

NEWSLETTER

Number 5 – Summer 2008

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



WELCOME ...

...It is with great pleasure that I introduce our fifth newsletter and say a hello to you all, especially to recently joined members. In case you are wondering who your fellow Guild Members are, a full membership list is included on the back page. If you discover a former colleague or long lost friend listed there and wish to contact them do let me know and I will put you in touch. My contact details are on the back page also.

Many of the members listed were present at our first event of the season – a splendid day touring Richmond Park in the company of its enthusiastic and dedicated parks staff, plus one very stern school marm, called Mrs. Sawyer, miraculously transported from the 1880s, and insistent that we all learnt our '3 R's'!

This was followed up with a visit to the home of the American Ambassador in Regents Park and, thanks to its Head Gardener, Guild Member Stephen Crisp, for an hour or two we were all able to sample the good life. As one member pointed out "the ornate antique chair they sat in was probably worth more than the new house they had just bought!"

Finally, a thank you to those members who took on the role of "expert gardener" at The Royal Parks Dig for Victory event in St. James's Park, on June 22nd, advising members of the public on the best way to supplement their wartime rations, including a very tasty recipe for carrot cake!

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter, and I look forward to meeting many of you at our *Last Night of the Proms* social event in Hyde Park on Saturday, 13th September.

Mike Fitt



THE ROYAL PARKS GUILD



APPRENTICES MoU...

The Guild has put its signature to an agreement with TRP, aimed at helping the Apprentices. The Memorandum of Understanding lists 17 key subjects where Guild members possessing certain skills and experience can assist apprentices. Many of these subjects are not covered in the general Apprenticeship curriculum – including events management, meetings protocol, parks history, financial planning, as well as skills concerning marketing and PR matters.

Standard horticultural advice will also be available, including pest, disease and plant identification, soil and turf management, pruning, propagation and safe use of machinery. But assistance will only be given after consulting with the existing apprenticeship stakeholders – TRP, Capel Manor College (the Training Provider) and the four employing contractors (Fountains, Veolia, Turfsoil and Enterprise).

Mike Fitt said: "It is exciting that we have at last managing to formalise the involvement between the Guild and the Apprenticeship Programme. We are anticipating some great times ahead." He added: "Another of the Guild's objectives is to raise funds for bursaries. These will be used, in part, to fund exchange visits for apprentices. As a trial we are talking to authorities on the Isle of Wight, both the parks department and Ventnor Botanic Gardens, to see how we might be able to facilitate the exchange of apprentices.

Alan Titchmarsh, TV presenter and Founding Patron of the Guild, himself a former parks apprentice, witnessed the signing of the MoU recently. In the picture are (from l to r) Peter Hughes, TRP officer managing the Apprenticeship programme; Alan Titchmarsh, Simon Goodenough (Curator of Ventnor Botanic Garden, Isle of Wight); and Mike Fitt.

PEOPLE...

Hearty congratulations to RPG Treasurer, former Royal Parks' acting Bailiff and latterly City of London Director of Open Spaces, **Jennifer Adams** (below left) who was awarded an **OBE** in The Queen's Birthday Honours. Similarly, RPG Committee advisor **Terry Gough** (below right), Head of Gardens and Estates for **Historic Royal Palaces**, based at Hampton Court, was awarded the **MVO**.



GOOD NEWS...

Historic **London** views will be protected again (as reported in the *Evening Standard*, 22 May). **Boris Johnson** has pledged to restore the protection to London's historic views which were previously slashed, it is claimed, by his predecessor **Ken Livingstone**.

Tony Arbour, planning spokesman for London Assembly Conservatives said: "We are **delighted** that Boris will now ensure the views are preserved for **future generations**."

Mr Arbour, who represents the **Richmond ward**, has been especially concerned about the view of St. Paul's Cathedral from **King Henry's Mound** in Richmond Park.

