



CHISWICK HOUSE FRIENDS

NEWSLETTER Autumn 2020

Charity No 289907

Patron: Lord Burlington



Nothing could represent better the resilient spirit of the Chiswick community this summer than their support of the Chiswick Festival - 20 nights of music and comedy organised at six weeks notice under full compliance with Covid restrictions and a wonderful atmosphere of goodwill and support in the peaceful surroundings of the Walled Garden. Above is Emma Fry enthraling her audience with her solo violin and group performance.

You can read inside Xanthe Arvanitakis, Director of the CHG Trust, explaining how she has met and exceeded her fundraising target of £120,000 in 120 days, including a webinar series, Dog Treasure Hunt, plant sales and culminating in a highly successful charity auction.

We have also contributed through the Chiswick House Lego model, of which more inside, which has raised £25,000 from almost 500 donors - a third of the way to our £75,000 target. Please continue to support this, and let's get the model built!

John Armstrong, Chairman, Chiswick House Friends

Letter from Xanthe Arvanitakis, Director of the Chiswick House and Gardens Trust

Thank you!

Three weeks into my new job as the Director of Chiswick House and Gardens – I was facing what seemed an impossible challenge. The need to pull my team, whom I had only just met, together and work out how we were going to cut our costs overnight, work from home, keep the Gardens open and find new income so we didn't drain all our reserves. I launched the **#welovechiswickhouse** campaign and set the target of £120,000 in 120 days. I had no idea whether we would actually do it but knew we had to be ambitious due to the loss of £500,000 overnight. With incredible commitment from the team, both staff and volunteers, we have done it!

My first step was to build a team of volunteers to support our fundraising campaign – Fazina Blanchard has worked tirelessly leading all our marketing activity. Mil Vukovic Smart has been instrumental in helping get all our donation tools set up and then led our Charity Auction team. Lily Henbrey worked with our team to take on all our social media and Matt Jones put together our Chiswick House Art Competition and "Adopt A" scheme (coming soon).

All have been working hand-in-hand with the skeleton team who have worked tirelessly throughout the summer: Nicki Thomas, Rozanna Colquhoun, Sarah Smith, Zak Hulstrom, Caroline Merritt and Alex Burns in the office, and Jake Lonergan, Geraldine King, George Sydenham, Chris Greer and Ellie Edmonds in the grounds. It has been a genuine team effort.



Art winners - Jenny Glenton (L) and Taylor Beau Nolan (R)

What next?

We have identified three strategic projects to broaden engagement with our visitors and local communities:

- Kids Outdoor Play - exciting and inclusive play-area and programme for all our local communities
- Volunteering - a programme to improve wellbeing for vulnerable communities in Hounslow
- House interpretation - refreshed and engaging visitor experience for the reopening in April 2021.

These three strategic objectives have been fed into all our fundraising bids to our statutory funders as well as Trusts and Foundations.

With the ongoing pandemic, we also need to grow our sources of income by exploring how we can better use some of our underutilised spaces and grounds.

In the meantime, we continue to ensure that we are funding the essential maintenance of our gardens and grounds with the valuable support of our volunteer gardeners.



Jeremy Vine promoting the #welovechiswick fundraising campaign with Xanthe Arvanitakis

We put together a programme of Summer fundraisers: plant fundraiser, Open Day for families, a webinar series, and all culminating in the Chiswick House Charity Auction. Simultaneously, the Chiswick House Friends Lego brick model fundraiser was launched to support the #welovechiswickhouse campaign. We have received lots of positive feedback about the Lego fundraiser, and that it's so much fun to see the building of it progress!

With grit, hard work and the support of our local community and volunteers we have done it. We raised over £127,555 (beating our own target!) – of which the Lego fundraiser has contributed £20,000 and the Dog Show Committee £5,000.

Thank you to all the Friends. It would not have been possible without your support – not just the income but spreading the word, attending the events and your generous contributions to the Charity Auction.



The Trust's gardening team presenting the first Webinar

We have set out our vision and ambitions in our 10 year Business Plan which can be found in the "News" section on our website (www.chgt.org.uk). Our vision is to be: *A special place to delight, educate and be inspired by our 300 years of stories of influence, design and environment. For everyone everyday.*

We want to hear from you

Chiswick House Friends represent our most committed and loyal supporters, and so your feedback is essential for us to achieve our vision. Please, if you can, take the time to read the 10-year plan and feedback to info@chgt.org.uk by 30 October.

And finally, we have one more webinar being held on Wednesday 14 October – thanks to the Dog Show Committee and Dogs Trust. Please visit our website to register (it's free to attend!)

