



### The Holly Lodge Centre celebrates its tenth birthday

#### Party in the Park

At this summer's fundraising highlight, hundreds gathered in the gardens of the Royal Ballet School, White Lodge, Richmond Park, to enjoy a truly wonderful concert. The Park was set alive with the sound of music on this July evening.

The entertainment started with the Sigma String Quartet playing gently in the background to welcome visitors as they arrived with picnic hampers, camping seats and everything else you could possibly need for the splendid night ahead!

Our friend, the poet Paddy Hughes, acted as Master of Ceremonies as the concert continued with St. Margaret's

#### Richmond Park Reflections

Paddy Hughes once again created a magical evening of poetry, music and story telling in Pembroke Lodge on a balmy summer's evening in June. Princess Alexandra and Sir Angus Ogilvy attended the event, as did the Deputy Mayor of Richmond and Mayor of Kingston. The evening raised £1,700 for the Centre.



*Stuart, Jem and Scott entertaining an enraptured audience*

Elastic Band contributing to the party atmosphere. Terry Denton de Gray in authentic guise of Henry VIII brought a touch of humour to the occasion as he rode by on horseback to check on "his park".

Columbian Dancers in their colourful costumes danced to traditional folk music, providing a real feast for the senses.



*HRH Princess Alexandra and Sir Angus Ogilvy with Giles Abbot – storyteller extraordinaire*

When Stuart, Jem and Scott of TENORS *UnLIMITED* took to the stage they wowed the audience with their warmth, wit and wonderful voices. They were not allowed to leave without several encores as our music lovers clamoured for yet more!

The evening was a huge success and ..... we hear there is talk of another musical event next summer.....

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#### TENORS *UnLIMITED* – New Patrons

We were delighted to hear that our three tenors, Stuart, Jem and Scott have said that they would like to be Patrons of the Holly Lodge Centre. We look forward to their visits and to hearing more of their wonderful singing in the future.



#### New Mural

Our exciting new mural provides an excellent teaching resource for the Centre. The mural depicts life in the park and includes the wildlife, trees and people who work, visit and play in the park.

# Since Our Last Newsletter...

## Group Visits

The number of visitors this year has risen by a staggering 37% - so we have been busier than ever.

*Some of our individual activities were:*



*Visitors from Athledene enjoying Summer Fun*

## Summer Fun Days

Once again, the Centre ran Summer Fun Days predominantly for people with special needs; four days with Richmond MENCAP.

Gina Martin, an environmental artist, ran the activities and she told us that it gave her great pleasure to see how proud the visitors were of their work. She encouraged them to use new skills, e.g. paper making, and to use implements, such as modelling tools, which they might not normally use.

The activities began with a walk along the nature trail, with opportunities to draw things spotted on the way ..... dragonflies, lizards, horses, butterflies, water lilies, rabbits, even the occasional toad! Back in the classroom, the visitors then made clay models, collages or dream catchers based on their drawings.

## Sculpture Workshop

As a result of a grant from the 'Awards for All' scheme from the National Lottery, the Holly Lodge Centre was able to host an artist in residence, Joanna McCormick. In September, Joanna worked with groups with special needs and created artworks using a variety of media. The works are now on display in the Centre's reception area.

On the final Saturday, a drop-in art workshop was held for the public in



*A pupil from Greenmead School making a bird's nest*

the gardens of Pembroke Lodge, at which the Diverse Strings Quintet played delightful contemporary music in the background.

## Junior Citizen

We were very happy once again to host with the Royal Parks the London Borough of Richmond's Junior Citizen fortnight. Some 800 children came to this event and the Centre buzzed with activities covering such topics as first aid, how to cope in an emergency, how to keep safe in the home and in the wider environment.



*A pupil from Oaklands School participating in the Big Draw*

## Big Draw

Two activities were organised in conjunction with the Big Draw in November. A group of pupils from Oaklands School and adults from the Athledene Centre with learning difficulties created embroidered panels of oak trees, which were subsequently exhibited at Orleans House Gallery. The groups were also encouraged in various drawing activities by Joan Hickson, of Postman Pat fame.

## Syon Park Countryside Live

The Centre manned a display at the above fair encouraging schoolchildren to become more aware of nature – they were able to touch and feel antlers, birds' nests and deerskins, for example. Our 'feely boxes' were a great success.

