



CHISWICK HOUSE FRIENDS

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2015

Charity No 289907

Patron: Lord Burlington



Melon House Renovation Complete

Chiswick House Friends can report that the coming year will present some new challenges and opportunities. We are delighted that the Melon House, illustrated here and largely funded from the proceeds of our Summer Operas, is now complete. Now our task will principally be to support Chiswick House and Gardens Trust as they gradually take on the management of the House itself from English Heritage. This will be the last time that the Friends' energetic opera committee will be responsible for two nights of brilliant opera in the gardens: the event will subsequently be run by the Trust itself. However our Dog Show, which broke all records last year, will continue, and we shall be planning other events either outside or in the House. We continue to work closely with Clare O'Brien and her management team, and of course our general purpose remains to support the work they are doing for the Trust and indeed for all of us.

George Nissen

Chiswick House and Gardens Trust News

Fundraising Success

The Trust is delighted to have a dedicated fundraiser as part of the team. Jane Booth previously worked at the Wallace Collection, and has joined the Trust predominantly to focus on the fundraising strategy for 2015/16 that will enable the Trust to take on the management and running of Chiswick House from English Heritage in 2016.

As part of the ongoing fundraising, this year the Trust has raised £32,000 from the sale of memorial benches. The benches are seen by visitors as a wonderful way of remembering a loved one and to share happy times spent in the historic gardens. Bench sponsorship costs £4,000 for a period of ten years. All benches are made by skilled craftsmen, and are built using high-quality, long-lasting, FSC-certified hardwood. They are well sited throughout the Grade 1 listed landscape. Each bench will display a plaque with a personal dedication.

For further information on fundraising or enquiries about memorial benches please contact jane.booth@chgt.org.uk

Camellia Show 2015

We have had a wonderful start to the Camellia Show, breaking all previous records. The press coverage has been tremendous, particularly the national and global media interest in the propagation and conservation of the heritage Chiswick House camellia collection, and in the heritage varieties being available for visitors to buy exclusively through the Camellia Shop.



The first few days of the Show saw 3,000 visitors through the Conservatory and a near sell-out of the heritage camellia plants. As the show is free this year, it is also encouraging to report that the suggested £5 donation 'keep our camellias blooming' campaign has been very successful.



The camellia collection is looking wonderful with more blooms than ever, so it is hoped that as many of you will visit before March 29th and bring friends, family and visiting friends to admire the blooms, donate to 'keep the camellias blooming' and purchase a plant or two!

Melon House & Heritage Camellia Propagation

It is wonderful to see the Melon House in full operation. Its first visitors were hundreds of heritage camellia plants in various stages of growth from the propagation that was outsourced to specialist camellia nurseries and growers. Now thanks to the Friends' generous donation and support, the Trust's gardening team have the facilities to continue the propagation programme of the historic camellia collection in the restored and improved Melon House. The Melon House will also be utilised by the Kitchen Garden team, volunteers and school groups for seed propagation to supply fruit and vegetables for the Walled Kitchen Garden.



The successful Kitchen Garden produce sales will be running Tuesdays and Thursdays 11am - 1pm outside the cafe from May. Please do support this valuable initiative by buying local seasonal produce grown and picked by the volunteers.

For more information, support or donations for the Kitchen Garden please contact william.rallison@chgt.org.uk

The Chairman and the Trustees would like to thank all the Chiswick House Friends for their generous support for the refurbishment of the Melon House.

Opera in the Gardens 2015



Verdi
La Traviata

7:30 Wednesday 1st July 2015

A tragic and beautiful opera



Strauss
Die Fledermaus

7:30 Thursday 2nd July 2015

A wonderful farcical operetta

Focus Opera will treat audiences to two evenings of spectacular opera in the beautiful gardens of Chiswick House. Performing for the third year at Chiswick, they will provide two exciting dramatic productions, a spectacular stage, and an enhanced sound system.

With a young international cast, Focus Opera will bring to life these enchanting dramas, with their exciting and beautiful melodies.

Guests set up their chairs and enjoy picnics on a magical evening celebrating summer with friends and families.

Food will be available to buy on the night and Fuller's, our major sponsor, will be selling beer, wine and champagne along with local distiller Sipsmith's Summer Cup.

Garden Party Sets sets are available to hire (Table & 4 chairs). These are being offered to the Friends first.