Xanthe Arvanitakis



Part-completed model at the Chiswick House Charity Auction with the Mayor of Hounslow, Tony Louki

The model build continues apace as we enter our fifth month of fundraising. Since June, we have raised over £21,000 in on-line donations, plus £3,000 in off-line donations and another £1,500 promised. In the photo above, the main House (with the steps) is almost all donated, the East Wing has been built for show, but is not yet donated, and the West Wing and Summer Parlour / Curved Corridor have just been outlined in bricks to show where they will go.

In terms of outings, the model has been shown at the Chiswick Festival, at the Hogarth Youth Club, at the Summer Fair and at the recent Charity Auction.



Model at the Chiswick Festival, August

The 500 or so on-line donors - including many of you, our members - have left us heart-warming messages saying how much they appreciate the park, especially that it has been kept open over the Covid period....



Paul Cooney of Horton and Garton, our first commercial sponsor

We are about one third of the way to our £75,000 target - all of which will be donated to Chiswick House and Gardens.

Once the model is complete, it can be used as an educational and inspirational resource for adults and children, showing them something of what the House used to be like, and the features that make it such an iconic building.

The model is also an accurate enough representation that we also plan for it to be used to involve the local community in the next steps of the development of the House, so they can see in a practical way what is proposed.

"Thank you for providing the residents of Chiswick and beyond a most beautiful place of refuge and sanity during these crazy times."

"We love Chiswick House. We got married here 7 years ago today, on a beautiful day surrounded by friends and family. So we're donating £10 for every year of our marriage. x x"

We have given two webinars on the model that have been well received - one as part of the CHG Trust campaign and one to the local Rotary Club, with whom we have also been working to raise commercial sponsorship.

But above all we are reliant on you, our members, to support us and help fill the great hole in this year's budget caused by Covid.

So if you have not yet bought bricks, please think about doing so - and if you have, please consider donating for some more.... All through our Just Giving page

Justgiving.com/campaign/ChiswickHouseLegoModel

Lakeside Views by Richard Sales

During the very hot summer, in late May, the lake surface was covered by the green algae, *spyrogyra*. Despite continuous cleaning from the bank it wasn't until mid-August that it was cleared. We have not had so severe a problem before, probably caused by the heat and lack of saline Thames water due to less filling required by the repaired automatic system.

However, the system broke down again in mid-July requiring large amounts of Thames water to be let in manually, the salinity of which finally killed the algae.

In August, the Amphitheatre pond ramp, which is secured to the edge to allow water bird young to climb out of the water, was seen floating in the pond.



Hedgehog in coot's nest on the Amphitheatre Pond

On closer inspection it was found that a coot had built a nest on it and a large hedgehog had also taken up residence on it! A rescue was carried out including a wader-wearing park ranger, Jake.



Ranger Jake Lonergan performing the rescue

The breeding season for birds has been very mixed. Our male swans nested from late March until late July, no young of course, but they scared off the nesting Canada Geese and so no goslings. The Egyptian geese flew away over the summer so no goslings either. Mallard young were severely predated by heron, magpie and crow until a super female hatched 10 ducklings in August all of which are still here and almost fully grown.

Coot and moorhen have both bred well especially those nesting in the southern pool free from predators.

To end on a sad note, Dot Beeson who funded the Swan Sanctuary in the 1980s, who has helped us so many times, passed away in May. Her family are carrying on with the good work.

Dog Treasure Hunt

Whilst the Chiswick House Dog Show scheduled for 20 September this year had to be cancelled, it was decided to 'remember' it by having a re-run of the 2017 "Sherlock Bones" Treasure Hunt.

The (canine) clues were all placed in the windows of shops and cafés in and around Chiswick High Road (thank you Chiswick Cameras, Chiswick Pets, Dog Town, Hack & Veldt, Insider Dealings, John D Wood, Lea and Sandeman, Macken Brothers, Potpourri, and Tamp).

Five teams (which had to consist of at least one adult and one dog) answered all the clues correctly, and this led them to the Patte D'Oie in Chiswick House grounds.

The event was sponsored by Wolfe Vets, with prizes kindly donated by James Bennett (at Wolfe Vets), Dog Town and Chiswick Cameras.

The winners were Team Honey Thorne – Honey is pictured here with Sue Thorne in the Patte D'Oie.



Winners Honey with Sue Thorne

Other News

Membership

Since the launch of our Lego fund-raising campaign in May, we have received a welcome number of new applications for membership, and now have over 600 members. We are grateful to those who have returned their Gift Aid Declaration, which is a great help to our finances & administration. **Please could those who are eligible but have not yet returned their Gift Aid forms do so.**

Friends Events

No Friends events are planned for the rest of the year, although we are waiting to see if a Carol Concert may be possible in December - we'll let you know.

Published by the Chiswick House Friends

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