

Elford Hall Gardens - Newsletter 20 - July 2013

Special Festival Edition

As those of you who attended will be able to confirm, the 2013 Family Music and Real Ale Festival was a great success. Much hard work by Dick and his team ensured that the organisation was in place well before the event and the brilliant weather on the day meant that most of the drink disappeared by the end of the evening. The preparation for such an event puts a great load on the shoulders of volunteers and the tropical temperatures made the work particularly sapping but all went according to plan and by mid morning on the Saturday we were ready to go!



The bar staff (stood here) were ready to pull the first pints, and were under pressure all day as the barrels emptied. It was a similar tale at the food area and the tea tent - the heat seemed to increase the appetites and thirsts of the punters - and *busy* meant funds were being raised. An excellent raffle was also in full swing and while all of this was going on, people were being royally entertained by a succession of local acts of impressive quality (and sometimes quantity too! - Ukulele Crazy were a crowd all on their own.)



The Walled Garden Wailers in Rehearsal mode (above) and the ever lively Wildfire Folk (below)



Barberama (above) and part of Ukulele Crazy (below) - I'd have needed a wide angled lens to get them all in!



The event was a great fundraiser for the Project and, whilst an exact figure for the profit on the day is not quite finalised, it is clear that it will exceed our previous best and put a total in excess of £8000 into our general fund to meet day-to-day expenses for the foreseeable future and thus safeguard the free access to all, which is such a key feature of the Project. Now that is good news for the project and for village as a whole.



Grateful Thanks

The success was due to many contributors and thanks go out to all of them. Dick's gift for organising big events is crucial, of course, and his team and the volunteers have already been mentioned. All of the musical acts were people who gave of their services for free; the craft stall people donated a portion of their takings; the Elford Art Group put on a lovely display and the proceeds were donated to the project; many of the barrels of beer and cider were sponsored by local businesses; many people donated prizes to Maxine's raffle; the Baker's Oven and Peter Coates Butchers provided their goods at a reduced price. The generosity of these people and others all contributed to the event's success. And fortunately, Mother Nature was on our side this year (after last year's disappointment).

Driving Forward

Even whilst the final marquees were being dismantled, a team from Lafarge Tarmac arrived on site to resurface the driveway. Hours had been spent by Dave Hill & Dave Kenny preparing the drive so that the laying experts could complete the job in one day and that is exactly what happened.

Dave Hill writes "Elford Walled Garden has joined forces with Lafarge Tarmac to provide the gardens with a beautiful new approach to its HQ and to enable the multinational company to experiment and further develop two of their core road building products. Lafarge Tarmac has laid new materials to test variations of surfacing, with the aim of reducing production costs as well as decreasing the carbon footprint of the materials used."

Chairman Dave Watton was very grateful for the generosity of Lafarge Tarmac in agreeing a subsidised trial of their surfacing materials and complimented them on their professionalism and the standard of the finished job. "I am sure that the road will stand as testimony for many years to the excellent work of both our dedicated volunteers and the experts of Lafarge Tarmac. We have to supplement our limited resources where we can and by finding innovative ways



to create win/win solutions to getting work funded, we can often achieve great things working together. We are very grateful to Lafarge Tarmac for their support and, as with as with all of our sponsors, hope that they will come to Elford and literally enjoy the 'fruits' of their own generosity.



After lengthy discussions and final checks, the work got underway at last. By 10 am the first strip had been laid.



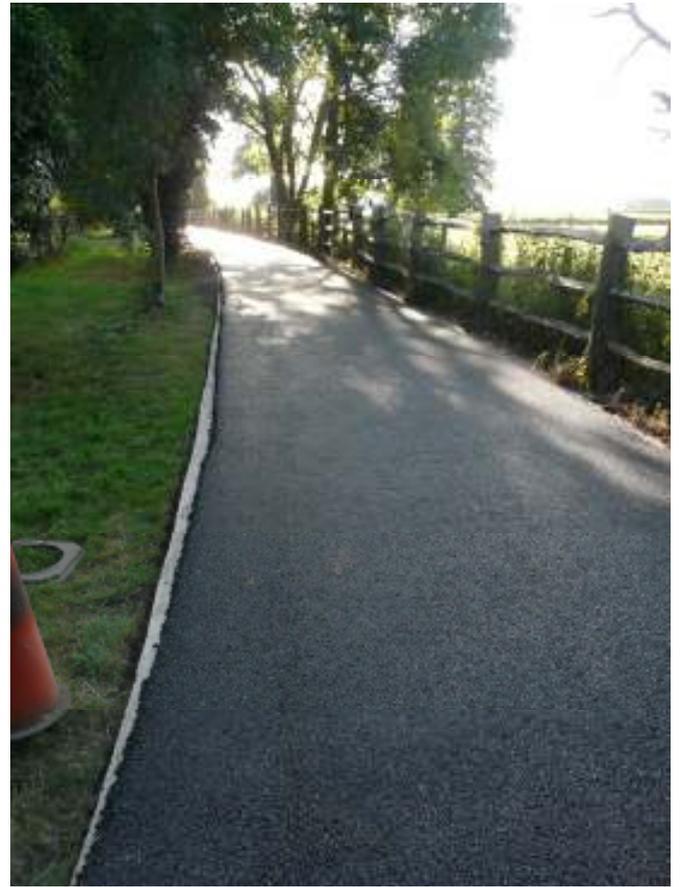
The workers had all of the latest technology at their fingertips.



By midday, the spreading had reached Peg's Stable and by mid afternoon it was all over bar the shouting.

Great job, chaps! The completed driveway will improve access for visitors, especially those needing wheelchair access. It is now possible to complete a circuit of the garden in reasonable comfort for wheelchair users - thus completing the first phase of the walled garden restoration plan. This has been possible largely due to the financial resources of those bodies who have allocated grant funding to the project and ultimately thanks to the skills and hard work of our army of volunteers who have translated that investment and trust in something tangible and wonderful (in my humble opinion). WELL DONE EVERYONE. Our relationship with the Heritage Lottery Fund is now at an end and final bills to them have been submitted. As our main funder, they have been both supportive and encouraging and we've done them proud. A special BIG THANKS to them.

So.... where do we go from here? Suggestions anyone?



Before and After....what a difference a day makes!

Best wishes,

Roger