

FRIENDS OF HARINGTON NEWSLETTER



September 2024

In this issue:

News from the Friends' Committee.

Friends' Past Events.

Friends' Future Events.

**Harington News Update - Jacqui Steel,
Principal and CEO.**

**Introducing Sue Shefras, Harington
Interim Chief Operations Manager.**

**Harington Celebration of Achievements
- Tuesday 9th July 2024.**

**Harington Students' Journeys -
Highgate Stationers Work Experience
Placement.**

**Harington Students' Journeys -
Highgate Cemetery Work Experience
Placement.**

**Our Icelandic Visitors at Harington
and their visit to Highgate Cemetery in
May 2024.**

**Hort News - Lee Haley, Vocational
Horticulture Trainer.**

**Harington Students Art Exhibition
at Lauderdale House, Highgate in
July 2024.**

NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS' COMMITTEE

By Rosalind Laurie

FRIENDS' PAST EVENTS

Your individual subscriptions and donations comprise a large part of the sum we give to Harington annually, but our fundraising activities add to it quite considerably, and this spring/summer we put on two successful special events.

The first was an afternoon tea quiz in April which raised over £1,650 and was very much enjoyed, both for John and Katie Plews's ticklish questions and for the three-course afternoon tea which replaced the three-course supper of pre-Covid times. Our new venue and format seemed popular, so another quiz is planned for 2025, with enormous thanks to the brilliant John and Katie.

Our second event was a classical violin concert in June, for which Leila and Stephen Hodge generously lent their house.

It was a beautiful evening in every sense: the young violinist was impressive, the weather was warm, the garden was gorgeous, and the canapes were delicious. The £1,335 profit for Harington was almost a bonus, so very many thanks to all those involved, especially Leila and Stephen.

Along with these special events came the two-day Spring Sale in May, in which our refreshments, home produce and raffle raised over £3,360 (thank you!), and the Celebration of Achievements in July, which raised not money but huge pride and satisfaction in our Harington students, as they received the certificates they'd earned from our lovely neighbour, Rowan Atkinson, and tucked into a very welcome tea provided by the Friends' committee.



Harington's Glass fronted classroom and viewing platform overlooking the horticultural site, with the magnificent trees on the site reflected perfectly in the windows.

NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS' COMMITTEE

By Rosalind Laurie

FRIENDS' FUTURE EVENTS

Thursday 19 September, 11am -1pm

A Guided Walk Round Surprising Shadwell, £25

Join us for this unusual walk round an area of London you've probably never thought of visiting! Yet this old sailor town will repay your interest, with its stories of the 1936 Battle of Cable Street, Daniel Alexander's Tobacco Dock, an escaping tiger, the famous Ratcliff Highway murders, and more.

Shadwell is easy to get to - just take the Northern line to Bank, then it's one stop on the Docklands Light Railway.

For more details and to book a place, please contact Rosalind Laurie on rosalindlaurie@talktalk.net or 07810 287670.

As usual, all proceeds will go to Harington.

Wednesday 6 November, 7.30pm

Festive Wine Tasting at The Theatre of Wine, 124 Junction Road, N19 5LB

(a 4-minute walk from Archway tube station)

Enjoy the festive season in advance by joining us for a lively, informative evening sampling a variety of high-quality wines with complementary cheeses and charcuterie. Cost: £25

There are only 16 places for this event; to book yours please contact Rosalind Laurie on rosalindlaurie@talktalk.net or 07810 287670.

An extra wine tasting is possible on Tuesday 12 November for those who can't make Wednesday 6. Please contact Rosalind if you would like to come to it.

Saturday 7 December, 10am – 2pm

Harington Christmas Fair, 54 Cholmeley Park, N6 5AD

It's way ahead but put this date into your diaries now! Don't miss out on our Friends' delicious jams and chutneys, our



Inside our stunning Greenhouse

mouthwatering refreshments, and our first-class raffle, with music from a brass band to put you into a festive mood, and plants and seasonal decorations from Harington.

Harington News Update

Jacqui Steel, Harington Principal and CEO

My first six months have been a busy and exciting time at Harington. After much preparation and anticipation, we were inspected by Ofsted in June.

We are delighted to retain the judgement of 'Good'. This is a reflection of all of the ongoing hard work of all of the staff and students. It is a relief to start the new academic year with the inspection now behind us.

We have some new changes to some of the staff teams. We are delighted to have welcomed a new Interim COO Sue Shefras who is working hard with the Gardeners,

the charity shops and our newly appointed Fundraiser.

We also welcome new Learning Support Assistants who will work across our sites to provide person centred support to our students.

After a week of staff training including Positive Behaviour Support, safeguarding and Speech and Language support, we are now very excited to welcome our new intake of students and look forward to the successes that they will achieve in the coming years.

Photo below: Entrance at Harington



Introduction by Sue Shefras, Harington Interim Chief Operations Manager



I joined Harington in June as the interim COO and have been settling into the role, enjoying getting to know the students and staff, daily life at the Highgate and Hornsey sites, the two shops and Harington Gardeners.