## Fundraising Activities

### Christmas Ball

Around 150 people enjoyed the Christmas Ball, held at the Twickenham Rugby Stadium on 6 December 2003. The music played by the Xenons was again a big hit and over £8000 was raised for the Centre.

### Richmond May Fair

Despite a very wet Saturday, many willing volunteers helped raise over £500 by selling a huge assortment of articles at the Fair.

### Summer Reception

A joint summer reception with Simon Richards on behalf of Richmond Park, was held in June. Members of the Richmond Chamber of Commerce were invited to attend, enabling them to enjoy a tour of the Centre.

### Sponsored Walk

In September, Andrea Hoadley and a group of friends from all over the country undertook a sponsored walk on behalf of the Centre. Andrea wanted her friends to 'fall in love' with the Park just as she had done. They enjoyed the five-mile challenge and raised £300 for the Centre.

## Volunteer Activities

Training sessions for volunteers have continued, covering health and safety, environmental issues and the history and philosophy of the Centre as well as how to lead and teach groups in various of the activities run by the Centre.

On a sunny Sunday in September a record number of volunteers enjoyed the annual barbecue, hosted by the Trustees.



*Volunteers training for the new Victorian schoolroom activity – practising drill!*

*'providing a stimulating programme of activities'*

# project update



*The mural as seen from the nature trail*

## Mural for picnic area

Little did we know how artistic our volunteers are! For some time the Trustees have wanted to brighten up the Centre's picnic area and earlier this year we received a grant from the Local Network Fund for Children and Young People via the Thames Community Foundation which would enable us to do just that. Enter Anne Cowie, who offered to take on the enormous task of designing a mural for the 25-metre wall adjoining the picnic site. Anne, Gloria, Peggy and Sheila, plus an assortment of other helpers, are creating an exciting and ever evolving panorama. The mural depicts life in the park and includes the wildlife, trees and people who work, visit and play in the park. It will provide an excellent teaching resource for the Centre.

## Nature trail and dipping ponds

This year there have been problems in maintaining water levels and controlling the spread of bulrushes and other invasive plants in the ponds. However, later in the year, a vigorous programme of maintenance improved the situation ready for 2005. As part of our major plans for the area we completed 260 metres of tarmac



*The dipping ponds in autumn*

path to provide wheelchair access to the nature trail. This has been joined onto the existing path round the dipping ponds and also to the site of our proposed shelter. Funds, donated by the IK Foundation specifically for this project, are being used to ensure that all works are completed by mid 2005 when we propose to hold a formal opening of the area.

## Victorian chemist shop

Following the design competition held in 2003 we have been closely involved with Richard Lewis of architects Murray Birrell and the Royal Parks to finalise our plans for this facility. In late September agreement was given by the Royal Parks for the development to go ahead. Now comes the fun of fundraising, as we need to raise in excess of £70,000 to complete the building. So, if you have any ideas please let us know!

## Victorian kitchen garden and washing area

Under the stewardship of Barbara, Gloria and Rachel, the Victorian kitchen garden provided us with a vibrant display throughout the summer and a second bumper harvest of 'Victorian' crops. Pumpkins



*The new wheelchair path in the nature trail*

and squashes, new to the garden, added a splash of autumnal colour. Visitors from Tear Fund at Teddington helped to create a Victorian washing area to complement the garden and kitchen. Two compost holders were also constructed during the year. The ground surrounding the garden requires considerable maintenance but, with the help of working groups from the charity, Tear Fund and Managers at Barclays Premier Banking, we have achieved our goals.



*15'4" sunflower dwarfing Malcolm Childs in the Victorian garden*

## Change in Trustees

During 2004 Elaine Price and John Mounsey resigned as Trustees in order to dedicate more of their time to other commitments – we thank them very much for their support and generosity in the past. Three new Trustees have been recently appointed: Sue Hume, Robert Scalzo and Joan Braune. We welcome them on board.

## European Year of Disabled People Award

As reported in our newsletter last year, the Holly Lodge Centre was fortunate to receive a grant for the European Year of Disabled people, which ran from 10 February 2003 to 31 March 2004. The focus for our project was to:

- develop new activities looking at life in water and birds
- set up a Park User Forum of disabled people and their carers to advise us and give us guidance
- develop disability awareness training with disabled people

- look at ideas for an 'outdoor classroom' made of timber with a group of children with special needs from Bedelsford School in Kingston

We achieved all this and the activities continue. During the training sessions, trying out a wheelchair and putting on glasses that simulated visual difficulties certainly put a different perspective on things! The project was a great success.

