

stepping stones

ISSUE SIX
WINTER 2005



Newsletter of the Holly Lodge Centre

Congratulations to the Volunteers

In June, volunteers at the Holly Lodge Centre were thrilled to receive a letter from Buckingham Palace informing them that they had been successful in achieving The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. This award, introduced in the Queen's Jubilee Year, recognises the great achievements by volunteers in every section of the community.



Garden Party, Buckingham Palace

The Holly Lodge Centre volunteers had been nominated for the Award by Anne Frier of Paddock School and this had been supported by Iris Henderson of Atheldene and Deborah Aplin, the President of Richmond

Chamber of Commerce. Nigel Clark, Deputy Lieutenant of Richmond, had subsequently visited the Centre, met some of the volunteers and discussed in great depth the work they do.

As a result of the award, two of the longest standing volunteers, Margaret Bourner and Elaine Nipper attended a Garden Party for volunteers at Buckingham Palace with Pat Ealey and the Chair of the Trustees, David Thomas.

Elizabeth Foster recalls a special annual barbecue

The volunteers' barbecue, held on Sunday, 16 October, was a very special and enjoyable event.

On this occasion, David Thomas was delighted to accept the trophy and certificate marking The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service on behalf of the volunteers, which was presented by Nigel Clark, representing HRH The Queen. We were also pleased to welcome Clare Head, Deputy Mayor of Richmond, who takes a keen interest in the work



Presentation of The Queen's Award at the Barbecue photographed in front of the Mural

of the Centre and had attended Richmond Park Reflections earlier in the year.

Live music provided a real sense of occasion to the event, helping

us to celebrate in style. What with wonderful weather, delicious food, the presentation and the music, it really was an afternoon to remember.



The Royal Star & Garter Home participate in the Big Draw

Wartime Memories

Ex-servicemen and women participate in the Big Draw

As part of the celebrations to commemorate the 60th anniversary of VE Day, residents of the Royal Star & Garter Home participated in the Big Draw Event at the Holly Lodge Centre.

The ex-servicemen and women produced storyboards recalling their very personal experiences during the war. Daphne Hill and Stephanie Kerans are seen here with two artist helpers, Kathy Whyte and Janet Silsby and Pat Ealey.

The storyboards, to be displayed in the classroom, will play an important part in any future activities relating to World War II.

'special needs in a special place'

Since Our Last Newsletter...

Our visitor numbers grew again in 2005 - 67% of our visitors have special needs. We again hosted the London Borough of Richmond's Junior Citizen fortnight, bringing many children from within the borough to the Centre.

The number of volunteers has risen to over 60 and we have continued to run training sessions for volunteers covering health and safety, environmental issues and the philosophy of the Centre.

Summer Fun Days – A Few Words from Creeping Toad, Gordon MacLellan

I spend most of my time travelling around the country, working with different groups in many different situations. The heart of my work is to help people explore creatively the places where they live, work or play.

Coming to Richmond is always one of the highlights of my year. To work in the Park itself is such a delight. To be able to walk under such magnificent trees and over rough grass in the middle of a city; to watch deer and woodpeckers on a daily basis; to meet stag beetles crossing a path - all these add up to make it a wonderful place to work in.

The groups we work with at the Holly Lodge Centre are as rewarding as working in the Park: always exciting and unpredictable. Often challenging for me as a workshop leader, these people give me some of my most enjoyable summer sessions. A residency at the Holly Lodge Centre can be hard work - but it is always fun.



As every year, the Victorian Christmas activity has been a very popular one in 2005 - children from Bedelsford School enjoyed decorating the tree

Fundraising Activities

Richmond May Fair

The weather was considerably better than the previous year and £478 was raised for the Centre. Remember to save your unwanted presents for our stall in May 2006!



Serge Lourie teased over £10,000 out of bidders during the auction



HRH Princess Alexandra is pictured with four of the performers Janet Shell, James Laming, Paddy Hughes and William Morton

Richmond Park Reflections

Paddy Hughes once again staged a very successful evening of music, poetry and dance on 7 June at Pembroke Lodge, which raised £3,260. The dance sequences performed by students of the Royal Ballet School, illustrating Paddy's poems - 'Mists' and 'Morning' - were some of the highlights of the event as were James Laming's rendering of Flanders & Swan's 'The Hippopotamus' and Joanna Garcia's cello solo 'To a Wild Rose'.

The audience and performers were served a sumptuous buffet during the interval. The weather was very kind, enabling many to enjoy their meal on the terrace with the magnificent vista of London.

