



STEPPING

ISSUE NINE
WINTER 2008

STONES

Newsletter of the Holly Lodge Centre

The perils of Morison's vegetable pills

Dr Pat Ealey tells the story of a new activity

A series of activities based around Morison's vegetable pills is one of our latest partnership projects. The Centre is always looking for new ideas for activities and when a request was sent to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society for suggestions for herbs to grow in our kitchen garden to link to the Victorian Chemist Shop, I had no idea that it would lead to a totally new project. Back came a list along with the information that Victorians were partial to taking Morison's vegetable pills for a variety of ailments. Included were some wonderful cartoons from Punch magazine showing the effects that an overdose of these pills would cause. People were growing carrot and cabbage noses and grass was growing on their faces. What a wonderful idea for stories!

I discussed the idea with a former volunteer who is now a professional storyteller and as we started to talk, I thought of another way of telling the story – with shadow puppets. Stewart Perkes made us a 'stage' and while Creeping Toad was running our Summer Fun activities he showed us how to make shadow puppets. The next step is to put in a grant application to fund a joint project to develop this new activity and to train volunteers (Oh, what next I can hear them saying!). A trial run of this activity formed our "Big Draw Days" in October as Isabel Scott now describes.



A cartoon from Punch relating to the wonderful effect of Morison's vegetable pills
'Wellcome Library, London'

The Big Draw – carrot and cabbage noses

Despite what the name implies "The Big Draw" is not a £1 million raffle! "The Campaign for Drawing" website describes it as inviting "everyone to join in, using drawing to engage with the past, present and future". Involving people of all ages and abilities, the aim is to "help expand the boundaries of drawing" using a variety of media from the humble pencil to "vapour trails and fire drawings."

In my case all this translated into a day of great fun with children from West Hill School. As you have read in Pat's piece, we were using the story of Mr Morison's vegetable pills to create drawings and stories using shadow puppets. This concept also allowed us to spend some time making "pills" the way Mr Morison would have done, and using dipping pens and ink to write labels for the pill jars – again just the way Mr Morison would have.

The children enjoyed all this immensely but it was with the shadow puppets that the fun really began! The children were split into two groups to make up a story – my group did this using drawings in cartoon fashion, lots of speech bubbles, etc. They then had to draw and cut out a shadow puppet for each character in their story, then use the "stage" to act it out for the other group. My group's story involved Mr Morison, his wife, his son and a magic deer, who had to cure Mr Morison after he had eaten some very nasty food. Luckily this was the second version of the story. The first saw Mr Morison die of his illness – but all was not doom and



The story of the Big Draw by West Hill School

gloom. According to the child who was making this up Mr Morison had a "wonderful funeral" and ended up "happily buried" in the cemetery! Who could hope for more?

The children had great fun with all this and one of their teachers wrote in her feedback form –

"We all enjoyed a fantastic day learning about Victorian pills. The most valuable part of the visit was to see our pupils relaxed, carefree and interacting with each other in unfamiliar surroundings."

That, I think, is part of the magic of the Holly Lodge Centre.

Isabel Scott



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

'special needs in a special place'



Since our last newsletter...



Christopher from Linden Lodge enjoyed stroking the Shire horses

A day with the Shire Horses

Sandra Croxall and Steve Green report on another new activity developed this year.

The Victorian classroom is within the compound of the Shires' yard and we often see Mrs Sawyer instructing the children in washing clothes and physical exercise the Victorian way.

More often than not, they are merrily gazing across the yard watching whatever Steve and I are doing with or without the Shire horses.

We decided the time had come to invite a few groups to see and experience exactly what we do, so we did.....

Over two days we had several groups with differing special needs. The first part of the session we devised consisted of interaction in the classroom – listening, touching and smelling various tools we use. It was fantastic to observe the children and watch their reactions to the feed, supplements and brushes. We were helped in our explanations by the wooden replica horses' hind quarters, which had been made by Stewart Perkes and the visitors were able to learn how to plait horses' tails with these aids.

The second part of the session meant a trip out onto the yard to meet our fantastic beasts close up. There were gasps of shock at the size and they soon understood why we have very strict rules about safety. Soon they were all mucking out the stables and then making up the horses' feeds. They looked around the yard and saw all the vehicles and equipment that we use. We were answering many questions as to what certain things were and why!

It was great to hear them all chatting and getting involved as many of these children have communication difficulties.

We hope the visit was a memorable experience and was enjoyed by all and we look forward to the possibility of more in the future.