*'set in the natural environment of Richmond Park'*

## In the Classroom with Ann Frier

I work at Paddock School in Roehampton, a special school for students with severe learning difficulties. As the class teacher of TG3, I am responsible for a group of eight 16 – 19 year old students with profound and multiple learning difficulties and complex needs.

Sensory stories and poems form an important part of our curriculum. Last half-term's poems, *The Poor Snail* by J M Westrup and *The Beetle* by Walter de la Mare, were adapted to suit the needs of our students. The aim was for each individual to become more familiar with beetles and snails.

Our monthly visits to the Holly Lodge Centre reinforce and support the work done in the classroom. By the end of the term, after three visits to Holly Lodge and lots of



*Ann Frier with her group*

work back at school, several students were able to recognise and name a beetle, a worm and a snail. For one of the students, this was quite magical. Joining in the Mini Beast Hunt at the Holly Lodge Centre literally brought the bugs to life.

We have a very special relationship with what I feel is a very special place.



## The Poor Snail

by  
J M Westrup  
from

'The Book of a Thousand Poems'

*The snail says, "Alas!"  
And the snail says, "Alack!  
Why must I carry  
My house on my back?  
You have a home  
To go in and out,  
Why must mine always be  
Carried about?  
Not any tables,  
Not any chairs,  
Not any windows,  
Not any stairs,  
Pity my misery,  
Pity my wail \_\_\_\_\_  
For I must always be  
Just a poor snail."  
But he's terribly slow,  
So perhaps it's as well  
That his shell is his home,  
And his home is his shell.*

*Ann Frier teaching her students*

## Star Supporters

*Our gratitude goes to all of you who have given funds, equipment, encouragement and time to the Holly Lodge Centre, particularly our volunteers. We do not have the space to thank everyone individually but we would like to give a special mention to the following:*

- ★ HRH Princess Alexandra and the Rt. Hon. Sir Angus Ogilvy for their continued support
- ★ Daniel Hearsom and all at Pembroke Lodge for their ongoing support
- ★ Paddy Hughes and all the performers at the Reflections of Richmond Park event in June
- ★ John Mounsey for sponsoring TENORS *UnLIMITED* at the Tenors in the Park Concert in July and for Richmond Rotary and the Epsom MG Owners Club for their support on the evening
- ★ Pippa Hogg, Melanie Brice, Rachel Cadle and staff and students from the Royal Ballet School for their assistance at the above events and throughout the year
- ★ Barclays Premier Banking, William Grant and Sons, MI Associates, John Brown Printing, Janice Rothwell and Doreen Childs for help in sponsoring the Christmas Ball 2003
- ★ Liz Martin for continued support of our newsletter
- ★ Julia and David Schofield for helping to design our website.
- ★ Blakedown, Accenture and Carillion for sponsorship of our Summer Fun activity. David Higgins, Gilbert Lloyd, John Stein and Joan Braune for donations to support other projects and activities
- ★ Volunteers from Tear Fund and Barclays Premier Banking for help during the year, in particular painting the classroom and with various outdoor tasks
- ★ Staff of the Royal Parks and the Metropolitan Police based in Richmond Park for all their help during the year
- ★ Nigel Phillips for the work he did for us during the year - we wish him success with his new job at the Iver Study Centre

*'a magical place created to fulfil dreams'*

## Dr Pat's Casebook

This last year has been our busiest yet! The summer and autumn terms were booked up quickly by visitors. We continue to make a difference to people's prospective lives; to broaden their horizons and help them experience the great outdoors.

But, will the Disability Discrimination Act make a difference? I hope so, since improving access invariably helps us all in one way or another. The laws, however, cannot make you care about others less fortunate - only a conviction within us and looking outwards instead of always thinking about ourselves can do that. And it's not just about all about loos and lifts!!! It's about being kind and generous and putting others first. It's about including disabled people at the planning stage and finding out what their needs are.

At the Centre we work with our disabled visitors, carers and teachers to make our projects and activities work best for them. Then they can learn much more and get a better sense of achievement when they come and visit. Comments on the feedback forms from groups help shape our ideas.



*Pats standing next to a painting created by Joanne during the sculpture workshop*

So we will embark on another year looking forward to welcoming people from all walks of life to come and share the beautiful environment of Richmond Park.

