

News from the Garden

Annual pruning is ongoing and will continue until Spring and early Summer. The shrub beds are being mulched and the garden paths have been edged back to the wooden kerb sides. The daffodils are now coming into their own and always bring a sense of awakening and cheerfulness.

Tidying up is ongoing in the Aviary area. Tree stumps are being dug up and removed and the hedge at the front will be reduced. Future plans are to cap the brickwork, put down a membrane inside the brickwork area and then gravel over the membrane.

Three bird boxes given to the Garden by a volunteer have been put up ready for the coming season.

Entry and exit holes in the perimeter fence have been blocked up to stop Muntjac gaining access to the Garden and we now have a dedicated volunteer on "fence duty". The deer cause considerable damage within the Garden. Moles and badgers also enjoy the Garden and we are endeavouring to track them and restrict their access too.

Following the sad loss of the peacocks Storm and Snowy we will be obtaining two new peacocks. However they will not be seen openly in the Garden for a while until they have settled into their new surroundings.

On the equipment front, a new chipper/shredder has been ordered and will be arriving shortly. The lawn mowers are being serviced in house in readiness for the start of the season and quotes are being obtained for a new hover mower.

4 work placements are a welcome addition to the garden volunteers now that the gardening year is getting into its stride.

Tony Young, Head Gardener

Conservation

I joined in December 2023 to co-ordinate conservation work.



I have a scientific background mainly in engineering. My work experience includes being an Education Director and teacher of Mathematics and Science; a Regional Manager in Ghana for an international project by the European Union and Canada and Assistant Lecturer and Researcher of Post-harvest methods, Agricultural Buildings and machinery maintenance.

There have been two additions to the current team of conservation volunteers so there are now 5 team members to assist me in the all important task of monitoring and conducting minor conservation-led repairs to the Garden's historic structures.

A formal report produced in March 2019 assessed priorities for structural repairs within the Garden. These are now being revisited and schedules prepared to take forward issues raised.

Currently the ironwork features are being cleaned as time allows and four garden benches are in the workshops being painted and rebuilt.

Mike Johnston, a Trustee of the Richard Ormonde Shuttleworth Remembrance Trust and former Principal of Shuttleworth College from 2010 to 2019, has also become involved with progressing conservation matters in the Garden.

Benonia Okang, Conservation Steward

Tree dedication

On 15 February 2024 the Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, Mrs Susan Lousada, visited the Swiss Garden to dedicate an Indian Horse Chestnut tree (believed to be a favourite of King Charles III) to commemorate the Coronation of King Charles III. This was the first tree dedication that the Lord Lieutenant had undertaken and she expressed her pleasure at creating a sustainable living legacy to mark His Majesty's Coronation and hoped that many generations and families seeing the tree would remember that event. The tree has been planted on a mound opposite the Swiss Cottage and a plaque will be placed there to ensure that the tree and the event are recognised.

We were very lucky with the weather and experienced an unusually warm afternoon which enabled the Lord Lieutenant to be escorted around the Garden by Tony Young, Head Gardener; Keith Hichisson, Chair of the Friends of the Swiss Garden Committee; Lady Jane Whitbread, Chair of the Trustees of the Friends of the Swiss Garden; Marion Maule, Trustee of the Friends of the Swiss Garden and Mike Johnston, Trustee of the Richard Ormonde Shuttleworth Remembrance Trust.

Many members of the Friends of the Swiss Garden (FOSG) attended the dedication ceremony and enjoyed a social gathering afterwards.

A letter of thanks from the Lord Lieutenant's Office asked that her heartfelt thanks be passed on to the volunteers who make the Swiss Garden the treasure that it is and congratulated the Head Gardener on the obvious impact he has had in a short time. She said that she intends to return before too long.

A longer article is included on the Friends of the Swiss Garden website : www.friendsoftheswissgarden.org



Access for FOSG members

There are times when access to the Shuttleworth site will only be available to those who have tickets for the specific event taking place, generally over a weekend.

To make sure that FOSG members don't end up making an unsuccessful journey this restriction will apply on the following dates:

- All Air Show days
- 30/31 March - Easter Bunny Fly In and Egg Hunt
- 25/26 May - D Day Weekend and Spitfire Sit in Experience

Detailed information on these events is available on the Shuttleworth website.

Access for RHS Members

RHS members can now gain free access to the Swiss Garden on a Monday as well as a Thursday so please do come and visit us more often and tell your friends and fellow RHS members about the new arrangements.



Celebrating 200 years of the Swiss Garden 1824-2024

Details are also available on the FOSG website

The Autumn 2023 edition of Clippings advised that the FOSG Committee was considering appropriate ways to recognise and celebrate the bi-centennial anniversary of the Garden's inception.

