

Welcome to the Gatton Park Spring newsletter. The year at Gatton is already on the way with our open days for the snowdrops and aconites being well attended despite the inclement weather. We have a full programme of events and activities for you over the coming months and we look forward to welcoming you to Gatton hopefully in the sunshine!



Hop Garden dam repairs and restoration

Back in December contractors Will and Ted Powell began work on repairing and restoring the hop garden dam. This dam was part of the original works that were carried out under the supervision of 'Capability' Brown in the 18th century and created what is now known as the hop garden pond. For a number of years this dam has been leaking through a section that was poorly repaired in the 1980's. The first part of the job was to clear the dam of all the weed vegetation that had sprung up over the last 40 years, which mainly consisted of ash and brambles. All the original yews and horse chestnuts that still existed were retained. Once the site was clear it was much easier to see the extent of the problem. After consultation with our reservoir engineers and contractors we decided the best way to solve the problem was to use the same techniques that Brown himself used, though with the help of a large digger. The process used is called puddling, whereby heavy clay is packed very tightly together to make a watertight seal. In small sections the old fill on the dam was removed until we found the original clay core. New clay which had been extracted from nearby was then packed in very tightly so it bonded with original core forming a watertight seal. This work has been very successful and the dam is again working as it should. In the final stage of this project we will be re-profiling the dam using the spare soil generated from the boarding house extensions at the school. The re-profiling will hopefully ensure that the dam will last for another 200 years.

The Gatton Trust

Gatton Park,
Reigate,
Surrey
RH2 0TW
Registered charity: 1063964
website: www.gattonpark.com

Park and Gardens

Tel: 01737 649068
email: glynsherratt@gatton-park.org.uk

Education

Tel: 01737 649066
Fax: 01737 649067
email: education@gatton-park.org.uk



New Website for Gattton Park

Over the winter we have been working on updating our websites to bring them all together in one place. Working with Treefrog Design Associates we have designed a website that we hope will be more easy to use and make information on the history of the estate and the events we now run more easy to find. All the information for both the education and conservation aspects of Gattton Park is now available from the www.gatttonpark.com website. A big thank you also to David Harbison for allowing us to use some of his great pictures. You will also notice that we have a new logo for the new combined trust which we will be using on all our publicity materials from now on.

As always we would love your feedback on how the site works for you, please do email us with your thoughts!

Gattton Art Club Returns

We are revamping our art club days to provide access to the park for individual artists both budding and experienced along with groups and art clubs that would like to come along and use the park for inspiration. People will have the opportunity to bring their materials and work in which ever medium that enjoy be that photographic, paints, pastels, sculpture etc. We are looking to build a supportive environment where artists can work give each other tips and confidence. We hope to provide some affordable opportunities to exhibit and or sell work as the year progresses.

On the art club days Jenny Adams has kindly offered to help co-ordinate the day and there will be lunch available as usual. With the new format comes new prices and the day will be a little cheaper than previously advertised. We are asking £10.00 for individual bookings and there will be a concessionaries for group bookings of 10 or more people at £8.00. Our days will be as previously advertised 11am to 4pm, running one Saturday a month through out the spring summer and autumn. These dates are March 27th April 24th May 29th days June 26th July 17th August 23rd. Sept 25th October 23rd. Booking required.

Forthcoming Adult Events

Sunday 7th March
Gardens and Grounds Open
 1-5pm Adults £3.50 children free
 The last chance to get a glimpse of the snowdrops.

Saturday 13th March
Quiz Night
 7.30pm £7 per head Inc supper
 One of the highlights of the year. Book early to ensure your team gets a place. Max 6 people per team.

Saturday 27th March
Gattton Art Club
 11-4pm Cost: £10
 (See above for more details)

Saturday 3rd April
Make it, Take It Lino Printing
 10am-3.30pm Cost: £20 (small materials charge) including lunch.
 Explore lino-cutting as an exciting method of print making with artist Angela Thames

(Change of date due to Easter)
 Saturday 10th April
Gardens and Grounds Open
 1-5pm Adults £3.50 children free

Sunday 18th April
Spring walk around Gattton
 A spring tour around the park and gardens with the Landscape/Heritage Officer
 1pm Cost: £5 including tea & cake

Saturday 24th April
Gattton Art Club
 11-4pm Cost: £10
 (See above for more details)



Sunday 2nd May
Gardens and Grounds Open
 1-5pm Adults £3.50 children free
 Fabulous plant sale all afternoon!

Wednesday 5th May
May Day talk and walk with Chris Howkins
 2pm Cost £8 Including tea & cake. Parterre open from 1pm for picnics
 Chris Howkins brings to life what May Day meant to our ancestors, followed by a walk in the park.

Saturday 29th May
Gattton Art Club
 11-4pm Cost: £10
 (See above for more details)

For more information on all these activities please call us on 01737 649066 or visit our website: www.gatttonpark.com

Would you like to receive mailings about our events and activities? Please send your postal and email address to us and tell us whether you would like information on adult or children's courses, or both.



Santa's Visit to Gatton

Close to Christmas time the winter weather had started to close in but we had a brilliantly sunny afternoon for Santa's Grotto, with nearly 80 young children coming to Gatton to visit Santa. With one young lad being rather worried that the last time he had visited Santa he had forgotten his gift from Santa and left it in a shop!! He was relieved to hear that Santa wouldn't be cross and the smiles made the day worth while for many of us when he returned up the hill from the park with a new "Santa gift" very happy to find that Santa wasn't at all cross! Santa was kind to us too and all the funds from the day will go towards setting Up Go Green at Gatton which will be on the 4th of July, so do remember to put the date in your Diaries.

