



STEPPING

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STONES

Newsletter of the Holly Lodge Centre



A Message from our Royal Patron, HRH Princess Alexandra

I am delighted to be the Royal Patron of the Holly Lodge Centre having taken a keen interest in the activities of the Centre since it was first founded over 12 years ago. On my many visits to the Centre I am always impressed by the enthusiasm shown by everyone – from the Project Manager, the volunteers and the visitors. Over the last few years the Holly Lodge Centre has flourished, greatly extending its facilities and activities and I have much enjoyed attending the various fundraising events.

I appreciate what a joy it is for some of the visitors from inner city areas of London to be able to spend time at the Centre and in the Park. This is especially so for disabled people of all ages, who would not normally have access to the outdoors.

I wish the Centre many successful years ahead.

A scintillating evening at the Royal Ballet School

"It was such a privilege to be able to see this wonderful performance in such a special venue", was just one of the many ecstatic comments we received after the Gala Performance at White Lodge on 21 June.

On the June evening guests enjoyed a glass of champagne on the terrace of White Lodge before being absolutely enchanted by a series of dances by students of the Royal Ballet School in the Margot Fonteyn Studio. The delightful evening of ballet was made even more special by the fact that several of the sequences were also choreographed by students.

The School had generously staged the event in support of the Holly Lodge Centre and over £5000 was raised on the evening.

The Centre is extremely grateful to Dame Diane van Schoor, Pippa Hogg, Melanie Brice and all staff and students of the Royal Ballet School for a wonderful performance.



The Mayor of Richmond with visitors from Richmond Mencap

Summer Fun activities

Acclaimed environmental educator Gordon MacLellan, known to all as Creeping Toad, returned again to provide Summer Fun activities for 13 different groups at the Centre. The workshops had a strong 'outdoor' component. Groups went for walks on the nature trail to inspire the creative activities and then made Richmond Park books composed of leaf rubbings, drawings etc, which told the story of their walk. Others made treasure chests and giant flowers. We are grateful to the Local Network Fund for Children and Young People and the Thames Community Foundation for funding this project.

The Mayor of Richmond, Cllr Marc Cranfield-Adams visited the Centre during this period. He toured the facilities and met visitors from Richmond Mencap, who were enjoying a session with Creeping Toad.



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'special needs in a special place'



Since our last newsletter...



During the Big Draw in October, led by Mark Parker from Kitevibe, children enjoyed making and flying kites, as seen here a child from Paddock School

A new activity - Toys then and now

Patricia Calfe reflects on the trial run of one of our most recent activities:

The delightful pupils of Ibstock School were the selected guinea pigs for the trial runs of our latest activity, "Toys then and now". Elizabeth Foster and Jennifer Watson were persuaded to dust off their mortarboards and devise the session, ably assisted by Isobel Scott and Inga Smith.

An eclectic selection of toys and games was acquired from various sources, including many donations from fellow volunteers and great fun was had sorting through them. Indeed, Elizabeth seemed to be displaying an almost unhealthy interest in dressing Action Man in his little rubber wet-suit and no one who was there could forget Inga's bravery as she produced her favourite doll, Nini, from an old school satchel and gave it away.

The format for the session is based on that of the Victorian Artefacts, with the children rotating between four tables of categorised toys, e.g. wind up, construction, etc. There is an outside break in the middle for games on the picnic lawn and concludes with their making either a peg-doll or a toy to take home.

Both sessions went well, although such was the enthusiasm of the children that some of us had difficulty holding their attention or passing on any information. As Isobel rightly bemoaned "all they want to do is play with the toys." Let's hope we have lots of takers for this activity, after all what's the use of a toy anyway, and how would you rather spend your time when you're only five?

Since the session we have been given the most beautiful German Victorian doll – Dolly Jo Ashwell by Mrs Anne Grice. She will be admired by many when she takes pride of place in the Victorian School Room.



Photographic sessions for visitors with learning difficulties have proved very popular this year. Su and Doug out in the Park with a group from St Phillips School.

Volunteers' outing to Nymans

Margaret Bournier wrote – I think the picture underneath tells it all!

Two coaches of volunteers from all the Royal Parks set off in good spirits on 16 July – one coach from Richmond Park and one from Hyde Park. The sky was a bit grey but we were not deterred and we were warmly welcomed by Simon Lee. It was good to see him again as some of us knew him well when he was Head of Education for the Royal Parks. Simon gave us a brief talk about the garden and then we set off on a tour. By this time it was raining seriously – but we had our umbrellas and cagoules and we pressed on.

The gardens were lovely, even in the rain, and we all enjoyed the visit immensely and agreed we would like to return – but on a better day!