I wasn't aware of Harington until I saw the job advertised and was surprised to discover such an incredible local charity, and even more surprised when I first saw the rolling 1.4-acre green site.

My career has been in event and project management, having established and run a London based agency for 20-years, delivering events across the UK and internationally for corporates and charities. 4-years ago I changed direction and have worked in operational roles for two charities.

I grew up in Manchester, moved to London following a gap year in Australia and have always lived in north London, aside from a 3-year break in Spain when my two children were little. Both are now at university, and keen kayak sailors. My own hobbies include hiking, travel and of course gardening.

As the interim COO my role is varied and includes operations, governance, finance, HR, and fundraising. It an exciting time to be working at Harington and I feel lucky to be part of the team.



Collage of Summer days, blue skies and stunning views of Harington

Harington Celebration of Achievements 2024

By Jane Simpson, Harington Admin Team

Summer days may be departing, but good memories of our celebrations linger on. "Moments to treasure" was the lovely comment made recently by one of the grandparents in our Parents and Carers Group, in response to being sent the wonderful photograph of her grandson, a Harington student receiving his certificate from Rowan Atkinson.

The Harington Celebration of Achievements Day took place in the afternoon on Tuesday 9th July 2024, in the beautiful marquee and in the equally beautiful Walled Garden with our students and their families invited to this special event.

The Walled Garden grounds are a different teaching area on the site, the gardens are made use of as a horticultural study area by the students, and the plant beds are divided into individual plots for students to tend and develop.

The celebrations were introduced by Jacqui Steel, Harington Principal and CEO, Alison Kelly, Chair of the Harington Board of Trustees, with Rowan Atkinson kindly in support calling out the students' names from their key group study classes.



Alison Kelly and Jacqui Steel

And a wonderful video of the students on the Harington horticultural site was also shown to an appreciative audience – the video was filmed and edited by George Nicola, Learning Support Supervisor and Duty Support Manager.

Despite the Summer downpours all afternoon, the atmosphere on our day of celebrations was so full of fun and community spirit, like the gathering of one big, fond family, and inside the marquee there was a wonderful light despite the persistent overcast weather.

Refreshments were provided by the Friends of Harington after the celebrations and awards. The wonderful Afternoon tea and array of homemade cakes were cheering and really appreciated by our students and their families, and Harington staff and guests.

The Celebration of Achievements Day is such a fantastic team effort and pooling of everyone's talents and resources at Harington, to make the occasion so special for the students. Smiles all round on the day simply outshone everything!



Nechat, Harington Trainer, Student Dillon and Volunteer Jess

Hort News

by Lee Haley,
Harington Vocational Trainer

We were waiting for the summer to start for quite a while here at Harington. Most plants are about a month behind where they usually would be by now. Despite this we managed to win some prizes at the Muswell Hill and Highgate horticultural shows.

This was thanks to Gary Sycamore, friend of the scheme and plant expert, who enters us for the competitions. Harington won a few first prizes for vegetables and cut flowers. It is great for the students to see their work placed in a wider context within our community.

This year some students have been attending Highgate cemetery for work experience. They have been helping the grounds team to maintain the 33 acre woodland estate.

We really look forward to going each week. The staff are very friendly and helpful. Each week the students are getting better at the maintenance jobs. The cemetery staff clearly recognise the group as an asset to their team and are sure to give us plenty to do each week.

They understand that despite having some learning difficulties, that the students are hard-working, high achieving and so they are valued highly.

Students have enjoyed playing cricket this year in the gardens at Harington. Next year we will hopefully use this as a vehicle to get the students out more to other schools with cricket grounds. We hope that this will help to integrate our students more into society and also to raise awareness and respect for young adults with learning difficulties among their peers.

In July, we held the student awards ceremony. Once again, awards were handed out by the one and only Rowan Atkinson, friend of the scheme which was thrilling for parents, staff and students alike. We thank Rowan for lending international prestige to our humble horticulture college in Highgate.

Each of our plant sales have been successful this year. We sold most of our stock on the first day. Next year we will be more ambitious about what we can sell and will aim for a bigger selection. Hopefully we'll have more sun next year too, and we can get a jump on the growing season.



Harington Students' wheelbarrows— stored on the Downside area of the horticultural site.

Harington Students' Journeys

Students on Retail and Customer Service Pathway Work Experience at Highgate Stationers and General Store

By Mariya Grigorova, Harington Job Coach

Luke and Maruf are this year's Harington students who attended work experience placement at Highgate stationers and general store.



Highgate stationers and general store, located just next to the entrance of Waterlow Park has been a valuable partner to Harington since 2016, providing learning opportunities for our students.

The store is a family run business with over 40 years of experience in serving customers across Highgate and North London.

They offer a wide range of services such as key cutting, printing, binding, photocopying, business card and unofficial advice and help with visa and passport applications.

Highgate Stationers and General Store is inclusive, welcoming and working for the whole community.

Luke and Maruf are students on the Harington Retail/ Customer service course and having a work experience placement at the Highgate stationers has provided them with an opportunity to learn how a business of this size operates.

