

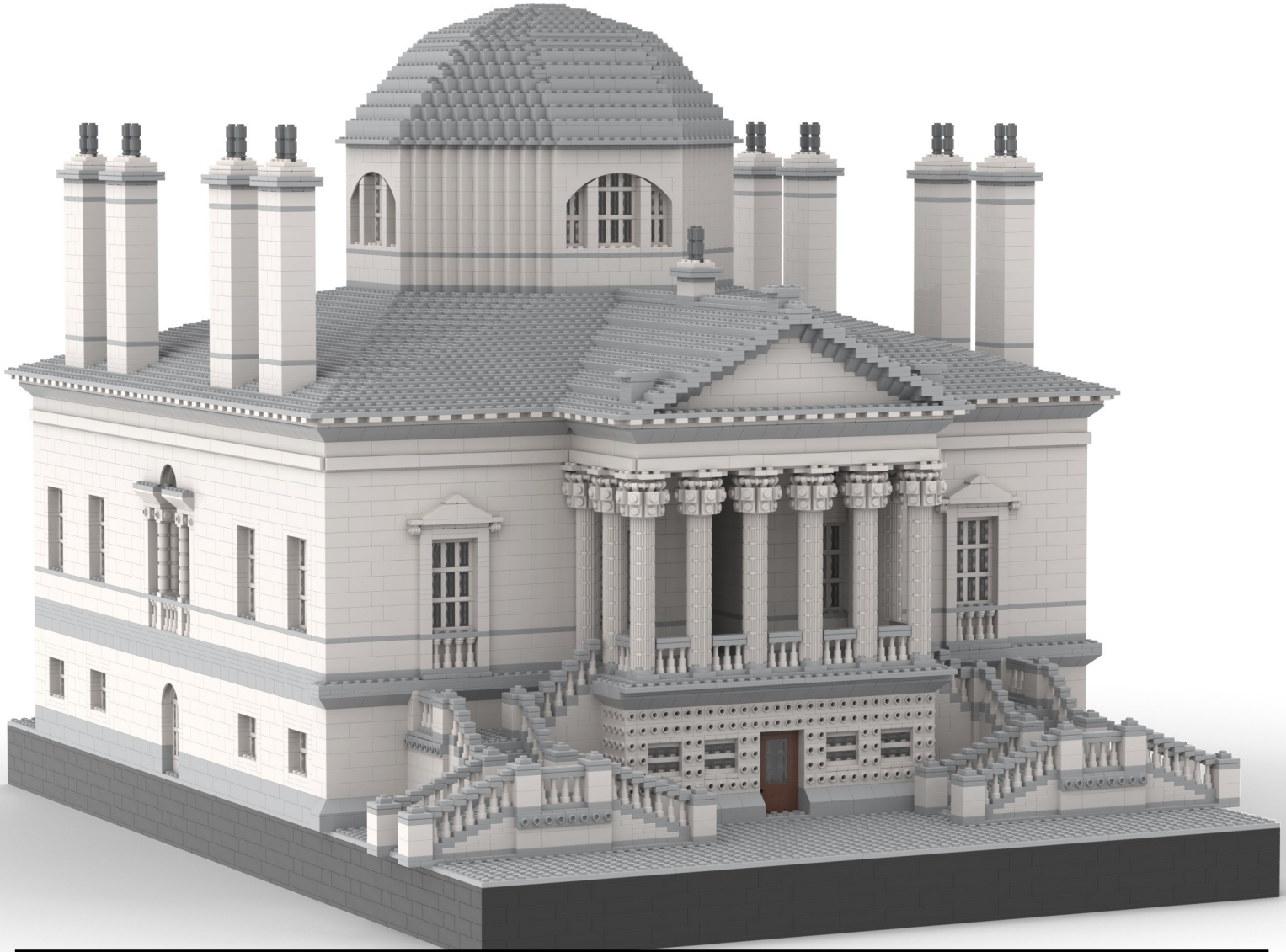


CHISWICK HOUSE FRIENDS

NEWSLETTER Spring 2020

Charity No 289907

Patron: Lord Burlington



This has been a difficult time for all of us. It is ironic that at a time when the Estate has looked particularly stunning in the Spring weather, the Chiswick House and Gardens Trust, which manages it, describes the situation as "desperate". The Trust has lost most of its commercial income for this year, and the shortfall is likely to be £500,000. All the more credit to the new Director Xanthe Arvanitakis and the Trustees for keeping the Gardens open, for which we are all grateful, so that the local community can at least get some relief in the calm and stillness of this beautiful place.

Our job as Friends is to support the Trust and benefit the local community especially at this time. We have already donated funds for the repair of the cascade, and a further significant sum for IT equipment to help Trust staff work from home. Sadly, we have had to cancel our own programme of summer meetings and events, including our AGM, but hope the Dog Show will still be able to take place in late September.