A wet, but enjoyable, volunteers' outing

Goodbye to Malcolm Childs as a trustee – from David Thomas

One of the original trustees of the Holly Lodge Centre, Malcolm Childs has decided to resign as a trustee. Malcolm has been involved with the Centre from the beginning and has made a huge contribution, enabling the Centre to grow and offer such diverse and interesting visitor facilities. Malcolm was always willing to turn his hand to anything from digging flower beds to assembling financial information for our auditors. His energy, drive and networking skills will be greatly missed as a trustee but the good news is that Malcolm wishes to continue as a volunteer.

All the trustees would like to thank Malcolm for the hard work and enthusiasm that he has given to the Centre over the past 15 years.

Project Update...

Victorian kitchen garden expansion

Under the leadership of Barbara Lindsey and her team of gardening volunteers, we are delighted to report a substantial expansion of our facilities. A new purpose built greenhouse with disabled access has been installed and with the support of the Royal Parks' staff the area available to us has more than doubled in size. With the help of volunteers we will be able to grow more and install more raised beds for use by our disabled visitors. New facilities will include wheelchair access paths, more growing beds and a seating area. The financial support of Sheila Lester, the Royal Parks Foundation and the fundraising event described below is enabling this expansion.

Bird hide

The hide has been brought into action for the season 2007/8 which runs until March 2008. Any groups interested in using this facility should contact us.

Second mural completed!

Anne Cowie, Sheila Carter, Gloria Claydon and Peggy Saunders have designed and completed a second mural in the picnic area on the old rifle range wall. It is another wonderful addition to the Centre's facilities and will eventually provide a backdrop for an outdoor stage.

Nature trail and dipping ponds

The Centre had to carry out repairs to the lined pond this year to ensure its future use. The wet weather last winter resulted in the lining "rising up" to the surface and then our moorhens decided to nest on top of the lining! Unfortunately we were not able to use the pond this year but activities in the natural pond have been enjoyed as usual.

We hope to upgrade the nature trail and an application will be submitted for funding for the outdoor classroom. This will enable the Centre to increase its visitor numbers and ensure even better use of our facilities.

Fundraising Activities...

Photographic Event

On a very wet 4 March we held a photographic event to raise funds for the Victorian garden, which is used by disabled children.

The event consisted of two slide shows: "Scenes from Kew" by Joanna Jackson, and "Wolves and Bears" by Mark Garbutt, professional photographer and a ranger in Texan and Canadian nature reserves. There were displays of photographs of Richmond Park by Diana Loch, keen local wildlife photographer.

Janet Bostock organised the event, which raised £1,200 for the Centre.

Many thanks are due to Joanna, Mark and Diana and particularly to Janet, who oversaw the whole event through from bright idea to successful implementation.

Richmond Park Reflections

This ever popular event was again staged for us by Paddy Hughes on 5 June in the presence of HRH Princess Alexandra. A highlight of the event was a duet by Kathryn Hide, soprano, and Phil Wilcox baritone, of a traditional Congolese banana song.

Douglas Guarneri, a renowned Brazilian pianist had composed a suite of piano pieces about various mini beasts and endangered species for which Paddy Hughes had written corresponding poems. Paintings by the French artist, Sylvaine Madinier, relating to each of the creatures, were also displayed.

We are extremely grateful to all the performers, and thrilled that over £3,000 was raised by the event.

Fundraising Dinner

On 1 November a dinner was held at Pembroke Lodge, when the guests were splendidly entertained by the three charming tenors – our Patrons, TENORS *Un* LIMITED. The talented magician Oliver Seymour moved from table to table baffling the guests. Over £9,000 was raised for the Centre.

Support of volunteer groups

During 2007 the Centre has been delighted to welcome visiting companies and organisations to assist us. The need for such support has grown as the level of our activities has led to the growth of areas needing maintenance. Andrew Harvey, Caroline Freeland and Lisa Burchill have worked hard to control the vegetation.

England Women's RFU, Red Door Communications PLC, Starbucks West London Management Team, students from The London Business School and the Community Service Initiative, led by PC Kelvin Clarke have provided the skills and support to enable us to do what we needed to and to develop new initiatives. We are very grateful to them all.



Volunteers from Red Door help clear the ponds

The Holly Lodge Centre – a user’s perspective by *Bridget Grant*

Barnes Primary School is a frequent user of the educational facilities at Holly Lodge. Being within a walk, or bus ride and walk, of the Centre, visits are easy for us to make.

