



CHISWICK HOUSE FRIENDS

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2010

Charity No 289907

Patron: Lord Burlington



A national wonder!

The world's rarest camellia – Middlemist's Red – has been featured in most of the national papers this month. The occasion is partly the flowering of one of the only two surviving examples in the world – the other is in New Zealand – and partly because restoration of the Chiswick House 100m long conservatory is nearing completion... more inside.

Letter from our Chairman

It is hard to believe that the wonderful transformation of Chiswick House Gardens is now virtually complete. The Friends have been hoping, ever since they were founded 25 years ago, that these things might be brought about. Now they have at last been possible, and they show once again what a superb place it truly is!

So we must turn our attention to ways in which we can support the work of the new Trust set up to run the House and the Gardens.

The role of the Friends will continue to be, as our Constitution states, to help and support whatever body is responsible for the well-being of the House and Gardens, so we shall work hand in hand with the Trust to that end. We feel sure that the Friends have a special role in representing the interests and views of the many users of the Gardens, particularly Chiswick residents. And we applaud the wonderful work which has been done in restoring the glory we all appreciate so much.

George Nissen



The Rosary Garden and Venus



The restoration has opened up unfamiliar views of the House



Some of the new playground equipment by the cafe



Restored bridge with early spring flowers



The Camellia House restoration nears completion

The New Café

What a lovely surprise! Here you can meet fellow mums and toddlers, dog-walkers, lovers and friends from over the water (I mean the Thames), have a gossip, have a coffee, or lunch or tea. Such a treat.

What is it really like? The building is wide and spacious, faces the sun, has lots of space for summer tables and chairs outside, and for colder mortals 30 tables inside. Friendly it certainly is; efficient too is the speed of service – not a huge choice, but nicely done.

Almost everyone, with few dissenters, seems to like the design; it is not a pastiche of the house and, although unashamedly modern, fits in with balance and colour in relation to the House. The large plate glass windows do not open but, as is common in Scandinavia, panels at the sides of them do, to give summer ventilation. The architects, Caruso St. John, have done a great job.



All the clientele seem happy – the few who have reservations about the design have no criticism for the running of it. When I have visited, many people have been calling for a regular morning coffee (it is really good), others for lunch. They all rated the ambiance and quality of the food such that they would come again. It won't cost you an arm and a leg either. Coffee around £1.50-£1.90, soup £3.75, toasted sandwiches £4.50, a hot lunch around £5 and lots of scrummy cakes and

similar treats. All the children love it. Extra items are available at weekends. Lots of soft drinks, and Fullers beer or simple wines for those who want something stronger. It is open 8.30am to 4.30pm and will be open later in the summer.



The caterers are the Company of Cooks, who do Kenwood and the Lido in Hyde Park among others. All is reigned over by the manager, Jenny Shaw, and her team of attentive and helpful assistants, Tania, Agnes, Olivia & Nicholas. Jenny has been with the Company of Cooks since they started 14 years ago. She assures me that what is on offer is only the beginning. She seems happy – even happier when the weather is fine! They are geared to do celebrations and parties as well, in the House, Conservatory or Marquee. In the café doors can be drawn across the service area and there is left a great space, suitable for birthday celebrations, private dinners or other things. With the new playground so near and lots of outside space, I see it as being in high demand. Dogs do have to stay outside but were being remarkably well behaved.



A few teething troubles – no credit cards yet, the telephone connection has gone AWOL, but should be there soon.

When I was there on a recent visit, it was full at lunch time and had been like that for most of the morning. I see it as a necessary and relaxed part of a park visit, but when summer comes my advice would be to get there early. A good place, indeed. Yes, yes, yes!

Felicity Crawley

The Opera

Arrangements for this year's opera – the Marriage of Figaro – are moving on well. The enclosed leaflet tells you more and gives you the opportunity to buy tickets for this all-picnic event. Diane Treganowan, who has organised the operas so well for many years, will be stepping down after this year's event, and we need someone to replace her – do please read the box on the right and think if you know someone willing to take on this most rewarding role.



Visit Marble Hill

The Marble Hill Society has offered a tour of this Palladian House to CHF members on Monday 17th May at 2 pm.

The tour will be conducted by their expert guide, John Moses, and English Heritage have generously waived all charges for the tour.

Places are strictly limited so please let us know as soon as possible if you would like to join this tour by emailing secretary@chfriends.org.uk or calling 020 8994 1767.

Treasurer

Richard Treganowan is standing down as CH Friends Trustee, Treasurer and Chair of Parkwatch. For many years now, Richard has taken care of our finances as well as working tirelessly on the many projects we have carried out. We are very grateful for all his efforts, and wish him and Diane well.

We are very pleased to welcome James Stitt as Trustee and the new Treasurer, and look forward to his involvement with us on the board of Trustees.

CHISWICK HOUSE FRIENDS TRUSTEES

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Volunteers

We are looking for volunteers to work with us on various Friends' activities that include such areas as membership, events and production of literature.

This would be an ideal opportunity for someone who enjoys Chiswick House and Gardens, is computer literate and can devote a few hours a week to become more involved with CHF.

If you would like to discuss this further please email secretary@chfriends.org.uk.

VACANCY FOR OPERA ORGANISER

The CHF Opera is a splendid event in our calendar, enjoyed by up to 1000 people in the beautiful Gardens of Chiswick House.

The role of Opera Organiser will become vacant in July 2010 and we seek an experienced and energetic person with good leadership, organisational and computer skills to fill it.

The Opera Committee, which the Organiser chairs, manages all aspects of the event.

This is a voluntary position but does require a significant amount of the Organiser's time at certain points in the year – it is also a very enjoyable and satisfying job with an energetic and resourceful committee already in place.

If you would like to hear more about this position please email: opera@chfriends.org.uk

We should very much like to hear from you as soon as possible as it would be very helpful for the new Organiser to join the Committee this year in order to become familiar with the process.

Memorial Service for Sir Richard O'Brien

Some of you may remember Sir Richard O'Brien, a past Chairman of the Friends, who died last year.

We attended a memorial service for Sir Richard, held in St Martin-in-the-Fields church on 27th February, and remember with thanks all his efforts on our behalf.

CHISWICK HOUSE FRIENDS EVENTS 2010

Marble Hill tour	17th May
Annual General Meeting; <i>in the House</i>	7th June
Opera – The Marriage of Figaro	10th June
Concert – a Harp Recital; <i>House</i>	9th September
Annual Drinks Party; <i>in the House</i>	20th September
Annual Dog Show; <i>in the Grounds</i>	26th September

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