The Fabulous Forties at Pembroke Lodge

A black tie dinner and dance was held on 7 October in support of the Centre, which raised just under £20,000. The theme of the event was - The Fabulous Forties at Pembroke Lodge: A celebration of the 60th anniversary of VE Day. Guests were entertained during a champagne reception by musical duo - Peter and Victoria Scott. Before dinner, Colonel Peter Luttmann-Johnson related some memories of his time stationed at Pembroke Lodge with the Phantom Squad during the War. Following a forties

menu, including sherry trifle as grandma used to make it, an auction and raffle, people chose to dance the night away or enjoy another glass - or two - of wine on the terrace. Yes, even in October this was still possible.

Mark Camley, Chief Executive of the Royal Parks recalls an enjoyable day at the Centre

I was delighted to take on the role of Chief Executive of The Royal Parks in May. In my previous role I was responsible for the Royal Courts of Justice in the Strand, and it is such a pleasure to have customers and users who want to enjoy and use our facilities - rather than ones who come in the back of prison vans!

Since arriving, I have visited all eight Royal Parks to familiarise myself with the parks, the staff and the issues they face and I offered to do two days' voluntary work over the summer. Pat Ealey booked up one of them within minutes of my offer (and then claimed the second day as well). I had a thoroughly enjoyable day in August - making lanterns with 'Creeping Toad' and a group of children in the morning, and doing some weeding in the afternoon with volunteers in the Victorian kitchen garden. My second day coincided with the Volunteers' Christmas Party, which was a really jolly occasion.

The work of the Holly Lodge Centre is so important and such an excellent resource for the local community. The work of the volunteers is so crucial to its success that I was very happy to have seen this at first hand. I am looking forward to building on what I know has already been a very successful partnership between the Royal Parks and the Holly Lodge Centre.

'providing a stimulating programme of activities'

project update

Mural – Picnic Area

The work, started in 2004, has continued in 2005 with more detail being added. Our dedicated team of Anne, Gloria, Sheila, Peggy, Voulla, Kathy, Liz and Annabel have worked with skill, enthusiasm and a great deal of panache to deliver a stunning visual representation of life in Richmond Park now and in Victorian times. 2006 will hopefully see the completion of this excellent additional teaching resource at the Centre.

Photos of sections of the mural taken by one of our photographic volunteers – Peter Hart



needed for this project, having recently set up a project team to work on the financing of this new building at the Centre. Any support or donations should be directed to Dr. Pat Ealey at the Centre on 020-8948 3209 x 236.

Nature Trail and Dipping Ponds

Following our concerns over fluctuating water levels in 2004, a decision was made by the Trustees to put an artificial lining into one of the ponds in the autumn of 2005. We now have the best of both worlds, a natural pond, where water levels rise and fall, and a lined pond which can be used all year round. Use of our dipping ponds remains a key part of the Centre's activities, so long term stability of the water supply is essential.

The new tarmac path in the nature trail has been a great success, allowing for disabled access all year round. Notice boards, highlighting trees, insects, birds and grasses, have added interest for our many visitors. We are now planning to build a shelter for the trail.

Victorian Chemist Shop

We are delighted to report that we are now actively raising the £75,000

Pen Ponds – Bird Hide

Following the initial work carried out in 2003, volunteers at the Centre, with much appreciated support from the London Business School, spent an action-packed day carrying out repairs and improving accessibility to the bird hide on the south-east corner of Pen Ponds. The work undertaken has enabled the Centre to re-introduce bird-watching for groups between 1 September and 28 February each year. In 2006 we also hope to re-establish use of our wheelie-boat on the pond for our disabled visitors.

Everything's coming up carrots in the garden

Barbara Lindsey reports

Rachel and I have continued to develop the Victorian kitchen garden and 2005 has seen a third successful year of growing Victorian varieties of vegetables, flowers, fruits and herbs. The garden has flourished; the dreaded encroachment of weeds from the surrounding area being controlled with invaluable help from Liz Martin and Janet Bostock. We have also benefited from the help of Andrew Harvey, our dedicated "maintenance volunteer", who has constructed a raised bed outside the current perimeter fence of the garden, so extending it both in area and usage in one go. The addition of a wheelchair accessible bed has enabled the Centre to develop this garden.

We've grown the usual selection of vegetables, using old varieties wherever possible, and aiming to provide a wide variety of shapes, colours and smells - as well as taste. The students from Paddock School in Roehampton have visited the garden on a number of occasions. They were able to enjoy its sights and smells and, with a little help, collected beetroot, carrots, pumpkins, potatoes and spinach (to name but a few). The vegetables were duly bagged and taken back to school to cook for lunch. They've learnt about what plants need to make them grow and sown seeds in pots to look after back at

school, as well as being the first to use Andrew's raised bed for sowing seed.

Plans to improve this area further in 2006/7 have now been drawn up, with the aim of improving access to enable students to become even more enveloped in the feel, sights and smells of the Victorian Kitchen garden.