Over the last few years, I have been lucky enough to have had regular trips with my classes. For some children this is their first ever visit to Richmond Park. The activities on offer normally relate to the areas we are covering in school but Pat and her team have been happy to make adjustments, to accommodate our needs more precisely. All our visits have had the same feel about them. As soon as we arrive, the children sense that this is going to be a bit of an adventure. It’s not school but what is it? Pat takes us into her classroom, immediately interesting with specimens, nests, photos, paintings, other children’s work and unrecognizable ‘things’. There is always a warm welcome and anticipation in the air for doing something a little different.

Even though I have taken classes on the same trip a number of times, Pat always makes it a new experience. The location changes, the activities may differ a little, the related worksheets never seem to be repeated. The extensive knowledge Pat has, teaches me new things about the Park – which I think I know well - and what goes on there on every visit. On one famous occasion, Pat told us that we might find a lizard. Lizards in Richmond Park? My scepticism was dismissed by a chorus of Year 4 voices some ten minutes later. “Mrs Grant! Mrs Grant! Come and look, it’s a lizard!” There it was, under the first log that had been carefully picked up in an investigation into habitats! The volunteer helpers on the team have the ability to interact with the children as though each workshop were a fresh experience for them each time too. Maybe it is!

On another visit, we lunched on the picnic benches as the lovely mural was being painted. The artists fascinated us all with explanations of what they were doing and how. One of them had been a primary teacher and was wonderfully indulgent to the children’s enthusiastic questioning. This summer, my Year 3 class was asked to trial a workshop in the embryonic Victorian Pharmacy. The hands-on aspect of pill and potion making proved to be an exciting and instructive activity, which I’m sure will become a bedrock attraction for groups studying the Victorians (see page 5).

I look forward to any visit to Holly Lodge. We always leave broadened and happy, thankful for the unique facility it provides and somehow, the sun is always shining!



Children looking for mini beasts under leaves with Bridget Grant



HRH Princess Alexandra with the late Nigel Cullingford Clark, Jane Clark and David Thomas at Richmond Park Reflections

A tribute by David Thomas to Nigel Cullingford Clark - a special friend

The Centre lost a very dear friend when the Deputy Lieutenant of Richmond, Nigel Cullingford Clark died suddenly in August this year. He was always resplendent in his uniform, usually complete with a sword, at various functions including the Richmond Park Reflections’ evenings at Pembroke Lodge.

He was very supportive of the Centre’s application for the Queen’s Award for Volunteering and presented the award to the Centre on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen in 2005.

A Service of Thanksgiving was held on 2 October and the church, which holds over 750 people, was overflowing. This reflected Nigel’s popularity, and he was accurately described by a friend as a, “decent honest chap”.

Star Supporters

Our gratitude goes to everyone who has given funds, equipment, encouragement and time to the Holly Lodge Centre, particularly our volunteers. Some of our supporters are specifically mentioned in relevant articles but apart from these we would like to mention the following:

- ★ *HRH Princess Alexandra for her continued support and her patronage*
- ★ *Pippa Hogg, Dame Diane van Schoor, Melanie Brice and all the staff and pupils of the Royal Ballet School for their support throughout the year*
- ★ *The Royal Parks Foundation for providing us with the funds for a greenhouse in the Victorian kitchen garden*
- ★ *The Wellcome Trust and the Rose Foundation for their support of the Victorian Chemist Shop*
- ★ *Louise Wood for running in the Marathon for us and raising over £300*
- ★ *The Hearsam Family Trust for continuing kind support of Richmond Park Reflections, our Volunteers’ Autumn Lunch and our Fundraising Dinner*
- ★ *TENORS Un LIMITED, Fuller Smith & Turner PLC, Arsenal PLC, Surrey County Cricket, The Osborne Group, Simon Richards, Spatial Imaging, Our Price PLC for their support of our Fundraising Dinner*
- ★ *Richmond Rotary Club, Richmond Park Charitable Trust, The Hospitable Saturday Fund, Phil Swallow, the Crescent Riding School, Kingston Riding Centre, the L.B. of Richmond Junior Citizens Scheme, Wimbledon Village Stables, Malcolm Childs, Eileen Acheson-Gray, Richard and Susan Peatfield, Anne Grice and all other donors*
- ★ *The staff and contractors of the Royal Parks, the Metropolitan Police based in Richmond Park and the Friends of Richmond Park*

Palmers 'Chymists' comes to Holly Lodge

You will have read in past issues of Stepping Stones about our Victorian Chemist Shop project and its progress, which has been slower than we had hoped. Fortunately this year we have had breakthroughs. Simon Richards, the Manager of Richmond Park, has made it possible for us to use an existing building rather than having to build a new one, cutting down costs and time. Secondly, our dedicated Fund Manager, Liz Wall, had excellent results in raising money for this project. And David Foster agreed to be Project Manager. Read on as David and Alex Mulholland bring us up to date.