Last year, before all this started, we commissioned for fund-raising, educational and display purposes the design and bricks for a 2m long Lego® brick model of the House. We have now set in motion our fundraising campaign to help keep the park going. In exchange for donations through our newly launched website www.chfriends.org.uk, we are building this historically accurate model, with regular online visual updates so that you can give your support while watching it take shape, brick by brick. The campaign was launched last week and seems to have caught the public mood, as donations exceeded £5000 in the first three days. But we still have a long way to go before reaching our £75,000 target. We plan to move the model to the café when possible, for its construction to be taken over by local schoolchildren. Do please donate generously for this project and help keep our park going.

John Armstrong, Chairman, Chiswick House Friends

Friends Report for 2019

We would ordinarily report on our previous year's activities at our June AGM. However as we have had to cancel it this year, we are including here a short report on what we have been doing.

Our events last year included:

- sponsorship of the Camellia Festival
- AGM in May
- Coro Chamber Concert in June
- Junior Royal Academy of Music Concert in July
- Friends and Volunteers Party in July
- Dog Show in September
- Christmas Carols in December.

Our donations to the Trust last year included:

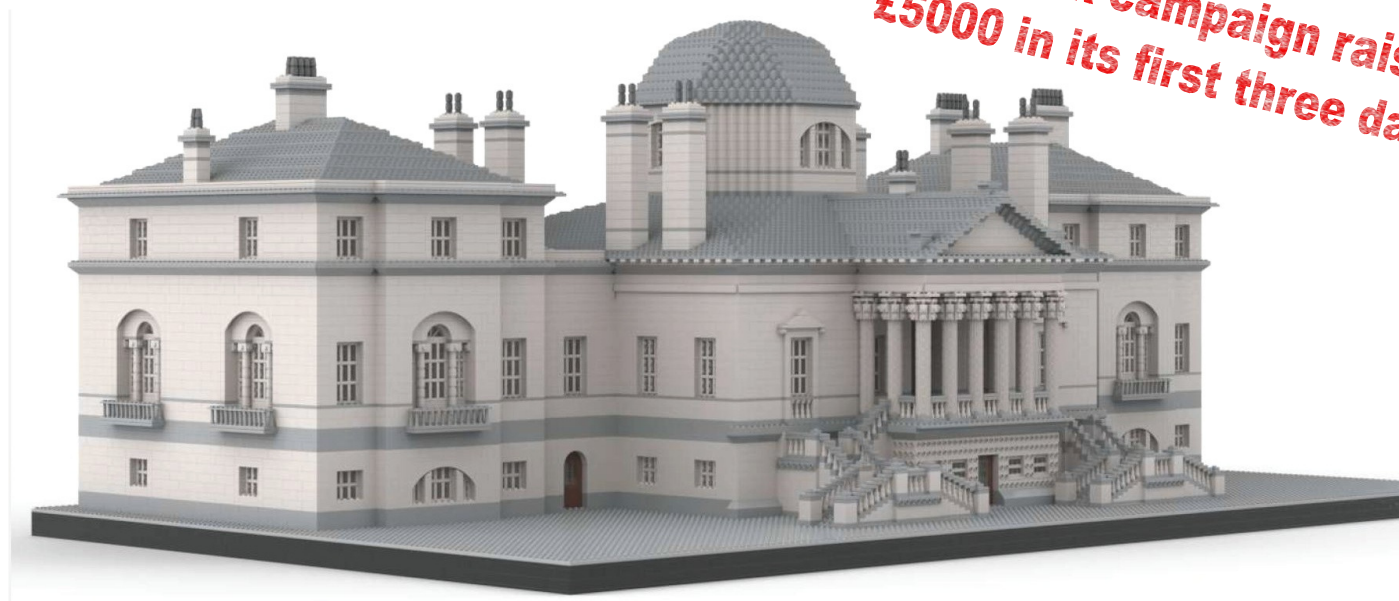
- £5,000 from the Dog Show towards the Gardens
- £1,500 part funding for Conservatory repair
- £10,000 for the Camellia Festival.

Our 2019 surplus was £1,469. Year to date, we have donated £10k for emergency IT equipment for the Trust and £6k for the Cascade repair. As at May 2020 we have adequate reserves including for the model.

Our Trustees normally retire after three years' service. If they are willing to continue to serve, their re-election is put to members at the AGM. In its absence this year, we cannot have the usual member vote, so we have held a special meeting in accordance with our Trust Deed. We have elected Simon Scott-Taylor as a new Trustee, and re-elected John Armstrong, Hilary Whalley and Angela Purtil, all of whom confirmed their willingness to continue to serve after expiry of their three year terms. If you have any comments, please email us.

Nicole Ruduss is standing down as a Trustee. We are most grateful to Nicole for her significant contribution to the Friends and to the Dog Show over the years.