Some of their duties include stock taking, replenishing stock, pricing, photocopying, assisting with customers' enquiries, creating promotional displays and merchandising, cleaning and tidying.



Maruf, Harington student with the Manager of Highgate Stationers.

Students on Retail and Customer Service Pathway at Highgate Stationers and General Store

Here Luke shares about his experience at the store: "I found the placement very useful, and it taught me how to stock count. I loved replenishing the chocolates on the shelves.

I enjoyed pricing and asking the customers if they need any help. I assisted in setting up the outside area of the store, I was also part of creating promotional point of sale for Valentine's Day as you can see on the photos."



Luke, former Harington student creating his Promotional Point of Sale display.



Maruf shares that he likes going to his work experience at the Stationers and it is the best part of his week. He particularly enjoys pricing and helping customers with their questions.

The Highgate Stationers and general store is a little gem at the heart of Highgate that provides a wide range of services and is helpful to the whole community.



Maruf pricing up stock, next to the key cutting section in Highgate Stationers.



Harington Students' Journeys

Highgate Cemetery Work Experience Placement for Harington Students — By Lee Haley, Harington Vocational Trainer

In the new year of 2024, the E3 Horticulture students were chosen by Frank, Head Gardener at Highgate Cemetery, to help manage the woodland estate. Some of the Harington students have been attending Highgate cemetery for work experience.

The students have been helping the grounds team to maintain the 33 acre woodland estate. Each week the students are getting better at the maintenance jobs. The cemetery staff clearly recognise the group as an asset to their team and are sure to give us plenty to do each week.

The staff understand that despite having some learning difficulties, that the students are hard-working, high achieving and so they are valued highly.

All of the staff have really enjoyed supporting the students. Highgate Cemetery is quite a big and scary place, so you can probably imagine that some were a bit nervous at first, but it has been great to see all of the students

overcome their initial fears and now looking forward to going out each week.

Seasonal jobs included leaf collecting, raking, and maintaining hard surfaces and helping to preserve the historic fabric of the cemetery. We are constantly finding interesting and unusual headstones, some belonging to famous or influential people.

Indeed there are plenty of opportunities for hazards within the grounds. We have seen grave-covers that have been prized open by ash tree roots, revealing ten-foot deep chambers beneath. Marble stones are very slippery in wet weather. There are many uneven surfaces, and some sharp materials.

Lead by Frank, all of the grounds team are well trained and well provided for in terms of their PPE and equipment. The students have benefitted enormously from working alongside these seasoned professionals, and have forged good working relationships.

Harington staff and Students Team at Highgate Cemetery.



Our Icelandic Visitors at Harington and their visit to Highgate Cemetery in May 2024

We were very lucky to have a visit to Harington from a large group of 20 Icelandic students on Friday 10th May 2024.

Their visit made for a very interesting cultural exchange at Harington, and a group of Harington students on the Employability course, baked three delicious banana cakes to welcome them to the site.

Afterwards our visitors were taken to view the students' work placement at Highgate Cemetery. The Icelandic group got to see the students working as professionals, while some of the less shy members came forward to chat.

Lee Haley, their teacher from Harington, got to talk briefly about training techniques, mainly TSI (Training with systematic instruction), which is driven by earlier practices (Marc Gold "try another way" approach) and philosophy (Wolf Wolfensberger's social role valorisation theory).

The Icelandic group seemed well informed, spoke great English and were not entirely unfamiliar with the practices of which Lee spoke.



Group photograph of our Icelandic Visitors in the Walled Garden.

Sunny Side Up!

Harington's Art Exhibition Lauderdale House, Highgate in July 2024

Our art exhibition showcased the incredible talents and creativity of the young adults who benefit from the Harington's individualised learning programs.

Through a combination of artistic expression and personal growth, these young people have discovered their own unique voices and artistic styles. Each artwork on display, tells the story of these incredible young individuals.

Harington is dedicated to supporting young adults with learning differences, and provides a unique opportunity for individuals to thrive and reach their full potential.

The proceeds from the event will support the Harington's ongoing mission to empower young adults with learning differences, guiding them towards employment, further education, and a positive start in their young lives. Our art exhibition represents a celebration of inclusion, diversity, and the immense value of supporting one another.

This exhibition is a testament to the strength and resilience of the human spirit, and the boundless possibilities that can be achieved when we embrace and nurture the talents of every individual.

Sunny Side Up!



Harington's Art Exhibition

*Private View - 8th July 2024
1.30 PM to 3.30 PM
Lauderdale House, N6 5HG
Public View: 8th to 30th July 2024*



We thank you for joining us in this memorable event. Together, let us appreciate the beauty of art and support the Harington's mission to create a brighter future for young adults with learning differences.

**By Arushee Suri,
Harington Art Tutor and Learning
Support Assistant**

Sunny Side Up!

Harington Art Exhibition Photographs



A selection of our Students' artworks in the exhibition space at Lauderdale House with glass atrium ceiling.