Piers from Paddock School working in the garden

'set in the natural environment of Richmond Park'



Children always enjoy hunting for mini beasts and on a bright, sunny day visitors from the German School participated in such a search with the help of Elizabeth Foster

Nature Walk
By Belinda Powell

We went on a nature walk and we saw a knobby tree. It was big. We touched the tree. It felt like elephant skin. We found lots of things on our nature walk we found feathers, leaves and other things. I found a strange leaf when we were walking back. Then we went back to the Holly Lodge.

Belinda, one of our young visitors, compiled this poem about a visit to the Centre

Forthcoming Events

Richmond Park Festival - Three-day festival planned for June 2006

On 6 and 7 June we are hoping to stage two evenings of music, poetry and song at Pembroke Lodge, including a buffet supper.

The third event of the festival will be held in the grounds of the Royal Ballet School, on 17 June. The star turn will be the three tenors, Stuart, Jem and Scott, TENORS *Un LIMITED*, who were such a big hit at the concert in the summer of 2004.

Further details will be announced in the spring.

Appointment of New Trustee

Daniel Hearsom, a generous and active supporter of the Centre for the past few years, accepted the Board's invitation to become a Trustee. We thank him for his support in the past and welcome him on board as a Trustee.

WEBSITE LAUNCHED!

STOP PRESS

With grateful help from Julia and David Schofield the website has been launched – log on to www.thehollylodgecentre.org.uk and keep in touch with us electronically.

Star Supporters

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

- ★ HRH Princess Alexandra
- ★ Daniel Hearsom and all at Pembroke Lodge
- ★ Paddy Hughes and all the performers at Richmond Park Reflections in June
- ★ Nigel Clark, Deputy Lieutenant of Richmond
- ★ Pippa Hogg, Melanie Brice and staff and students from the Royal Ballet School for their assistance at our events during the year
- ★ Barclays Premier Banking, the Hearsom Family, Robert Holmes & Co., Bluebird Boats, Cosmos Yachting, Patisserie Valerie and Joan Braune for sponsorship of our October event
- ★ Our supporters who provided auction and raffle prizes for our events and gave their time to assist at the events
- ★ Liz Martin for continued support of Stepping Stones
- ★ Barclays Small Business at Sutton/Epsom, Tear Fund and London School of Business for their 'away days' helping at the Centre
- ★ Staff of the Royal Parks, their police and the Metropolitan Police based in Richmond Park and the Royal Parks' contractors in the Park
- ★ JP Morgan and Suzanne Blankemeyer for computers, software and installation and AGI Media for donating digital cameras for the photographic classes
- ★ The White Lodge Ladies Golf Club, Wimbledon Stables, London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, Inner Wheel Feltham, Eileen Acheson-Gray, D.J Shawe, Elaine Nipper, Inga Smith, Epsom MG Cars, Barnes Community Association, Nancy Vlasto, Crescent School of Riding, Douglas Reynolds, Genean Stec, Malcolm Childs, Ham Amenities Group, Rotary Club Richmond, the Disabled Drivers' Association and visitors from City and Village Tours for their generous donations of funds.

'a magical place created to fulfil dreams'

A Message from our Patron, Michael Fitt OBE

As I write this piece, the indefatigable 'Dr Pat' is moving into Victorian Christmas mode, bedecked with holly and fingers sticky from making the Holly Lodge Centre Christmas pudding. Daniel Hearsum has removed his tin helmet and is busily packing away the camouflage netting following the 'Forties' evening, fundraising event. Meanwhile, a working group has convened to consider the possibility of entering an exhibit into the 2007, Chelsea Flower Show.

Victorians, World War II and Chelsea Flower Show! Is this the sort of thing we were thinking about in the early nineties when draft proposals for the Holly Lodge Centre featured the catch phrase 'special needs in a special place' but all that existed were a few redundant outbuildings plus an ugly, concrete car park? Well, to be truthful the answer has to be **no**. However, everyone involved recognised the need for innovation and commitment if that 'special place' called Richmond

Park was to be made welcoming and accessible for those with 'special needs'.

Therefore, it doesn't seem strange to me that the able and less able are being encouraged to delve into the pleasures of Christmas past; that much needed funds are being raised through the celebration of the ending of WW II and that volunteers are planning the promotion of the Centre by exhibiting at the world's premier flower show.

In fact, these kinds of initiatives and exciting events have been at the heart of the Centre's development since the early days. The commitment, creativity and dedication manifested by all those involved has been recognised by recent awards such as Pat Ealey's 'Woman in the Community Award'

in 2003 and The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2005.

