



CHISWICK HOUSE FRIENDS

NEWSLETTER Spring 2019

Charity No 289907

Patron: Lord Burlington



An early morning in February heralds spring and hopefully a beautiful summer.

2019 is a significant year for the Chiswick House Friends as it is 35 years since our founding in 1984. In this newsletter, we look back at these years and what we have been able to achieve for the House and Gardens.

Our biggest regret this year is that we have had to cancel the 2019 Friends Opera - more about this on the back page. We hope to re-launch the Friends Opera in 2020.

John Armstrong

Chiswick House and Gardens Trust News

Caroline Busby, Interim Director of Chiswick House and Gardens Trust, gives us an update. Caroline was appointed Head of Finance and Resources at the Trust in February 2018, and as Interim Director in January 2019 following Clare O'Brien's departure to take up a new role as CEO of the Mall Galleries. She is a qualified accountant with over 20 years' experience working in the City. Caroline has lived in Chiswick for a number of years and says she was delighted to be given the opportunity to work in such a beautiful and historic location with people who have such passion for the Estate. She will continue in her present role until a permanent Director is recruited.

Dear Chiswick House Friends

It's now officially spring and the gardens are looking lovely with the spring flowers and blossoms emerging. The camellias bloomed earlier than last year because of the milder weather, and the Camellia Show was a great success. This year we ran a 'Camellia Celebration Weekend' at which we hosted a competition, supported by the International Camellia Society, for members of the public to enter their own camellia blooms. The winners included some of our own volunteers as well as people from further afield.

Over the last few months, our gardeners, assisted by our valued volunteer team, have been preparing the Italian gardens, tending the camellias (including lots of leaf cleaning) and trimming the trees on Dukes Avenue. In addition, many hours and lots of hard work have gone into the building of a Knot Garden in the Kitchen Garden. Knot Gardens are gardens of formal design in a square outline, and are Tudor in origin. Our Knot Garden is designed to reflect the floor plan of Chiswick House, and will be grown entirely of edible herbs and plants. Please come and visit it on one of our Kitchen Garden Open Days.



Hard work digging the Knot Garden

Our events team has been busy filling up the summer diary with a variety of events - there is something for everyone, we hope. All events are listed on the 'What's On' section of our website.

The House team has recently opened the doors for a new season. This year our team will be reinforced with volunteers acting as room interpreters and providing free tours on the days the House is open. We hope this will improve our visitor experience and

help our visitors learn more about Lord Burlington and his villa. The House will be open from 1 April to 31 October: remember that Friends get unlimited free entry to the House. Our new House opening times can be found on our website.

Our Patrons' scheme continues to grow. Events in the last few months have included a trip to the Foundling Museum, which Lady Burlington helped to create, and a guided tour of the camellias in the conservatory. Future events include talks by the House Curator and a trip to nearby newly-opened Pitzhanger Manor. If you love Chiswick House and Gardens and wish to be more involved, please contact us to find out more about becoming a patron.

My priorities as Interim Director over the next few months are to ensure that the Gardens are maintained to the high standard we have become used to (we will be entering the London in Bloom awards again this year), to have a successful season in the House and to successfully deliver our programme of events. These events are vital to help fund the upkeep of the House and Gardens.

As always, the Trust is very grateful to the Chiswick House Friends for their on-going support in helping to ensure that the House and Gardens remain an asset for all to enjoy. We hope to see you soon!

Caroline Busby, Interim Director

Chiswick House and Gardens Trust

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Chiswick House Friends News

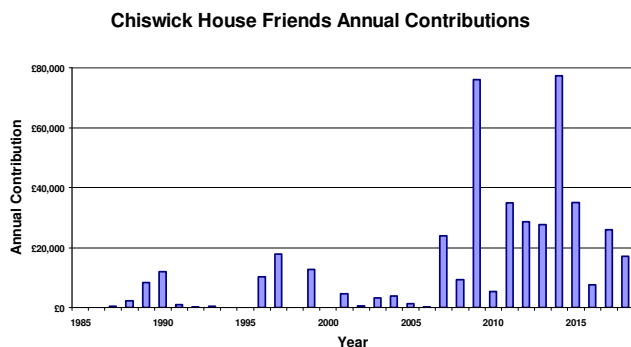
Friends for 35 Years

The Friends exists to support the House and Gardens on behalf of the local community, but is a completely independent body from the Trust that runs Chiswick House and Gardens. We work closely with the Trust and most of our funding goes to support its work. This year it will be 35 years since the Friends was formed: in this article we look at some highlights.

Since the Friends were formed in 1984, we have contributed £446,000 to more than 100 causes of one kind or another. Broadly, these contributions can be summarised under the following headings:

Garden Restoration & Contents	£52k
Cascade Restoration	£18k
Items for House, eg paintings	£73k
Venus Statue	£60k
Melon House Restoration	£100k
Camellia Festival Sponsorship	£25k
Equipment (eg Warden's buggy)	£21k
Contributions from Dog Show	£52k
Grants, Education, Concerts, Talks	£40k
Other	£5k

The contributions peaked in the years from 2009, when we were running the Opera, as can be seen from the graph below:



We have always appreciated garden furniture, and designed and commissioned three benches over the years - two for the House and one for the Patte d'Oie in memory of Ted Fawcett. The House benches were installed in 2005, see below:



Pair of benches on the SW wall of House

In 2009, we commissioned and installed a replacement Venus statue for the Rose Garden from a sculptor in Yorkshire who carved the figure from a slab of Portland stone. In September this year, she will have been in place for 10 years!



