



# CHISWICK HOUSE FRIENDS

## NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2009

Charity No 289907

Patron: Lord Burlington

### 25th Anniversary Issue

#### Venus Installed!

On 21st September, in our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, the new Medici Venus statue carved by Andrian Melka and sponsored by the Friends was fixed on top of the Doric Column in Chiswick House Gardens.

The Chairman of the Friends, George Nissen, said "We are immensely proud to be making our own special mark on the Restoration Project. I hope that the new statue of Venus will be a landmark symbol for the Friends, and will encourage everyone in our future efforts for these much-loved Gardens and House."



## Progress of the Restoration Project

The renovation of the grounds is coming on apace, and most of the landscape works are due for completion by the end of the year. If all goes well the café will be opening for business in February 2010. The images below show something of what has been achieved.



*Inside the new Cafe*



*Conservatory renovation nearing completion*



*The new Terrace Steps*



*The 18<sup>th</sup> century Orangery floor uncovered*



*Restoring the wall and bridge behind the Southern Pool*



*Fiona Crumley, Head Gardener, in the Camellia Shrubbery*



*New Estate Office and facilities behind the Conservatory*



*New buildings in the Yard*

# We need your help...!!

## Chiswick House and Gardens Trust is Recruiting Volunteers

Volunteers play an important part at Chiswick House and Gardens whether as Tour Guides bringing the villa to life, as Goosefoot Volunteers taming neglected areas of the gardens or as Kitchen Gardeners providing a wonderful community resource in the walled garden. And once the Trust takes on the overall management of this unique site in 2010, new possibilities will open up.

### New Areas for Volunteering

We are planning to have a series of volunteer teams including Garden Guides, Conservatory Stewards, Volunteer Wardens, Education Activity Supporters and Events Volunteers.

**Chiswick House Tour Guides:** Groups come from across the country and abroad to enjoy and learn more about Burlington's famous villa, later enjoyed by the society siren Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire and throughout the centuries as the venue for fabulous parties. Our Tour Guides share a love of history and the ability to engage a wide variety of audiences in an entertaining and lively manner.

**Garden Guides:** To complement tours of the house we are now seeking enthusiastic guides to conduct groups in the gardens. The completion of the Restoration Project will lead to a surge of interest in what is regarded as 'the birth place of the English Landscape Garden'. You do not need to be a horticulturalist to provide a garden tour, as for many groups the story of the gardens and the people who influenced them will be uppermost.

**Goosefoots:** This well-established group currently undertake a wide range of conservation and woodland tasks including coppicing, dead-hedging and clearing brambles. Next year there will be exciting new opportunities to garden in the Italian Garden, Camellia Shrubbery and Rosary. There is currently a waiting list to join the happy band of Goosefoot volunteers and this is being reviewed in February 2010.



*Goosefoots dead-hedging in the Northern Wilderness*

**Conservatory Stewards:** The restored conservatory will be a major visitor attraction open from February when the camellias will be most abundant and through to the end of October with additional displays of flowers and produce. Working in pairs, volunteers will welcome and talk to the public as well as ensuring the plants and building are respected.

**Volunteer Wardens:** This would suit anyone who enjoys being outdoors, is interested in the ecology and wildlife of the gardens, likes people and wants to help ensure that visitors both enjoy the park and also respect its precious environment. Tasks will range from collecting litter to monitoring and recording species, responding to public queries and checking and reporting graffiti or damage.

**Kitchen Gardeners:** The Chiswick House Kitchen Garden charity's pioneering community project within the walled gardens is set to continue as a core part of Chiswick House and Gardens Trust Volunteer Service. Whether you are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about growing food and would enjoy helping others including school children to benefit from these skills, or you would simply like to 'dig, pot, weed and learn', we would love to hear from you.

**Education Activity Supporters:** Simrit Mann has recently been appointed as CHGT Education and Outreach Officer, partly funded by the Friends. She has exciting plans afoot for school sessions in the House and Gardens ranging from Victorian children's gardener workshops to nature trails, costumed activities in the villa and hands on archaeology. If you have an educational background you may like to help with school visits on a regular basis; there are also interesting opportunities for behind the scenes research and preparation from information gathering to costume making.



*Simrit Mann – CHGT Education and Outreach Officer*

**Events Volunteers:** We are developing an exciting and high profile events programme for 2010 including outdoor film and theatre, a fete champetre and food lover events. In order for these events to be enjoyable and successful we need teams of people involved in all aspects from ticket collecting and stewarding to ensuring musicians and actors are managed on site.

### The Benefits of Being a Volunteer!

Volunteering requires varying levels of commitment but whether it's a weekly routine or more occasional events, it can be very rewarding. Next year our volunteers will benefit from a new purpose-designed building within the Nursery Yard. All regular Volunteers will have free access to the House and concession tickets to a fantastic choice of events happening in the gardens. Our new café will be a perfect place to enjoy a delicious seasonal lunch or well-earned cup of tea!

### Volunteer Recruitment Event

To find out more about the Volunteer Service and to meet the staff involved, there will be a Volunteer Event at **Chiswick House, 3.30pm 30th October**. To register your interest and/or book a place, please visit [www.chgt.org.uk](http://www.chgt.org.uk) and fill in the on-line enquiry form. We look forward to hearing from you.

**Sarah Finch-Crisp**  
*Director, CHGT*

## The Medici Venus

The commissioning of a stone-carved Venus was undoubtedly the high point of the Friends' contribution to the Lottery project. In our picture below, Andrian Melka the sculptor stands with his Venus at the top of the Doric column in the Rosary Garden.



## Dog Show

This year's Dog Show on 28<sup>th</sup> September was our biggest and most successful yet. Over 1200 visitors enjoyed the show in which almost 400 dogs and their owners took part, with 30 stall-holders from local businesses. Winner of Best in Show was Piper, below.



## Opera – Sell-out Performance

This summer we hosted another exciting opera in the newly restored Gardens of Chiswick House. Rossini's "The Barber of Seville" was performed by the Garden Opera Company to a sell-out audience in front of the House.

The audience picnicked on the lawns and made the most of the beautiful surroundings, enjoying a really special summer evening. The atmosphere was marvellous with people saying it was "the best yet".

The opera is the main fundraising event for the Friends, and was the fifth we have put on. Look for next year's details in March 2010 on our website.

## Birthday Party

We celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our founding in the House on the 21<sup>st</sup> September with a record 150 members and guests. Chairman George Nissen and Hounslow Mayor Paul Lynch reflected on the achievements of the Friends' 25 years of work in running local events and projects, raising funds in support of the Lottery project and generally representing the views of the local community.

## Chandeliers

Guests at the birthday party were able to see the pair of period chandeliers (below) bought for the House by English Heritage with our financial help.



## Christmas Cards

We again have a fine selection of cards for sale through our website or the enclosed booking form.

## House Opening Times

Until 1 November, the House is open 10-5 on Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed & Bank Holidays. It is then closed over the winter until 1<sup>st</sup> April. The Gardens are open every day of the year from 7am until dusk.

***Published by the Chiswick House Friends***

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