Stewart Perkes finishing off one of the horse's tails



What our volunteers think

Satisfied, committed, motivated volunteers abound – positive results characterise the HLC 2008 volunteer survey

During the year Di Wheatley, a marketing consultant, used her experience to look at and evaluate the centre and gave the trustees some very interesting findings for consideration regarding future direction, planning, marketing and fundraising.

She has also undertaken research for the Centre among our volunteers and our clients resulting in some other useful information.

Di wrote that the HLC volunteer survey was the first comprehensive survey to be undertaken across the base of HLC's volunteers since the Centre started almost 15 years ago. It has provided a helpful snap-shot of volunteer opinion to HLC management and trustees, in particular demonstrating that the Centre's regular volunteers are satisfied with their experience of volunteering at HLC - with volunteers being highly committed to the Centre, motivated in their duties and (with many) willing to do more if asked.

94% of respondents stated that they were at least 'satisfied' with the volunteer experience at HLC with a further 54% stating they were 'very satisfied'; no respondents reported being dissatisfied.

Volunteer dedication overall is indisputable with the average 'length of service' standing at an incredible 6.5 years; with close to 70% of all respondents having volunteered for at least 2 years.

The Centre is developing ways of working even more closely with its clients – in particular special needs schools - as a result of the findings of Di's client survey.



Barnes Primary School participated in the Holly Lodge Centre's activities at the Syon Park Estate Day in May

New reception area

Thanks to a donation from the Rose Foundation, we have been able to enclose our reception area. The new space gained will be used to hang children's coats and store their boots and lunch boxes during sessions. An additional welcome result has been that the classroom and offices are much warmer than they used to be.

We have also been able to build a storage unit at the entrance to the nature trail to house tools for the outside workers.

Project Update...

The Victorian Garden has been transformed

I am writing this in October and the garden is looking beautiful and, as usual, has left us with a lasting image as we go through the winter – this year of yellow pumpkins clambering through the front fence.

It has been transformed by a number of things – we have the greenhouse, thanks to the Royal Parks Foundation; we have extra space for cultivation, but more than that, we now have a growing number of volunteers interested in working in the garden and/or helping with groups who come to enjoy and use this area.

A transformation has been brought about by the extra input from more people, who come with different ideas and experiences and who give their time to this very special place.

Paddock School have continued to use the garden on a regular basis and a group from Whitton CRC has also been working in the garden regularly. Now that we have more volunteers we are looking forward to welcoming other schools that have shown an interest.



Liz Carran, chairman of the May Fair Ball Committee, visited the Centre with David Thomas while Paddock School were using the garden



Martin Currie (Polishing UK) restoring furniture for the chemist shop

The Victorian Chemist shop is underway

We can now say that 'Palmer's Chymist' is well and truly on its way! Since we last wrote about the Victorian Pharmacy project there has been much good progress and then some unexpected hurdles came our way. But now we are moving forward again as fast as we can.

The building has been cleared and stripped ready for its conversion. That all went very well but then some of the hurdles took rather longer for us to leap than we had ever expected. These included getting planning permission, listed building consent, building regulations approval, and then our preferred contractor found he was unable to help us. These challenges are now behind us and building will commence in the New Year

While working on this project many of us are learning new things about Victorian chemists and the treatments they offered their customers. Herbal medicines is just one of these.

We also have a puzzle on our hands: under the floor in the pharmacy there is a tunnel which one of the Open Day visitors suggested might be a conduit such as those used for water distribution in parts of Richmond. We are investigating further. If anyone reading this has information that would help us identify more of its history we would love to hear from you!

Fundraising Activities...

Christmas Carol Concert

On December 3 the Centre held its first Christmas Concert in Richmond Parish Church for which we thank the rector, Canon Julian Reindorp. The event was hosted by the BBC television presenter, Mark Curry. Dame Eileen Atkins and Prunella Scales kindly participated in the event with readings and were joined by Nigel Lawrence who read some of his amusing poems.

The choir, St Peter's Singers of Hammersmith, under their Musical Director, Duncan Aspden, opened the concert with the beautiful 14th Century 'Quem pastores laudavere' following which there was plenty of audience participation in our favourite carols.

Bridge Event

In January, Independent Charity Events (ICE), organised a bridge lunch at Pembroke Lodge. Over £3,000 was raised and the Centre is extremely grateful to the Members of the Committee of ICE for this initiative.

Richmond May Fair Ball

The Holly Lodge Centre considered itself very fortunate and privileged to be chosen as the charity to benefit from the Ball this year alongside the community and education outreach programme of the Orange Tree Theatre. The event, attended by around 460 guests, was held on Richmond Green with several local celebrity guests. The evening resulted in a wonderful donation of over £38,000 to the Centre.



