

CROOME TIMES

The Newsletter of The Friends of Croome Park. No. 3 - June 2005

A Message from our Patron, Lady Maria Coventry

I am delighted to be asked to take a position with The Friends of Croome Park. Obviously, it is a project near to my heart, and it is so pleasing to see such an interest being taken in all activities and its future.

Good luck to all concerned.

Menagerie Wood Project by Nigel Matthews.

The first time I went into Menagerie Wood was early this Spring when Michael Smith had first suggested the area as a potential long term project for the Friends. I was immediately struck by the wild beauty of the place; clumps of primroses were dotted amongst the trees, early bluebells and other woodland flowers carpeted areas of fresh grass. There were fallen trees and some tangles of bramble but in the main the wood has a wonderful open aspect so that sunlight is reaching the woodland floor. Now as we reach midsummer a rich profusion of flowers, ferns and greenery has leapt up giving a richness to the area. There are a few clumps of plantation conifer which smother their surrounds and the inevitable skeletal fingers of dead elm in certain parts but overall the wood has not suffered from the air of decay and deadness which characterised much of the main park when restoration began.

There are deer in the wood as witnessed by their fresh tracks and no doubt many other interesting creatures and plants.

The wood definitely has the potential to be opened up to visitors as an educational woodland / nature trail which takes them through the original woodland, into the replanted area and onto the Menagerie Wetland. This gives the scope to offer the visitor something different from the carefully structured, manicured vision of the main park, whilst remaining linked by the views over Browns landscape.

In addition it is the kind of area which lends itself to be the focus for schools trips where they combine in one day historical and environmental science activities.

However, to create this new feature and then to maintain it will take work and this is where the Friends could come into their own. The project has yet to be formalised and advice is needed from NT experts on how to handle the area but as a taster to start:

- Survey the wood for remains of original paths.
- Surveys for important flora and fauna.
- Plan initial walk routes and subroutes, clear these of debris and fallen trees, and put them in place, marking them etc.
- Clear away any rubbish and dangerous/unsightly fallen timber (NT Foresters may have to do certain felling).
- Clean up and restore drainage features for the wood.
- Judicious replanting along original paths.
- Producing educational and information plaques and leaflets.

Any Friends who are interested in being involved in this exciting project please contact:- The Secretary, Joan Willis – 01684 594570



Members of your Committee in Menagerie Wood with Michael Smith – Property Manager

The next Friends meeting will be held on Wednesday 20th July at 7.00pm in the Carpenters, workshop at High Green. Our speaker will be Simon Barker, Regional Nature Conservation Advisor for The National Trust who will speak about Menagerie Wood and what can be done by

way of conservation. After his talk members will be able to visit the Wood and one of the new wetland areas close to the motorway. Please note: strong walking shoes are recommended!!

Membership

Our membership is growing rapidly. At the beginning of June there were 78 members including two junior members. It would be wonderful if we could reach 100 by the time we get to our first AGM early next year.

We are very pleased to be able to welcome the 13th Earl of Coventry amongst our members who visited the Park recently.

Age is no barrier to being a member. Our youngest is currently 10 years old and the oldest a magnificent 96! (can anyone beat that?)

Visit to Hidcote Manor Garden

On 14th June 13 members visited Hidcote where they were given a very interesting guided tour of the Gardens by a volunteer Garden Steward. Visits such as this are a very good way of meeting fellow members as well as having an enjoyable day out. We hope to arrange further visits soon. If you have any suggestions as to possible properties to visit please let us know.



Some of our members enjoying part of the Garden at Hidcote.

News from the Catering sub-committee

The Catering sub-committee was formed in April, prior to the Launch Day of the Friends of Croome Park on Saturday, 30 April. Betty Mills & Christine Adams agreed to join me as the sub-committee responsible for arranging refreshments for the Visitors on that day in April. On the

day itself, Cara Henderson, Lys Hemsted, Valerie Rimell, Ann Butcher, Ian Buchanan and several others, without whose help the day would not have been such a success, ably helped us. With the sale of delicious home made cakes, mini packets of biscuits, and many cups of tea, coffee, and squash for those who needed a cold drink, we were able to make a profit of £66.00, after paying for all our supplies, a lot of which were carried over to our next event on Sunday & Monday 29 & 30 May. This time we made a profit of nearly £200.00, (and we still have quite a large proportion of supplies in hand). These three days have made a terrific boost to our funds, and I should like to thank all those who gave their time to come and work so hard to give the visitors to Croome Park, a pleasant ending to their visit, with a welcome cup of tea.

Our next Refreshments Event is to be on Saturday & Sunday 16 & 17 July. This is during Archaeology Weekend, so we may expect lots of visitors, who will welcome refreshments again, I am sure.

At the end of our year, the money we raise with the sale of refreshments will be donated to the Trust for a particular project within the Park.

If there are any of our members who would be free and could offer help on either of those days, I would be pleased to hear from you, even if you could only come for half an hour, you would be most welcome, and it would make all the difference. Please contact me at 01684 594570, to book your slot of help.

Thank you all in advance. Joan Willis



The refreshment stall at the launch on 30 April with some of the catering team

...and finally

If you have any items for our next edition please send them to Joan Willis before 31st August