Pat Ealey

Project Manager

## A Merrythought

Volunteering at the Holly Lodge Centre requires a readiness to turn one's hand to many things apart from simply welcoming and helping our visitors. Elizabeth and I joined after retiring from teaching careers in Home Economics and Chemistry. Note we have no background in History – but we were inveigled by Pat (she does a lot of this) to research Victorian schools and come up with some ideas that she might use in the proposed Victorian schoolroom programme.

So off we went to the Ragged School, East London, to see how the professionals do it. We decided that patriotism was important in Victorian times, so we researched the history of the Union Jack and the national anthem. Many children today will tell you that the cross of St. George is the flag of the English football team, and as for the national anthem they are about as fluent as some footballers! The three R's obviously had to be taught in the Victorian manner, so we brushed up our copperplate-producing copybooks.

We persuaded friends to make wooden holders for inkwells, and a churchwarden from Surbiton produced an old easel. This needed pegs and a board, but inspiration came in a DIY store that 1 banister = 2 turned pegs. So with a piece of MDF and blackboard paint we had our blackboard. Elizabeth made some pen-wipes, and when more fabric was needed I managed to buy some old sheets from the Barnes Jumble Sale. I told the stallholder why I needed them and she gave me a good price because she knew of the Centre. However, a little later she came and gave me a piece of paper with the following lines written on it:

*Once I was a merrythought that lived upon a hen  
Now I am a slave doomed to wipe a pen*



*Jennifer and Elizabeth with Peter Davison and visitors from the Star & Garter Home enjoying the sculpture workshop*

She then explained that a wishbone was called a merrythought until about 1900, and that they stretched fabric across wishbones to make pen-wipes.

Victorian picnics are another activity we prepared. Charity shops were scoured for tartan rugs, wicker baskets and straw hats to turn into Victorian bonnets. Beanbags were made; hoops, skipping ropes and quoits were obtained. Our local Londis store donated paper bags for our picnic lunches. When our rusty memories failed to quite remember the rules for fivestones, the Internet came up trumps.

So, as I said at the beginning, you never quite know what you might be doing next at Holly Lodge – but that is all part of the enjoyment of working there.

P.S. Is there anyone out there who could turn old sheets into school smocks?

Jennifer Watson

*'special needs in a special place'*

## A Message from our Patron Peter Davison

It has been a pleasure to be a Patron of the Holly Lodge Centre and to discover what great work the Centre has been doing since it opened officially in 1994.

I was doing a photo shoot in Richmond Park three years ago when Pat Ealey pinned me up against a tree and asked me to be Patron. I had no idea when I agreed how rewarding it would be! In that short time, I've seen the Centre flourish and I've been delighted to be part of this - whether it's attending fund raising events, improving my stone painting skills when invited to take part in one of the sculpture classes run for the Star and Garter Home, or enjoying the hospitality during the volunteers' days. My wife and I, as well as our two boys, have always been made so welcome and that kindness is extended to all of the children and adults who visit.

Thank you to everyone who supports the Holly Lodge Centre – I urge you to continue to do so.



## Mike Fitt, O.B.E.

Mike Fitt, Deputy Chief Executive of The Royal Parks and Director of Parks, will be retiring from his post next summer. It was Mike who conceived the original idea for the Centre and he has been closely involved since it started in 1992.

He will continue to be associated with various projects for the Parks and has also assured the Trustees that he still wishes to be actively involved with the Holly Lodge Centre. He is particularly keen to help us at the May Fair!

We are delighted to say that he has agreed to become a Patron and look forward to his continuing flow of ideas and inspiration.

## Can you help us?

If you are already a supporter, you will know about the valuable work being done by Pat and her volunteers and about plans for the future. We would very much like to expand our activities and facilities and increase our visitor numbers but we cannot do this without additional resources. This year we have had to turn down several visitor requests. Pat is our only paid employee.

If you have a teaching qualification and can help us as a volunteer – please contact us. We have a park full of teaching resources and every week, indeed every session, is different at the Holly Lodge Centre.

In terms of funding, we need over £45,000 a year to maintain our current level of service – and additional money is needed for various projects.



*Lara Out of School Club on a visit during the holidays*

If you can help us in any way, or wish to find out more about the Holly Lodge Centre, please contact us. We should be delighted to show you round.

Please contact:

Dr Pat Ealey  
The Holly Lodge Centre  
Holly Lodge, Richmond Park  
Surrey TW10 5HS  
Tel 020 8948 3209 Ext 236 or 259

Email: [pealey@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:pealey@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk)

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