

FRIENDS OF CAVERSHAM COURT GARDENS

Newsletter No 24 Spring 2020

Dates for your Diary

Volunteers' update session Saturday 22 February, 1000-1200

Come along on Saturday 22 February, 1000-1200 to the Griffin meeting room (upstairs, no lift). We will have an update on what's happening in the gardens and brainstorm ideas for events in 2020. New volunteers very welcome, please email chair@fccg.org.uk so we know numbers for coffee/tea .

Tea Kiosk opens Mothering Sunday

The charities running the Tea Kiosk will start the season on Sunday 22 March, 1100-1700.

Easter Nature Trail, Saturday 11 April 2-4pm

The traditional Easter Nature Trail for children will be held on Easter (Holy) Saturday, 11 April, 2pm-4pm. Start swotting up on your nature notes!

Spring talk (after lightning AGM)

Wednesday 22 April 2020, 7.30pm. Refreshments from 7pm. Reading Canoe Club, The Warren, Caversham RG4 7TH. An extremely brief AGM will be followed by a talk by historian and broadcaster Sir Roderick Floud, whose latest book looks at exactly how much Britain's world-famous gardens actually cost their owners to develop and maintain. In preparation, try keeping a list of just how much you spend on your own garden!

Friends' First Sundays

FCCG Volunteer guides will be in the gardens on the first Sunday of each month – 5 April, 3 May, 7 June, 5 July, 2 August, 6 September – from 1400 to 1630. No need to book, but please let us know if you would like a sensory tour for people with visual or hearing impairment. Tours can be booked at other times to suit you and your family or organization, email friends@fccg.org.uk. Details of extra events (weather dependent) will be on the FCCG website <http://home.fccg.org.uk/events>. Look out for family croquet, the Salvation Army Band, crafts for children and more.

Mike Eggleton OBE

The New Year brought the sad news of the death of Mike Eggleton, a founding member of FCCG, committee member and stalwart supporter of the gardens. Mourners at his funeral on 22 January gave generous donations to the Friends, which we will put towards fitting tributes in the gardens which Mike and his late wife Sheila enjoyed so much.

Join the committee!

We are keen to recruit new committee members! We have about 5 meetings a year, so being a committee member need not take up too much time. We are also keen to expand our contacts with

schools and to do more work with young people on climate change and its effects on historic gardens in particular. Do contact the Friends if you have ideas on how we could develop this.

Christmas Carols 2019

Many thanks to the St Peters team for the warm welcome they gave us on Monday 16 December, when wet weather and slippery paths drove us indoors for the carols evening. Not everybody was able to squeeze in, but those left outside sang along (often a bar behind the choir!) merrily, and those inside were entertained by presenter Simon Thomas, the Salvation Army Band and the choir of St Peters. Thanks to all of them, and to Revd Rachel Ross Smith for her joyful address. The Tea Kiosk charities were there to provide mulled wine and mince pies. Generous donations allowed us to cover the costs of the event and in our turn to give donations to St Peters, the bell-ringers, choir and Salvation Army Band.

Planting

Having won Gold in the Britain in Bloom competition in 2019, the Parks Dept will be looking to repeat their success. In Caversham Court, it will be hard to do better than last year's stunning planting outside the stable block, and the vinery border was a glorious splash of colours and textures. The Friends will be funding the vinery border again in 2020, and amongst other projects, will also fund some new plants for the western, 17th century-style border.

Footprint stonework

The Friends are delighted that relaying of the **House Footprint** was completed in December 2019. Limestone from Vraca (Vratsa), Bulgaria, has been used to outline the main "rooms" of the Victorian house, with composite concrete round the entrance area. A new feature is that oak has been used for doorways, whereas the thresholds were previously delineated in the same stone as the walls showing the 19th century mansion. RBC Parks Development Officer Carolyn Jenkins explains that the floors would have been timber boards: replacing the threshold stones with rough-sawn oak thus makes the interpretation of the footprint much clearer. Rough-sawing means that they should be less slippery in wet weather.

Lime tree at entrance gates

RBC Tree Officer Sarah Hanson has informed us that most regrettably, the lime tree to the left of the main gates has to be felled, since it is damaging the listed wall behind it. A replacement lime will be planted on the patch of ground in front. Sarah Hanson emphasises that the decision has not been taken lightly. The work will be carried out in mid-March. RBC will also plant a new tree on Council land outside the entrance to the stable yard.