The Chiswick House Lego® Brick Model



Computer image of Lego® brick model of Chiswick House showing the wings added in the 1780s

Earlier this year, we decided to commission a Lego® brick model of Chiswick House. At the time, the purpose of this model was to help inform visitors to

Coronavirus - Impact

As well as the AGM, sadly we have also had to cancel our Coro Choral Concert on 21 May and the Junior Royal Academy of Music Concert on 7 July. It is also unlikely that we will be able to hold the annual joint Friends and Volunteers Summer Party, but we still hope the Dog Show can go ahead as usual. We will keep you in touch with developments.

As noted on the front cover, the lockdown has affected all other events in the House and Gardens: most have either been cancelled or postponed. This leaves the Chiswick House and Gardens Trust in a financially desperate position, with most of its commercial income lost for 2020. This is its primary source of income as only 25% comes from public funds. Meanwhile costs can only be reduced to a certain extent through staff furlough - the wardens still have to patrol the Estate, the gardeners still have to tend the grounds, litter still needs to be removed and dog waste bins emptied.

We offered to help and were able to donate £10,000 towards upgraded computer equipment to enable those five Trust staff not furloughed to work effectively from home.

Meanwhile in April the London Borough of Hounslow put out a notice expecting all dogs to be kept on leads in its public spaces, including Chiswick House Gardens. After some clarification involving Sir Derek Myers, the Chairman of the Trust, this edict was modified to say that the dog rules would be as before in the Gardens, with the request that at busy times dogs should be on leads to aid social distancing.

The House remains closed, but the café has re-opened for takeaways. We are very grateful to the Trust staff for all their efforts to keep the Gardens open and looking so beautiful.

**Buy-a-Brick campaign raises
£5000 in its first three days!**

the House about its history and significance, and to help raise funds to support the work of the Trust. Now that we know about the devastating effect of

the shutdown on finances, the reason for fundraising is that much more acute. This is an exciting project and we hope that all our members and their families will help by purchasing bricks and watching the model grow.

The model has been designed and supplied by Brick Galleria, the company employing the only Lego® Certified Practitioner in the UK. It is at 1/37th scale, with 50,000 bricks, and will be two metres long. Building of the model has just started. Due to public gathering restrictions, it is being built offsite initially, with daily updates posted on our website. Once the café re-opens we plan to move it there, for assembly to recommence assisted by Chiswick School children.

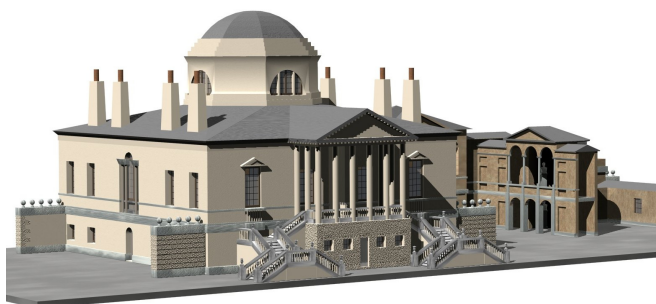
The model will be built in three configurations to illustrate the architectural development of the House.

Version 1 - Chiswick House was conceived and built by Lord Burlington as a neo-classical villa in the 1720s, as a showcase for his architectural capability, as a temple of the arts where he kept precious drawings and paintings, and as a meeting place for his friends. It was not designed as a domestic dwelling, being rather small and lacking basic domestic facilities.



J Rigaud's engraving of Burlington's Villa and Jacobean House (courtesy Historic England Archive)

Instead, Burlington and his family lived in a Jacobean mansion (shown in the above engraving), situated close to the Villa and linked to it by a two-storey building called the Loggia. The Jacobean mansion was demolished in the 1780s.



3D computer model of the original Villa

Version 2. Many of our members may not be aware that the House was extended fifty years after being built by the addition of two huge flanking wings. These were added in the 1780s by the 5th Duke of Devonshire, grandson of Lord Burlington. He wanted to rectify the rather impractical arrangements he had inherited from his grandfather; and turn the House into a comfortable domestic abode.

The House with these wings will be the largest of the three model versions and the first one to be built.



Early 20th century photo of House with wings (courtesy Historic England Archive)

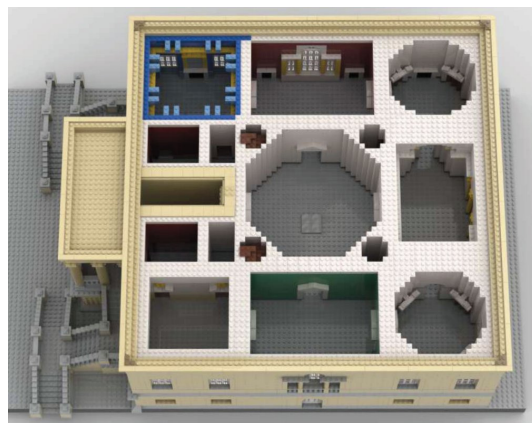
These wings stayed in place for the next 160 years - throughout Queen Victoria's reign - and were removed in the 1950s because of rot and war damage. On their removal, photographs and surveys were taken of exactly how they were constructed. This useful treasure trove of information helped us in the design of the wings for the Lego® model which will be detachable to show the way in which they were connected to the main House.