Installation of the Venus de Medici

We raised substantial funds over ten years by running the Friends Opera over one, and later two, evenings. Our stalwart Opera Committee - now sadly disbanded - was keen to fund a single large project with some of the revenue, and over the period 2014/15 suggested that we should donate £100,000 towards restoration of the Melon House. This was originally built in the nineteenth century and provides much needed propagation space for the Gardens. It has now been brilliantly restored.



Inside the restored Melon House

At present, most of our income goes towards support for events such as the Camellia Festival. However, we have made several proposals to the Chiswick House and Gardens Trust for new projects to support its work, and we look forward to engaging with The Trust on further initiatives.

The Friends have always sought to keep the local community engaged and informed. Apart from the website and twice yearly newsletter, we organised an extensive survey of our members in 2008 to find out exactly what they wanted in the £12m Lottery-funded restoration of the Gardens. Their views were sought on the café, the treatment of the Northern Wilderness and the proposals for further dog restrictions. We took the resulting information to the Lottery Project team and managed to get some of the more draconian proposals modified to an acceptable level.

A good deal of our funding has gone on education, including a grant of £6000 to the Chiswick Community School and the sponsoring of a number of lectures, concerts and tours.

We have always supported those stalwarts of the Gardens, the dog-walkers, and we installed the black dog-litter bins at the time of the Lottery project. We also host the annual Dog Show - now the most popular of its kind in West London, and our brilliant Dog Show team is already planning the September 2019 event.

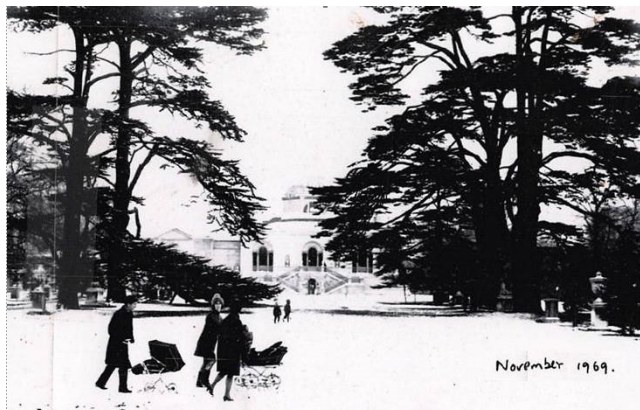


The Friends Autumn Dog Show

In the House, we have contributed towards the purchase of various items including four paintings by Rysbrack which depict scenes of the Gardens and were commissioned by Lord Burlington in the 1730s, and a pair of eighteenth century giltwood tables with inlaid marble tops.

Cedars of Lebanon in the Gardens

One of our Trustees sent us this picture from 1969 - fifty years ago.



She (Felicity Crawley) can be seen pushing the pram in the foreground! Notice that there were then four cedars, in two pairs. The pair furthest away from the camera have now gone; compare the image below taken this year:



If you have an old photograph of the House or Gardens that you would like to share with us, please get in touch using our contact details below.

Carol Concert 2018



The Carol Concert was held in front of the House last December in very cold, wet weather! In spite of this there was a cheerful gathering of Friends and visitors. A big thank-you to the Addison Singers and the children of St Mary's Primary School, Chiswick for their wonderful performances.

Spring Update from Richard Sales

Our male pair of swans are starting to make a nest, however unlikely this seems. The pair of Egyptian Geese, whose breeding tree fell down last June, have still not yet found a replacement nesting tree, but they are checking out a cedar. Coots are building

nests already and Canada Geese are checking their previous year's nest sites.

Our other winter residents, Shoveler and Little Grebe, have left. There has been no sign of any Kingfisher, but our Brentford-based Herons are daily visitors and the Cormorants feature regularly.



Egyptian Goose (photo courtesy Paul Brown)

The Cascade has been out of action since last September due to an electrical fault related to high water levels. This is the responsibility of English Heritage, who want to carry out a major redesign to alleviate the problem for good, requiring extensive work and therefore cost. This has taken six months so far with no progress that I can see. While waiting, I would hope that a temporary repair could have been done as in the past. The aeration and flow provided by the Cascade is essential for the quality of the water in the lake. Our lake was one of the few still bodies of water that did not suffer last year from algae or botulism because of the very hot dry weather (as noted by The Swan Sanctuary at Shepperton last summer).

(Editor's note: we'd like to thank Richard for his regular contribution to the newsletters. Richard spent his career flying for BA and Singapore Airlines. He and his wife Jacky (a stalwart of the Dog Show Committee) started walking their dog in the Gardens in 1987 and were appalled by their state, especially the lake. Richard immediately began removing abandoned bikes from the water and there began his passion. He was the first Goosefoot volunteer!)

2019 Friends Events

- 23 May:** 7pm Coro Choral Concert in the House
- 3 June:** 7:30pm CH Friends AGM in the House
- 3 July:** 7pm Junior Royal Academy Concert (House)
- 17 July:** 7pm CHF and CHGT Party (Conservatory)
- 22 Sept:** 11am CH Friends Dog Show

Opera: *sadly we have had to cancel this year's CH Friends Opera. The Heathrow flight path was changed, from the provisional southern runway when we booked the date last year, to the northern runway (with unacceptable noise levels) when confirmed by Heathrow in January. By this time other event dates had been booked by the Trust and we really had no option but to cancel. We will try again next year.*

Published by the Chiswick House Friends

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