In autumn 2000 the contents, including all the furniture and many artefacts, from a Victorian Pharmacy in Mortlake were donated to the Holly Lodge Centre by the owner pharmacist Mr Alex Mulholland.

The business of Chemist and Druggist in Sheen Lane was started by Thomas Palmer in 1865 and all the records since then are intact. He controlled it until the early part of the 20th century when the



Children from Barnes Primary School enjoying the pilot activity



Joan Hickson judging the BrickArt competition

Higgs family took over and renamed it "Stewarts Pharmacy". Mr Stewart Higgs had a long and distinguished career running the pharmacy through the war years and during the introduction of the NHS in 1947. He died in 1965 and the new, and as it turned out to be the last, owner Alex Mulholland took over. This family pharmacy has only had three owners in 135 years and so it is fitting that, as it has never been broken up, it remains complete for generations to see and learn about in the educational environment of the Holly Lodge Centre.

Since 2000 there has been great discussion and planning involving the Royal Parks, Richmond Park, the trustees of the Centre, architects, and builders. Then last year Liz started fundraising in earnest. As well as successfully presenting the project to the Wellcome Trust and other funds, Liz organised a BrickArt competition, which was judged by Joan Hickson who met the successful winners.

Many volunteers have helped including Brian Bowers and Alex who have made good headway in cataloguing each piece. Everyone involved is "firing on all cylinders" to hasten the completion of the project by spring 2008. Pilot classroom sessions, developed by Stewart Perkes, have already been held and enthusiastically received.

Work has started on preparing the chosen building by stripping out all the equipment as well as the ceiling boards and floor tiles which were found to contain asbestos. Not only that but we had to get rid of a few wasps' nests that were then found in the roof. Work has also started on the detailed design of the interior and once converted the building will provide an excellent environment for the educational activities that will be developed so extending our links with Richmond Park and its Victorian history.

Dr Pat's Casebook

One of the great things about working at the Centre is that there is always something different or new happening. There's never a dull moment – except perhaps when you're faced with revising all the risk assessments! But this was my first photo call with a camel. Omar was very well behaved. He was gentle! I always thought that camels were miserable creatures, grumpy, awkward and liable to spit. So my prejudices were unfounded and my view on camels changed.

We carry around many prejudices in our lives on all sorts of things. I'm sure that some disabled people suffer very much from people's prejudice about them. Very often our views are built on experience, or rather, lack of experience of meeting people who have special needs. It can be disconcerting meeting someone, for example, with learning difficulties for the first time. Yesterday two new volunteers helped with an art session with adults with learning difficulties. This was the first time they had had close contact with disabled people in this setting. It wasn't easy but very rewarding and the group produced some lovely pictures. With experience and encouragement I'm sure these volunteers will be able to take group sessions on their own.



Pat with Omar, the camel, at the May Fair in Richmond. Omar and his keepers from Kempton Park were collecting money for the Holly Lodge Centre

The key to all this is to be patient, remember that these are people too and put yourself in their shoes. Then any preconceived negative ideas we have about disabled people will disappear and everyone can be treated with respect.

Pat Ealey

Project Manager

A Volunteer's Story

On 7 March, while Pat was 'hors de combat', I found myself acting as the strict Mrs Sawyer in the Victorian Dame School. I have never taught before and 'strict' is not my default mode so it wasn't easy – especially as it was hard to find anything to be strict about with these children – a group of charming six year olds from Rokeby School. One little chap tended to slouch a bit but every time I rapped out an order to him to "sit up straight in my classroom", twenty-odd other little backs snapped so even more alarmingly to attention that I began to worry about their spinal cords!

For the arithmetic lesson I had decided to use pounds, shillings and pence in a simple sum to illustrate the currency used in Victorian times. Unfortunately, I had not thought it through far enough and to my horror towards the end of my sum, I suddenly realised that I was about to introduce these six-year olds to long division! (I muddled through, largely because these boys knew their twelve times table!)

This was, of course during the 'organised chaos' that reigned while Pat was away!

Most of my experiences as a volunteer have been very different. Some are very touching, such as seeing how often the members of the disabled groups, who use the Centre, are so supportive of each other and appreciative of the care given to them by their helpers.

Others are very funny. Imagine a nursery group who had come to look for 'mini beasts'. A small moth had actually entered the classroom on the jumper of a teacher. It fluttered onto the table - "oh look", we cried, a "mini beast is here in the classroom". Immediately, one of the most angelic looking children raised his innocent little hand and went "SPLAT". End of that particular mini beast!

I really enjoy my times at the Centre and look forward to walking, and (in due course tottering) in for many years to come.

Isobel Scott



Jabeen Baig proudly showing the book she made during the Summer Fun activity described on page 1

Can you help us?

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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