A special programme of events has now been arranged this year as follows:

Saturday 23 March in the Garden Room 10am to 12noon

Launch of the programme, with an introduction and welcome by the FOSG committee to explain the events for the year. After that children are invited to join in with some crafting on a daffodil theme and to follow the daffodil trail around the Garden.

The children's writing competition will also be launched. Its title is "Inspired by nature with a garden theme". Please see a separate article with further details regarding this competition.

Wednesday 19 June in the Garden Room From 5 pm

The Annual General Meeting of the FOSG Committee, possibly including a short film showing a pageant filmed in the Garden in 1910.

Friday 26 July in the Swiss Garden 10am to 4pm

Teddy Bears Picnic

Bring along your own picnic and a bear or two as well as the children and play some games in the Garden. There will be a best dressed bear competition and children's crafts in the Garden Room on a bear theme.

There may be a surprise bear appearance as well as a sing along event.

Saturday and Sunday 17 and 18 August 10am to 12noon both days

Fairy Weekend

There will be children's activities including making fairy doors and a fairy doors trail.

Monday 16 to Friday 27 September Annual Art Exhibition

The main theme is British Landscapes, Gardens and Wildlife. Especially for this year there will be an additional category called "200 years of the Swiss Garden". This can be in the form of a photograph, a painting, a poem or anything else that conveys that title.

Saturday and Sunday 19 and 20 October 10am to 12noon both days Land Art and Sculpture

Land Art, Sculpture trail and associated children's activities.

Saturday 26 October 5pm to 9pm Halloween

A spooky tour around the Garden with a new story.

Sunday 3 November 2pm to 4pm

Closing Ceremony for the 200 year celebrations. This will include displays of what has taken place during the year and there will be a guest speaker talking about conservation in the Garden. Presentation of prizes to the winners of the writing competition. Light refreshments will be served.

This calendar of events will enable you to enter dates in your diary to celebrate this special year in the Garden's history.

Further detailed information will be available on the FOSG website and future editions of Clippings as the year progresses.


SWISS GARDEN
celebrating 200 years
— 1824 - 2024

Children's Writing Competition

Details are also available on the FOSG website

"Inspired by nature with a garden theme"

- What inspires you about nature and gardens?
- Have you got a favourite tree, fruit or flower?
- What do you like about ponds?
- Can you design a logo which includes a plant?
- What do you find interesting about your subject?
- How did you get the idea?

Entry is free.

Your entry can be in the form of a poem, a sonnet, a haiku, a short description or any other way that inspires you within the rules.

Your entry of up to 250 words must be typed on a sheet of A4 paper and include an illustration (a drawing, a photograph or something downloaded from the Internet).

There are two categories:

- 5 to 10 years old
- 11 to 16 years old

Please send your entries by email to: friendsoftheswissgarden@outlook.com. Any questions may also be sent to this email address.

The closing date is [30 September 2024](#).

There are prizes and the overall winning entry and runners-up will be prominently displayed at the Swiss Garden.



Garden activities on 28 and 29 June during the Festival of Flight Weekend

Details are also available on the FOSG website

The FOSG Committee is supporting the Air Shows on 28 and 29 June by organising games in the Swiss Garden such as croquet, jenga and quoits on both days. There are also children's crafts in the Garden Room at specific times (to be advised).

Saturday 28 June only

From 10am - face painter

11.30am to 12.30pm - Story teller Workshop in the Garden Room

First come first served on the day

An interactive experience with local children's author Laura Noakes encouraging children to participate and use their imagination

Keyboard player with a variety of melodies from musicals and days gone by

Sunday 30 June only

Punch and Judy shows with additional opportunities to practice your own show

We would like to encourage you to dress up in any fashion from the last 200 years (which would include punk!) or make your own hat depicting any fashion from the last 200 years.

The above activities are included in your Air Show entry ticket which needs to be purchased to attend these events. Don't forget that a discount is available for FOSG members.

Shuttleworth House - Open House and Tours

Monday 1 April to Thursday 4 April

Visit the Grade II* House set within the historic Lakeside Parkland free of charge from 11.00 to 15.00 each day.

Inside the rooms are full of original period detail, including a Victorian Grand Piano, enormous chandeliers, gold leafed ceilings and panelled walls.

No ticket is needed for a visit to the House.

However if you wish to go on a tour there is a charge of £10 per adult, available for online booking on the Shuttleworth website. Led by expert volunteers, these tours offer unique insights into the heritage and grandeur of Shuttleworth House, making it an enriching activity for visitors of all ages.

The tour will last approximately 1 hour. Limited availability, pre-booking essential.

Parking is separate from the main visitor attraction and will be located on the Parkland by Shuttleworth House. Please follow parking signage on the day.

Please note that if non FOSG members wish to visit the Collection or Swiss Garden on these days, they must purchase a valid Daily Admission Ticket.



Photo by Darren Harbar