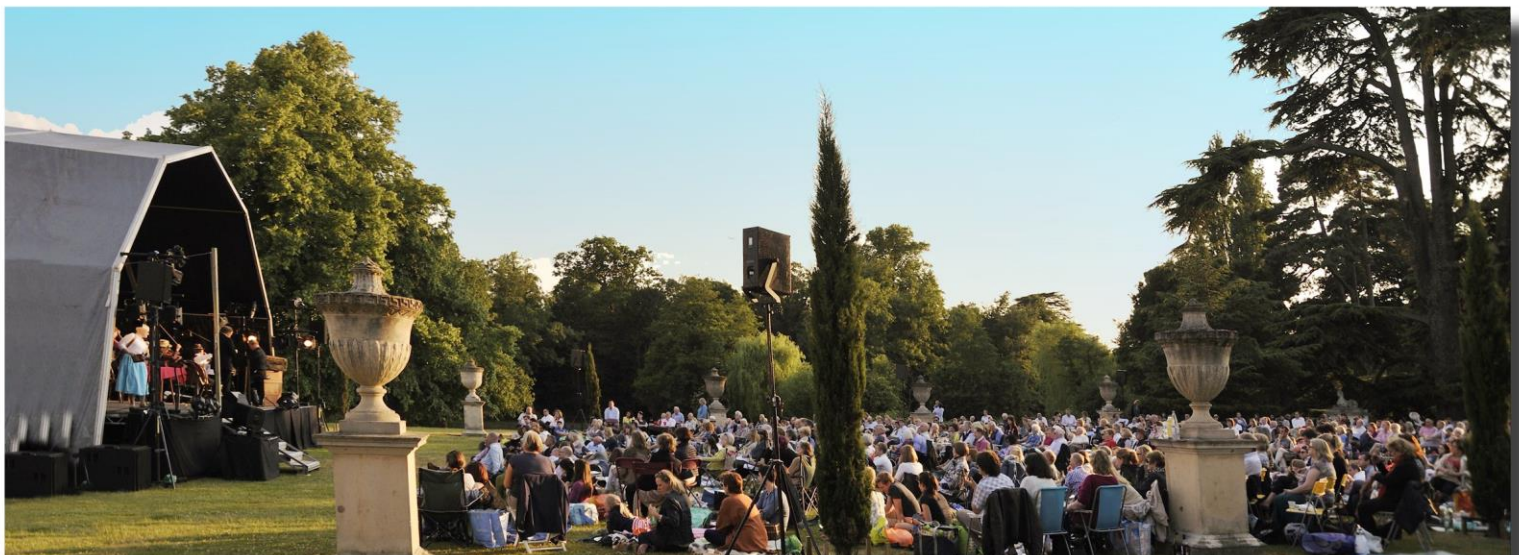
Discounted opera tickets for all Chiswick House Friends' members and their guests.

Adult tickets normally £35.00. (CHF £31.50)
Children 5-16 years £18.00.

CHF members save on all adult tickets when using the application form found on our website.

For tickets and more information:

www.chfriends.org.uk



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Other Friends News

2015 Dog Show

Thanks to our wonderful organising committee, last year was our best ever Dog Show, with over 3000 visitors and a record sum of money raised for projects in the House and Gardens. This year's event will be held in the same place and format on Sunday 27th September.

Waterfowl Update (by Richard Sales)

Our male swan, who has been in a long slow decline, was not able to refurbish the nest, chase out the previous year's offspring and fertilise his mate's eggs and, although she laid six eggs, none hatched.

Eventually he was taken in July to The Swan Sanctuary in Shepperton where he was more comfortable and well looked after, but sadly died in his sleep in late September. We now believe his age was closer to eighteen years than eight. Of his surviving three offspring, one flew off last Autumn, one was killed on the A316 by a car in August and the third injured itself on landing, was taken to The Swan Sanctuary in early September to recuperate and recently went to join a gang of juvenile swans at Kingston Bridge. So now the female is on her own.

We have had this situation twice before, and on both occasions, a new swan has flown in after a few months to make up a pair. So we are keeping our fingers crossed.

Of the eight original Egyptian Goose goslings, seven reached maturity but four had wing problems caused by a birth defect (lack of egg rolling during incubation?). The fit ones have flown off so we are left with three flightless juveniles and the adult pair.

Breeding, apart from all the above, was once again very successful as you can see below.



To finish on a brighter note, our kingfisher pair has been seen regularly since late July and appears to be in residence around the southern pool behind the cascade.

2015 Opera

As you can see from p3, we have big plans for two operas this year - La Traviata and Die Fledermaus. Organising these operas has proved increasingly time-consuming, and this will be the last year that we as the Friends will be putting them on: next year they will be managed by the CH&G Trust who have the staff to do this. We'd like to thank all our volunteers and committee members for their dedication in making open air operas at Chiswick such an outstanding success.

2015 Events

This year we are hosting for the first time a joint event with the Chiswick & Brentford Rotary club: a recital on 24th April by the brilliant international concert pianists Ivo Varbanov and Fiammetta Tarli, playing four-handed Brahms waltzes and Stravinsky's Rite of Spring.



They are followed on 13th May by Serafina Steer, the much acclaimed Harpist who enthralled us with music from Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire's favourites, through to the music of today.

Tickets in advance from the Secretary.

2015 Events

- Until 29 March 10 - 4 (not Mons): Camellia Show
- 22 March 11am - 2pm; Art Miles, walking trail
- 24 April 7.30, Dukes Ave; CHF piano recital
- 13 May 7.30, House; CHF harp concert
- 16 May, 26 Jul, 13 Sept; Kitchen Gdn Open Days
- 1 June 7pm, House; CHF AGM
- 11 - 24 Jun, W Walled Garden ; Giffords Circus
- 13 Jun, 11am - 3pm; Open Garden Squares
- 1 July; CHF opera, 'La Traviata'
- 2 July; CHF opera, 'Die Fledermaus'
- 12 Aug; open air cinema - 'Romeo & Juliet'
- 13 Aug; open air cinema - 'Top Gun'
- 10 Sept; Book Festival Launch
- 27 Sept 11 - 4.15pm: CHF Dog Show

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