Japanese Garden gets a freshen up

It is 11 years since the Japanese garden was restored as part of the 'Lost Gardens' series and some of its features and plantings are due a freshen up. Over the winter volunteer Bob Sims has been repairing the bridge where the banister had become loose. This will ensure that it will last for a few more years yet, though we are already thinking about designing a replacement. We have also been clearing out some of the beds and removing some of the invasive bamboos and this work will carry on throughout the spring. Also in the spring we will be reducing some of the aquatic plants that have grown too large to ensure they don't take over the pond completely. Later in the year we will look to improve the soil in some of the beds and re-establish some of the plantings around the waters edge. By the autumn we hope to be in a position to start replanting with plants that blend well with the already well established 'Lost Gardens' plantings. We will of course keep you posted on progress and if you are interested in getting involved in this work please do get in touch.



Snowdrop success

Our first open days of the year for the snowdrops and aconites have a been a great success despite the inclement weather. Both the National Gardens Scheme days were well attended and we had lots of visitors who had come to Gatton for the first time. We also raised nearly £2000 for the NGS who support a number of worthwhile charities.

Forthcoming Children's Events

Wednesday 7 April

Squirrels (4-7years)

Activities, games and art linked to our nut-gathering friends.
10-12 noon or 1.30-3.30pm. Cost: £5. booking required

Friday 9 April

Start Art-Underwater (4-7 years)

Art activities for young children and their families about animals that live in water. 10-12 noon or 1.30-3.30pm. Cost: £6. booking required



Sunday 11 April

Fairy Tale Treasure Hunt (all ages children young and old!) Discover fairy tale characters around the park as you hunt for treasure. In conjunction with Gatton Community Theatre.

1-4pm. Cost: £5 per child (adults free). Refreshments available to purchase. **NO BOOKING REQUIRED**

(Change of date due to Easter)

Saturday 10th April

Gardens and Grounds Open

1-5pm Adults £3.50 children free
Free activities for children

Sunday 2nd May

Gardens and Grounds Open

1-5pm Adults £3.50 children free
Free activities for children all afternoon



For more information on all these activities please call us on 01737 649066 or visit our website: www.gattonpark.com

Would you like to receive mailings about our events and activities? Please send your postal and email address to us and tell us whether you would like information on adult or children's courses, or both.



London Schools Project Update

The London Schools Project has been set up to sponsor bringing London schools on educational visits to experience the natural surroundings and open countryside around Gatton Park.

Comments from both children and teachers have shown us that we

As we are fully booked during the summer month our London Project days began in November and will run through until Easter. We have already had several schools visiting from Wandsworth and Lambeth and so far have been really lucky with the weather. The children were great fun to work with and it was wonderful to see them absorbing the park environment happily learning, quick to engage in the activities offered and working well together with each other and the park team.



are one very worthwhile track with this project. With particular emphasis on our ability to provide a fun, good quality outdoor learning experience. Our feedback also indicated that the biggest issue prohibiting access to these opportunities for these children is the cost not just of entrance fees to venues but also transport. So it is with real thanks from both The Gatton Trust and the London Schools that we acknowledge our sponsors, The JP Morgan Foundation, The Goldsmiths Company, The Garfield Weston Foundation and The CLA Charitable Trust who together have raised a total of £17,160 for these visits allowing them to be fully funded.

There are 12 more schools booked in the spring term when we hope we will have warmer weather and we are hoping to be able to arrange a similar project for London schools again in the next academic year. *"The opportunity for the children to be working outside the classroom - real context"* (Falconbrook School).

"The whole day was very well planned and thought through. All the children enjoyed the various activities organised and had a fantastic day. All the staff were helpful, patient and enthusiastic (LoughboroughSchool).

Volunteer opportunities at Gatton Park

The volunteers at Gatton make it what it is, if you would like to get involved there are many different ways you can help out!

Garden restoration and maintenance:

Since 1996, the garden restoration volunteers have brought back to life the rock and water garden, the Japanese garden and areas of parkland. These areas need continuing development and maintenance. You don't have to be a gardener to help us but any experience would be useful

Parkland Management Assistant:

Come and help the Park warden with the maintenance and development of the park. Work involves hands on woodland and grassland management, habitat creation and surveying

Kitchen Garden Volunteer:

Get involved in a project to restore the areas of the walled kitchen gardens. The first part of this project aims to reinstate an area of kitchen garden for use by the children of the RAA School. This will involve laying out paths and beds in which we intend to grow a variety of different fruits, vegetables and herbs. We also intend to establish an orchard to complement the small orchard that we already have. With this opportunity you have the option to either work on the gardens, in a small group, or alongside the teachers working with the children. It would be great if you have any food growing experience though this is not essential.

Animal Care Assistant:

Help us with the management of the animals that we keep in the park. You will be working with our staff to help with the management of our chickens, pigs, goats and ornamental birds. If you have a preference to work with one particular type of

animal this can also be facilitated. No experience is required as training will be given, but if you do have experience it would be very useful.

Can you help the Education Team?

We need help on a wide range of tasks. These include:

- Helping with or leading groups of children on in- and outdoor studies and activities
- Administrative help, such as computer work and promotional mailings
- "Blue Peter" volunteers – cutting, sticking, colouring, laminating – to prepare for children's activities
- Helping out at special events or with weekend activities
- Marketing or assisting with fundraising

We are happy for volunteers to come anytime during the week that fits in with your schedule.

If you would like more information on our volunteering opportunities please call or email us. Our contact details are on the front page