



FRIENDS of CASTLE GREEN

NEWSLETTER

Celebration - Education - Recreation
A Park for People!

Words from The Chair

As the festive season approaches, we can look back on a fantastic year for the Friends of Castle Green. 2009 saw more events than ever before and, despite the complete lack of a proper summer, we lucked out on the weather for all of them. The summer fayre basked in sunshine, we cheered the 3 Choirs Festival on with our own Festival Fun event and Oddsocks Theatre Company gave us another side-splitting performance in August.

I hope everyone will agree that Castle Green is gradually beginning to look better than it has done for years. The Riverbank Project work team is winning the "battle of the bramble", ably assisted by all those people who turned up to help on the volunteer days. If you stand on the opposite bank and look across at the work they have achieved, you can see the beginnings of the design that came out of the public consultation. Large areas of re-growth that look natural and provide those important habitats for the wildlife on the bank are clearly discernible. A huge thank you must go to Amey, who have stepped in yet again and agreed to design the technical specification for the viewing points with benches that will be created along the promenade and all for free! Matt Hatter, Riverbank Project Co-ordinator, has received plaudits from all sides, and rightly so. His gentle, but persistent approach added to a good deal of hard work has meant that the project is fully on track. I look forward to the planting of indigenous shrubs and flowers that will bring additional colour and vibrancy to what was, until recently, a neglected, overgrown and uncared for part of the green.

Something you may not have noticed is the repair work to the metal fencing that runs around the high path on Castle Green. This was paid for by the Parks & Countryside service of Herefordshire Council as part of a "community deal". Our side of the bargain is to get it all painted, along with the original Edwardian metal benches with the paint supplied by Amey. We hope to do this sometime in April, so if you are handy with a paintbrush and don't mind giving up a day of your time please take a note of the day which will be advertised in our next newsletter.

The Friends of Castle Green committee join me in wishing you all a very happy Christmas and an eventful New Year. Do come along to the Christmas Fayre on Sunday 6 December - it's a great way to start/finish your Christmas shopping in style!

Mark Hubbard. Email chair@friendsofcastlegreen.org.uk
Tel: 01432 272684

The Three Choirs Festival Fun

Early in 2009, the Three Choirs Festival committee approached Hereford City Council (your parish) for a grant to help pay for the festival. The City Council is very supportive of the Three Choirs Festival and, after some careful consideration, they asked Three Choirs to come up with an event that would be free to attend, so that the whole city could join in, whatever their personal means.

That was how the idea of "Festival Fun" was born. The Three Choirs Festival in conjunction with the Friends of Castle Green staged a huge event on the final day of the festival on the Castle Green. And the city really did turn out in force! It was amazing to see over 2000 people all on the green at the same time - the place was buzzing. *continued overleaf*

fodder
the health store

This Christmas reduce
Reindeer Miles with
local foods
from a locally
owned independent
health food shop!

Happy Christmas to all our
customers!
26-27 Church Street Hereford

JOIN THE FRIENDS OF CASTLE GREEN AT THEIR
CHRISTMAS FAYRE!

SUNDAY 6TH DECEMBER 2009

10AM — 4 PM

COME AND CELEBRATE THE SEASON WITH YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY — LOTS OF
STALLS OF LOCAL CRAFTS AND PRODUCE, CAFE, MULLED WINE, MINCE PIES,
BOTTLE STALL & SEASONAL ENTERTAINMENT!



Richard III

Had you decided to take a stroll through Hereford's Castle Green on 26 August, you would have

been witness to an extraordinary summer sight; some 200 people sitting in the not-so balmy night air, impersonating cows and laughing uproariously at Shakespeare's well-known comedy, *Richard III*. And well known this particular production deserves to be, for in the imaginative and inventive hands of Oddsocks Theatre Company, this dark tragedy becomes a theatrical delight.



Using a wooden cart as stage and backdrop, the company introduce themselves under feigned names, and in novelty codpieces as if they are indeed travelling players and we are invited 'in on the joke' with witty asides and ad-libs. The six actors play between them twenty-six characters and a number of musical instruments - providing sound effects and plot-summarising ditties to keep us up to speed.

