always happy to do more, and I have the students and staff of the Royal Ballet School firmly with me on that one!

Pippa Hogg-Andrews

Art, nature – and fun



Some of Leonie's group from Whitton CRC with others from The Triangle Resource Centre

We are privileged to have attended sessions at the Holly Lodge Centre for two years or so now. The Centre offers visitors a safe, nurturing environment in which everyone can express themselves through art. Each activity is diverse and provides us with the opportunity to use different and interesting media, developing a new creative experience. Indeed, prior to a session we are often fortunate enough to be able to explore Richmond Park and the nature area, taking inspiration from our surroundings, e.g. using fallen leaves and sticks to embellish work, and also reinforcing each person's individual appreciation of nature, local wildlife and green issues.

The sessions bring about a real sense of group cohesion, social/community inclusion and democracy as we consult each other and share ideas. People also develop a sense of identity. The volunteers at the Centre are wonderful – great creative thinkers and, indeed, good friends.

As far as festival activities are concerned, we have had the pleasure of celebrating a jolly Victorian Christmas and participating in a Bushcraft day, making such things as chestnut leaf soap and totems. We have had fun and learned a lot in the Victorian Kitchen Garden.

I know that all the activities at the Holly Lodge Centre enrich the working week for individuals. These sessions are something that everybody looks forward to and people gain so much from the serenity of this much-loved retreat and centre for learning. Thank you.

Leonie Newton

Ben Shepherd, our new Patron

The Holly Lodge Centre was delighted when Ben Shepherd agreed to become one of its Patrons. He had already supported the Centre by hosting the annual Christmas Carol Concert in 2008 and we believe that his skills, expertise and warm personality will be a great asset.

Ben is a well-known TV personality, having been a presenter of GMTV for over ten years until he joined Sky Sports.

Ben said, 'I first visited the Centre during the Richmond Park Open Day in 2008 and felt that the work being undertaken there, especially for children and adults with special needs, was worth supporting. I love being in and around the park and I am looking forward to brushing up on my pond dipping technique!' We, in turn, look forward to watching you do this!

The Holly Lodge Centre supporting the police and local authority in drug awareness training



Chief Inspector Wayne Petford hands the cheque to Pat Ealey

The Centre was delighted to receive a grant of £5,000 from the Metropolitan Police Property Act Fund to enable drug awareness training to be undertaken for children in the London Borough of Richmond. The sessions will be held in the Victorian pharmacy.

An initial approach was made to the Centre from Constable Kelvin Clarke of the Richmond Park Safer Neighbourhood team and the charity are delighted to support the police and local authority in this important area.

Dr Pat's Casebook

I am so excited that we have opened the Victorian Pharmacy! We are really looking forward to running a variety of activities in there and I'm looking forward to my storytelling part of the session where I'm growing vegetables on my body! (That's another story!) Expanding the range of activities we offer will enable us to engage with different groups in the local community.

Discovering the range of products that the Victorian chymist created made me realise how many skills have been lost. Asking our visitors to write with pen and ink on labels is something some of them have never done before. I hope that technology doesn't take us over at the Centre and that we continue to enable our visitors to experience the natural environment and heritage by hands-on activities. I was surprised at a statistic in *The Times* from 2009 saying that some research had found that some British children spend over five hours each day in front of a 'screen'. The Holly Lodge Centre in Richmond Park can be an antidote to this. We can



Pat with 'vegetables growing on her body' dressed up to tell her pill-making story

motivate our visitors to get outdoors and explore by inspiring them when they are here. When was the last time you sat quietly outside listening to birdsong or watching wildlife?

Pat Ealey
Project Manager

Message to Mars has been a popular activity in 2010

Kingston Young Carers (left) and Linden Bridge School proud of their rockets



My Holly Lodge Centre days

Hard as it is to accept that I am now a reluctant ex-volunteer, I sit here in Birmingham with fond memories of the Holly Lodge Centre and all the wonderful people I feel privileged to have met. When our daughter Genevieve moved from the Royal Ballet School to Elmhurst School for Dance in Edgbaston, very aware of the difference it would make to my life, she apologised for taking me away from the beautiful area of Richmond and the Holly Lodge Centre. I could only thank her for having enabled me to be there in the first place and made possible my three years of treasured experiences.

So many times I heard myself extolling to prospective volunteers the virtues and uniqueness of the Centre. Having explored my new area for a similar worthy cause on which to expend my spare hours, I discover just how very true this is. Nowhere comes close to offering the range of facilities or providing the versatility and adaptability of that extraordinary team of people: the volunteers!

Few people can say that in one Monday morning they've had such a happy time in the office, seen truly fabulous pieces of artwork produced by a special needs group in the classroom, photographed a beautiful Victorian garden and assisted in a Victorian classroom ... and then on Thursday morning done something completely different at the same place of work!

I do miss all the special people in that special place. Keep it up; you truly are unique.

Karen Heron, ex-volunteer

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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