The marquee was decorated with children's paintings depicting the word 'bow'. These were the winning entries.

More Fundraising Activities...

Learning to write with real ink and dip pens



Learning to wash the Victorian way

Children examine articles which will be in 'Palmer's Chymist'

Richmond Park Open Day

On a glorious Sunday in September the Holly Lodge Centre was open to the public as part of the Richmond Park Open Day and visitors were able to see the Centre 'in action'. Children were able to make butterflies in the main classroom and be treated to face painting or leap about on the bouncy castle in the picnic area – as well as enjoying a picnic, as the sun made one of its rare appearances of the summer during the Open Day.

Sue Underwood from Battersea Social Education Centre, and her mother, Joan, organised a tombola and many volunteers helped with this and with selling bric-a-brac. Altogether over £850 was raised during the day but more importantly 2,300 visitors were able to experience the work of the Centre first hand – a golden opportunity for increasing our profile and recruiting new volunteers and friends.



Children enjoy pond dipping



What did they find in the pond!

Richmond Park Reflections

We were delighted that HRH Princess Alexandra was able to come again to this popular event, organised annually for us by Paddy Hughes in Pembroke Lodge. As always the audience enthusiastically welcomed 'old' friends on the stage, Kathryn Hide, Jacki Piper, Joanna Garcia and Phil Wilcox, among others.

HRH Princess Alexandra, Royal Patron, at Richmond Park Reflections with Simon Richards and Mike Fitt. Sir Ken Knight, (left) Deputy Lieutenant for Richmond received the Princess.



Infected with the Holly Lodge Centre Virus

A Message from the Chairman of the Trustees, David Thomas

I first felt the effect in 1992 at the first Richmond Park Open Day. Holly Lodge was in its embryonic stage - Dr Pat Ealey was working there part time while she was still a student. I had a look round the facilities, which at that time really just consisted of a classroom and not much more. The plans for creating a Centre which would open the Park to so many more visitors with special needs struck a chord and left a lasting impression on me.

The Holly Lodge Centre officially opened in 1994 and in 1996 I was asked to become a trustee of The Richmond Park Charitable Trust, which at that time incorporated the Holly Lodge Centre.

It was very apparent at the trustees' meetings that the Centre was starting to expand into many more activities and within a short period of time it was agreed by the trustees and the chairman, Peter Beckwith, that it would be sensible to create the Holly Lodge Centre as a separate entity. The Centre officially became a charity in 1999. We are therefore shortly to celebrate our first 10 years.

This is when my involvement with the Holly Lodge Centre became a very important part of my life. The first trustees were Phil Swallow, Malcolm Childs and me; we received huge support from Mike Fitt who, as a former Park Superintendent, was very involved with starting the Centre.

Since those early days I have seen the Centre grow and develop, whilst it almost seems as if nothing much is happening - the Victorian classroom, dipping ponds, Victorian garden, nature trail and of course the fantastic murals have all appeared. We are now in the process of developing the chemist shop, which will give our visitors a taste of what they looked like in Victorian times - a big difference from the supermarket type pharmacy we see today.

I am of course very fortunate to have Joan Braune, Sue Hume, Daniel Hearsom, Robert Holmes, Robert Scalzo and Phil Swallow



*The mural
being enjoyed as
a teaching tool*

as my fellow trustees. Their hard work and dedication are reflected in the continuing development and achievements of the Holly Lodge Centre and our fund raising events. We are also lucky to have a special Project Manager, Dr Pat Ealey.

Simon Richards and the whole Richmond Park team, offer so much help. The Royal Parks education officer, Toni Asserati is a tremendous support in organising courses and projects, which will benefit schools and ensure we are keeping up with National Curriculum requirements.

All of us are fully aware that nothing would have been possible without the terrific hard work and encouragement of our wonderful volunteers.

I would like to take this opportunity to say 'Thank You' to all of our volunteers, supporters and my fellow trustees for their hard work, which has enabled the Holly Lodge Centre to become the centre of excellence we know today.