From the moment the cart opens to reveal a large and infantile Edward IV in a bath-come-pushchair brandishing a rubber sponge cake, to Richard's dying moments on the battlefield (after the best theatre swordfight on horseback I've ever seen), we are treated to engaging, imaginative and witty theatre. We are both invited inside theatre - seeing the ropes and pulleys - and invited to delight in theatre's ingenuity - so that a smiling 'severed' head on a platter on the floor which moves about the stage is replaced by a dummy without us realising, and booted off the stage.

Audience participation features largely and we are invited to join in the glorious joke that is playacting. We are divided into the two houses of York and Lancaster, invited to cheer the King and boo Richard; and even more enjoyably, to delight in theatrical inventiveness: 'string' blood, dummy beheadings and disappearing bodies. The scene in which the two sleeping princes in the tower are smothered by their own teddy bears is staged so ingeniously that it's hard to believe one's own eyes. Andy Barrow is an agile and deliciously villainous Richard III, giving nods to Rik Mayall and Edmund Blackadder (in his first incarnation) in his performance - a performance that grows, as his Bergerac nose lengthens and his voice thins, as his devilment increases.

Our five year old sat transfixed throughout, loving the slapstick and athleticism, bewitched by the music, and full of questions about the characters - a perfect introduction to Shakespeare. Playing fast and loose with Shakespeare's text, but playing true to the conventions and character/heart and spirit of Elizabethan theatre, Oddsocks thrill, delight and even move their audience in a production which is above all, entertaining and a fabulous night out. *Kathy Gray*

The Three Choirs Festival Fun (cont)

The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Hereford, Cllr Sylvia Daniels opened the day in real style and then stayed well into the afternoon, mingling with the crowds, visiting the various activities and watching the entertainment. Many thanks, Madam Mayor! The Cider City Jazz Men, Tarrington Brass, the Leominster Morris Men, Squeakes Noyse and Les Berieaux entertained the crowds with various displays of music and traditional dancing and there were plenty of chances for people to get up and have a go themselves. The circus skills workshop was incredibly busy all afternoon. Hundreds of children juggling, plate spinning and learning how to bounce devil sticks completely exhausted the workshop organiser, who was quite overwhelmed by the success of it all.

A particularly stomach churning barber surgeon came as part of the medieval village, enthralling and horrifying the assembled audience by turns with his detailed descriptions (& demonstrations!) of medieval medical surgery, which left us all thanking our lucky stars we were born when we were. Archers and armourers, herbalists and baby swaddling all added to the historical theme.

A massive thank you must go to Guy Rawlinson, who, with his Three Choirs Festival team of helpers, was always there when a job needed doing and who kept smiling even though he must have been exhausted and also to Rebecca Saunders, our Events Officer, who always pulls it off.

We look forward to 2012 when the Three Choirs Festival next comes to town.

Building Update

The beautiful Georgian building in the corner of Castle Green, which is currently used as the Council Training Centre and Youth Canoe Centre, has been the subject of much discussion by the Friends Committee over the years. We are tentatively moving forward with these discussions involving Hereford's Heritage Regeneration Group and Herefordshire Council, which owns the freehold.

Initial thoughts about long term uses for this building include its potential for a social enterprise - a community run business, the profits from which are ploughed back into its upkeep, providing a sustainable future and a permanent base for the Friends of Castle Green. The Chair of the Friends has met with the Heritage Regeneration Group, who in turn have met with representatives of Herefordshire Council and a general agreement has been reached that a project proposal should be developed in consultation with various stakeholders. This is a slow process and the financial viability of such a project needs to be very carefully thought through, but there is great potential. Any long term plans would need to include the canoeists, but the training centre staff are likely to relocate to other council premises in the next few years. Definite plans will need to be fully worked up with funding arranged by the time the council moves out, which may seem like we have plenty of time, but as the saying goes - "time flies"!

PLEASE HELP! ON SUNDAY 6TH DECEMBER

**MARQUEE VOLUNTEERS - COME AND HELP PUT
THE MARQUEE UP FOR THE XMAS FAYRE 7AM**

**BOTTLE STALL VOLUNTEERS - A VALUABLE
FUNDRAISER THAT KEEPS US GOING 9.30AM**

**CAFE VOLUNTEERS - KEEP THE CROWDS FED &
THE MULLED WINE FLOWING 9.30AM**

**IF YOU CAN HELP PLEASE CALL MARK ON 272684
OR REBECCA ON 272605. THANKS!**