A great deal of achievement for everyone to be proud of - but there should be no resting on our laurels! We can only build on past success if there are resources to do so. This means increasing our income through fundraising whilst giving every encouragement to all those who work so hard to make the Centre the wonderful place it is. Knowing the enthusiasm and determination of all concerned - fellow Patrons, Trustees, volunteers, staff and supporters alike, I've no doubt the Holly Lodge Centre will continue to thrive and prosper, enabling all of its visitors to enjoy the enchantment of a 'special place' that is Richmond Park, no matter their circumstance or ability.

News from The Royal Parks

by Toni Assirati

Head of Education and Community Engagement. Co-opted Member of the Board of Trustees of the Holly Lodge Centre



Picture of final farewell of Wildlife for All programme, with Mike Fitt on the far left

Wildlife for All programme celebrates the last three years

In November 2002 the Wildlife for All partnership project between the Royal Parks and the RSPB sprang into life. Over the past three years there have been many occasions when the little blue van arrived in the Parks and delivered valuable information about the wildlife to the public. Many new schools and community groups have begun to build relationships with the environment. Different free walks have been organised within the Parks to

show people the amazing variety of wildlife that lives in the Parks - from herons and bats to stag beetles and sparrow hawks. New interpretation boards are being placed in strategic areas to encourage the public to understand the wildlife they might see. Altogether the project engaged with 30,000 people.

Sadly we must now say goodbye to this project, as the 3-year funding, provided by the HLF (Heritage Lottery Fund) has come to an end. The Fund enabled the project to establish some excellent models of good work practice, which will be continued throughout the normal working day of

the Parks. The final farewell was held at the DCMS (Department of Culture, Media and Sports) on Wednesday 15 November. The CEO of RSPB, Graham Wynne, the CEO of The Royal Parks, Mark Camley and the London Chair of the HLF, Mary Austin thanked everyone who had taken part in the project, including the 109 volunteers. The project has concluded but the partnership has been strengthened. Together the RSPB and the Royal Parks successfully bid for a second project called Wild in the Parks and we will report more about this in the next newsletter.

'enabling access to fun and learning for everyone'

Dr Pat's Casebook

This year, as you will have seen, we were given the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. Our volunteers certainly deserved that! The Holly Lodge Centre could not function without them. I am always amazed at how much time and commitment people are willing to give. But it's a two way process. As well as them giving time and sharing skills, they get an awful lot back too. There have been many rewarding moments here. Just to see a disabled child's face light up with a smile is a small acknowledgement that we have got through. Or for someone to speak for the first time in years!

A few volunteers have moved on to obtain jobs relating to their work here and others have found it a stepping stone to other employment. Some have even made career changes!

For the first time ever this year, I have had to say to one of the local volunteer bureaux that actually we didn't need any more volunteers! So I would like to say a big thank you to them all for their support, in so many different ways, over the years that I have been here.



Pat in front of Holly Lodge – the picture used by the Richmond & Twickenham Times for her profile entitled 'Painting and pond dipping creates an oasis of calm' which appeared on 19 August 2005

Pat Ealey Project Manager

Our Artist Speaks

As a painter it is easy to spend a long time on one's own and that is why I decided to give a little of my time to a charity or another worthwhile cause. I wanted to meet people on a regular basis during the day and to have more contact with the outside world and the community. "What could be nicer than to do this in the middle of one of the most beautiful parks in London", I thought, when I was told about the Holly Lodge Centre.

Discussing ideas with Pat is always fun and challenging. She has a mind of her own when it comes to art, and that makes my work at the Holly Lodge Centre all the more enjoyable! The first thing she suggested I did was to paint the three-dimensional oak tree made by another volunteer, Stewart Perkes, which I enjoyed a lot. The oak tree is now used by many children who come to spend time at the Centre. It helps them learn about nature, the different seasons and how incredibly alive the quintessential English oak tree is. I must confess that I am myself constantly learning and being fascinated by the discovery of life going on around us all the time.

One of the things that I find most rewarding at the Centre, is seeing how children express themselves with a few



Manel in front of the oak tree which he painted - his first task for the Centre

coloured pencils and a piece of paper - making things out of a few leaves, conkers, twigs and any other things they collect on their expeditions in the Park. Particularly moving is to see the effect this type of activity seems to produce on some of the less able people who come here; for a little while they appear totally immersed in their own creations, and the quietness that fills the classroom at those times is something I find quite special.

Manel Güell-Leal

Can you help us?

If you are current supporter, you will know about the valuable work being done at the Centre and about plans for the future. We would love to expand our activities and facilities but we cannot do this without additional resources.

We need over £45,000 a year for core funding – and additional money is needed for specific projects, such as the shelter for our nature trail and the Victorian Chemist Shop.

If you can help us to increase our resources or if you 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
www.thehollylodgecentre.org.uk

'special needs in a special place'