

# *Friends of Caversham Court Gardens*

## *Newsletter no.6 - February 2010*

**AGM - Wednesday 24 March at 7pm for 7.30 at Reading Canoe Club, The Warren.**

Giles Pritchard, the historic buildings architect who worked on the renovation of Caversham Court will give us the story behind the restoration of the causeway and the gazebo, the discovery of the vaults and the excavation of the cellars under the house footprint. You will look at the buildings with a different eye next time you visit Caversham Court!

Now is your chance to contribute to our Friends group and stand as an officer (chair, secretary or treasurer) or as a general committee member. Alternatively you might like to offer committee support, e.g. to work on the website or the membership database. Nominations from all enthusiastic supporters will be very welcome and in particular we would welcome people who have young children or an interest in IT or in publicity.

To find out more or stand, contact: [FriendsofCavershamCourt@googlemail.com](mailto:FriendsofCavershamCourt@googlemail.com) or Tel: 0118 947 5062

### **JOIN FCCG OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW!**

The Friends need your support in their work to encourage the preservation of one of Caversham's best-loved open spaces, to publicise its importance to Caversham, to Reading and beyond and to input into future developments and activities. Membership cost £2.00 per person to December 2010 or £5 for a 3-year membership until December 2012. Join / renew at the AGM or by contacting: Philip Darlow, Treasurer FCCG, Kalewa, The Warren, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7TQ - Tel: 0118 947 2205 / E-mail: [FriendsofCavershamCourt@googlemail.com](mailto:FriendsofCavershamCourt@googlemail.com) .

### **KEEP UP TO DATE WITH FCCG - WEBSITE LAUNCHED – [www.fccg.org.uk](http://www.fccg.org.uk)**

Thanks to the support of Highdown School FCCG now has a website where people can find out about Caversham Court, what to see there and events taking place. We think that the four students, under the supervision of their IT teacher, Bouba Dembele, have done an amazing job. Look at it if you can!

### **VOLUNTEER GARDENERS GROUP**

Head Gardener Emily is planning to start this up again during February, so if you would like to join do phone her on 0118 947 8930 and leave your name and contact details so that she can get back to you.

### **VOLUNTEER GUIDES**

Volunteers from the Friends of Caversham Court are available to take groups around the gardens to talk about the history of the site and about the garden. If you, or a group you are a member of, would like to arrange to be shown round, please contact the Friends. Representatives of the Friends will also be on hand at weekends in the summer to answer questions and to offer informal tours. Please email [friendsofcavershamcourt@googlemail.com](mailto:friendsofcavershamcourt@googlemail.com) for further information.

### **WHAT IS HAPPENING IN CAVERSHAM COURT**

- Last of the snowdrops under the yews – about 3000 were planted in 2008 so this is our first opportunity to enjoy them, as Caversham Court was still closed this time last year.
- The first crocus should be flowering down by the river in February. Emily and her apprentice planted about 16,000 bulbs, mainly purple, mauve and lilac.
- Tulips and anemones have been planted in the borders and daffodils, tulips and irises on the winter walk down from St Peter's.
- Look for pleached limes to be planted on their new framework between causeway and allotments.
- There should be 3 new mulberries around the carriage circle at the entrance to Caversham Court to join the one already there.
- The glasshouse border, next to the vaults, should be even more colourful this year and plans to put a cast-iron framework over it are being investigated.
- Emily has a new apprentice, Phil, who will be working towards his workplace diploma in horticulture during his time at Caversham Court.
- Low fencing will be going up along the riverbank and the permanent sign boards are due soon.

- Anne Keenan, the Project Development Officer for the refurbishment, has finished her contract. We understand that the photographs and documentation that she discovered during her research are now with the Parks Department and it is planned to deposit the most precious of them with the Berkshire Record Office.
- A skidding motorist drove into the left-hand gate post chipping the stonework and knocking it off the plumb – repairs are already being planned.

### **REFRESHMENT KIOSK** – reopening Thursday 1 April, and real coffee will be available!

The local charities who run the Tea Kiosk were delighted with the compliments last year on their cakes and biscuits. They are determined to maintain their standards while expanding their ranges including dairy-free and wheat-free offerings at least some of the time.

The opening days will remain the same – Thursdays to Sundays starting at 1pm. The closing times, usually between 5 and 6pm - will be a little flexible depending on the number of customers.

Come and support them by drinking their teas and of course they too would appreciate volunteers to work with them in the kiosk.

### **WHAT SHOULD FCCG SPONSOR AT CAVERSHAM COURT?**

FCCG's aims include raising funds for particular projects at Caversham Court which benefit the community. Please tell any member of the committee what kind of project would be your priority. Current suggestions are:

- a. Special bulbs and plants e.g. nerines to go along long walk
- b. Fairy lighting on outer edges of yew trees beside pond for functions
- c. Vegetable growing for youngsters in allotments – volunteers also required!!
- d. Shelter in kiosk area for inclement weather e.g. sail shades
- e. Permanent landing stage
- f. Removable Victorian lanterns and hooks on left wall going down to kiosk for events

### **CAVERSHAM COURT NEWEL POST**

Under C for Caversham look for the newel post from old Caversham Court (dated 1638) in the Reading A to Z exhibition in Reading Museum - until 18 April 2010.

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

1st April 2010: Art & Leisure in the Gardens – Come along and try a range of workshops from New Directions. Cream teas from noon. Further details from New Directions on 0345 842 0012

10<sup>th</sup> July: St Peter's and St Margaret's fete

22<sup>nd</sup> July for 9 nights: Progress Theatre production of *Merry Wives of Windsor*.

### **RECENT EVENTS**

- Emily's plant safaris for FCCG members in October gave a fascinating insight into why the flower beds all look different – the history of the particular area, as well as its soil and aspect were all taken into consideration.
- Heritage Open Days in September brought in appreciative visitors from Caversham, Reading and beyond. The Friends had a welcome stand providing information about the gardens and talking about the exciting finds.
- Carols Evening had to be cancelled at the last minute because of the sudden snow. This was a great disappointment for all, as so many people had worked so hard to organise it, including St Peter's Choir who were to lead the singing and the Refreshment Kiosk Charities who were planning mulled wine and home-made mince pies
- Many people enjoyed Caversham Court in the snow – it looked magical, lots of snowmen appeared and the 'rolly poly' bank was a great joy to very young sledgers.

### **YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN . . .**

**History of Reading Society** – meets monthly at 7.30 in Abbey Baptist Church

**Berkshire Parks and Gardens** - The Berkshire Gardens Trust is creating a gazetteer of historic and locally significant parks and gardens If you are interested in contributing information or joining one of these groups, contact Ben Viljoen either by phone on 0118 9843170 or by email at [berks-gardens-trust@live.com](mailto:berks-gardens-trust@live.com)