*David Thomas (centre) with (from left to right) Dr Pat Ealey, Joan Braune, Pippa Hogg,
Head of the Royal Ballet Junior School, Su Hume and Daniel Hearsom*

Star Supporters

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

- ★ HRH Princess Alexandra, Royal Patron
- ★ Pippa Hogg, Melanie Brice and all the staff and pupils of the Royal Ballet School for their support
- ★ The Hearsom Family Trust for their generosity and help during the year
- ★ Paddy Hughes and all the performers at Richmond Park Reflections and everyone who participated and supported the Christmas Carol Concert
- ★ Liz Carran, Gillian Thorpe and Peter Forster and all members of the May Fair Ball Committee
- ★ TENORS Un LIMITED for performing at our annual dinner and everyone who donated auction and raffle prizes for that occasion
- ★ Simon Richards and all staff and contractors of the Royal Parks, the Metropolitan Police based in Richmond Park and the Friends of Richmond Park
- ★ Eileen Acheson Gray, Carol Martin, The Calleva Foundation, Gladys Wightwick Trust, Marsh Christian Trust, Jenny and Charles Carter Trust, Val D'Arda Association, Leopold de Rothschild Trust, Harvington School, the Worshipful Company of Cutlers, Blakedown, Raymond Oppenheimer Foundation, Miles Trust, FJ Wallis Charitable Trust, Woodroffe Benton Foundation, Malden Society for Model Engineers, Richmond Rotary, The Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Club and Wimbledon Village Stables for donations in money and kind during the year.
- ★ Malcolm Childs for running in the Half Marathon and raising over £500
- ★ The London Business School and Media.com for helping us maintain the bird hide and the surrounding area in the pen ponds plantation

'a hidden gem in a magical place'

Dr Pat's Casebook

The Holly Lodge Centre thrives on working together with other people and organisations. Partnerships play a vital role in every aspect of running the Centre. Our two most important partnerships are working with the Royal Parks and of course with our volunteers. We would not be here as a charity without their co-operation. This started me thinking about all the other people we work with.

The group visits run smoothly with the help of the leaders (teachers and carers), who bring them and the knowledge of their often complex needs. It's much easier to help someone understand something when the leader can advise us on the best way to communicate with a person with a disability.

We belong to a variety of professional organisations. Meeting like-minded people can stimulate ideas and joint projects. The West London Museum Group has 'loan boxes' of equipment, which can be borrowed for special activities, e.g. Victorian costumes. These loan boxes were put together by the group and are shared and maintained by them. Even the Botanic Gardens Education Network has very relevant training days and conferences. Attending meetings or conferences which don't seem immediately



Pat enjoyed having her face painted at the Richmond Park Open Day and now knows what it feels like!

linked to the Centre's activities can help us think 'outside the box'.

Our latest partnership project using shadow puppets as a teaching tool involves two new partnerships – you can read more about this on the front page of the newsletter. Joint ventures are an adventure and result in fresh new initiatives and developments which help to enable the Holly Lodge Centre to go forward.

Project Manager *Pat Ealey*



David Dalley perfecting his signwriting on the milk float, which had been donated to the Centre by Mrs Denton de Gray

A Volunteer's Story

I have been an artist volunteer for just over one year and in particular have been doing a lot of work with the Whitton CRC group. We usually meet on Mondays and a great rapport has been built up with the very differing personalities in the group – they always want to come back for more. It is such a joy helping them paint and express themselves while making sculpture with clay and other materials. One of the highlights was doing paintings with them on canvas for their pirate party and seeing them all dressed up as pirates on the night of their dance at York House, Twickenham.

I also worked with Mark Parker from 'kitevibe' during the Big Draw in 2007 inspiring children to make and design kites – seeing their faces when they first flew their colourful kites was fantastic.

Helping *Creeping Toad* with leaf printing with different age groups to produce nature books of Richmond Park and working

with Linden Bridge School looking for inspiration for the Royal Parks Deckchair Dreams project were other memorable tasks. In the latter case the Royal Parks include many schools and well-known artists in designing a deck chair. The winners have their design printed and made up. I then went to the auction where a Tracey Emin deckchair sold for £17,000 and the proceeds went to the Royal Parks Foundation.

My latest project has been restoring the 19th century Mrs Sawyer milk dairy cart – doing the sign writing has brought back memories of sign writing on yachts in Suffolk to earn a buck while going through art school many years ago.

One of the funny moments of the year was when my wife came home to find me whistling bird noises on the phone to a researcher from the 'One Show' as they were looking for the new Percy Edwards – whistling bird songs is something I enjoy doing and I have been known to whistle while out walking with the groups. *[I did not get the role with the BBC.]*

This year I have enjoyed working with and meeting many talented volunteers at the Holly Lodge Centre and hope many years will follow.

David Dalley

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:

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

email: hlcinfo@thehollylodgecentre.org.uk

www.thehollylodgecentre.org.uk

Stepping Stones is compiled and edited by Joan Braune with help from Hugh Bostock. Photography is by Sue Hume, Dr. Pat Ealey, Karen Heron, Mandy Pudney and Di Wheatley. It is designed by Elaine Nipper and printed by K and N Press Limited.