Computer image of Lego® brick model of W wing showing access

Version 3. The last configuration to be built is of course the Villa as it stands today. It is broadly similar to Burlington's original, except in not having the tall chimneys or Loggia.

For the design of the Lego® model, the first step was to build our own 3D computer model of the three versions of the House. This was not straightforward as there are few detailed plans, especially of Burlington's original design. However, we are grateful to Dr David Jacques and Juliet West, former trustees of the Trust, and to Esmé Whittaker, Curator, English Heritage, for supplying helpful additional information.



Computer view of inside of Lego® brick Villa, roof removed

From these model files, Brick Galleria were able to create the Lego® brick designs, and importantly, the build instructions for the schoolchildren to use.

The model is raising funds through the sale of individual bricks, mainly through our website. Our plan is that the pupils of Chiswick School will take on the building of the model once things return more to normal. It will take at least a year to build, depending on the rate of brick sales. Our plan is to make it mobile, so it can be displayed at different venues, for instance schools, fairs and so on.

Do please donate what you can, perhaps for a Lego lover - our new website is now live at www.chfriends.org.uk/lego-model - or you can find us at justgiving.com (type in "Chiswick House Lego Model")

16th Chiswick House Dog Show 2020

This year's Dog Show is planned for Sunday 20 September, and for our theme this year we are celebrating 50 years since the very first Glastonbury Festival (that very weekend!). This should give plenty of scope for the Fancy Dress class...

It takes over 150 volunteers (aged from 9 to 90) to put on the show, so if you feel you able to donate a couple of hours, do please let us know at: www.chiswickhousedogshow.org.uk/volunteer-sign-up



More up-to-date information will be available from: www.chiswickhousedogshow.org.uk

Spring Update from Richard Sales

As usual the coots are the first of our water birds to nest. There are currently seven nests being occupied, with the Classic Bridge coot ahead of the rest with nine chicks. Our male swan pair are now on their second nest of the season. At least five pairs of Canada Geese are noisily fighting for the three best nest sites mainly near the Park Road end of the lake. Our new pair of Egyptian Geese is yet to have a brood, so that means we have had no goslings since June 2018 when their nesting tree was blown down.

We have been visited by up to five herons daily from their Brentford home. Up to six nuthatches have been playing about in the old sweet chestnut tree in the grove. In the old 'blasted' Indian Bean Tree on the lawns coal tit and tree creeper have been seen nesting. A male wren has even been seen making a nest in a fluorescent life buoy housing at the southern pool. A double large robinia next to the Deer House has at least three current nesting tits.

After 20 months, we at last have a working cascade which will help keep our lake with the best possible water quality condition.

Chiswick House and Gardens Trust News

Letter from the new Trust Director



We welcome the new Director of the Chiswick House and Gardens Trust, Xanthe Arvanitakis, who joined in March 2020. Xanthe is an experienced leader in the heritage sector. With a new Chairman, several new Trustees and now a new Director, the renewed team at the Trust has been immediately thrown into the challenges of the current lockdown situation. We wish Xanthe well and will do our best to support her.

"Dear Friends

I was hoping to introduce myself and talk about future plans but unfortunately events have overtaken us and I have been catapulted into COVID-19 crisis management.

The impact of the Government guidance hit us very fast and we had to adapt rapidly. We have kept the Gardens open so that we can all enjoy the much needed space. We retained our gardeners and contractors who are carrying out essential maintenance, litter picking and cleansing. But we closed the Café, Conservatory and public toilets, and did not reopen the House itself.

We have secured our grants but this only covers 25% of our everyday costs. Our biggest financial challenge is the loss of income from the cancellation of events and weddings that usually covers our running costs. I have had to make some difficult decisions - furloughing most of our team and cutting costs where we can - but despite these measures we still have a shortfall of £500,000.

I have been in touch with many Friends, regular visitors and our volunteers, and have been overwhelmed by the kindness and offers of help. With this help we are launching a campaign and asking all visitors to Chiswick House to donate £5, or more if they can. Please keep an eye out for the posters and spread the word.

Thank you to the Friends for all your support so far. My working from home team are delighted with the new laptops and screens only made possible with the support of the Friends. And I am sure the Friends' Lego fundraiser will be a great success.

With best wishes and looking forward to meeting you all in person,

Xanthe Arvanitakis"

Published by the Chiswick House Friends

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