

Stage II Lottery Bid Submitted!

At last CAMS is able to report that the detailed Stage II bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund has been submitted. Another major milestone for the Cobham Ashenbank Management Scheme, the bid was submitted after many months of intense survey, analysis and design that culminated in the production of the Cobham Park Conservation Plan. This is the masterplan document that describes the history of the Park, considers the importance of every aspect of the historic Park and proposes policies for its protection and restoration. As well as the Conservation Plan, design drawings were submitted to HLF, prepared by consultants of the design team, several of whom have previously presented to the CAMS Forum.

The Heritage Lottery Fund process requires that projects costing over £1m go through a two-stage application process. The Stage I application, which was approved for CAMS in 2001, granted initial approval for the proposed project and provided funds to develop the full scope and costs of the proposals, taking a wide range of criteria into consideration. For Cobham Park the Conservation Plan has been the centrepiece of this development process. The Stage II application is currently seeking a grant from HLF of £4.95m, which would provide 75% of the Phase 1 project costs.

CAMS is also taking a phased approach to the implementation of the project as it allows for the most efficient management of the many different aspects of restoration work involved in such a large and complex scheme. This is particularly true for elements like the Darnley Mausoleum, where the more detailed requirements for the internal restoration will not be



Dr Michael Houghton, HLF Regional Manager, receiving the Conservation Plan

able to be accurately determined until after the graffiti and soot damage has been cleaned away.

Deciding which elements to include within the first phase bid was not an easy task for the project team but was arrived at by considering four key issues: the significances produced by the Cobham Park Conservation Plan; HLF strategic priorities and selection criteria, especially the ability to provide conservation and public benefits; tackling buildings and structures most vulnerable to further damage or deterioration; and restoring the framework of the Historic Park to ensure its integrity. The successive phases are likely to be smaller than the first phase and will address specific issues.

The proposed works in the first phase will consist of:

- ✿ The repair of buildings and hard landscapes in Cobham

Hall grounds: including the Aviary and garden walls, the Pumphouse by Brewers Ponds, Repton's Seat, the West Park Bastion, and the North and East Courts.

- ✿ The restoration of the historic landscape of the North Pleasure Grounds, and the restoration of the parkland landscape in West Park.
- ✿ The structural restoration and cleaning of the Darnley Mausoleum.
- ✿ The restoration of the traditional wood pasture landscape of Cobham Woods.

In addition to the conservation-based works there will also be the provision of warden's accommodation, and the improvement of Lodge Lane and the access track from the Lane to the Mausoleum. The access network throughout Cobham Park will be enhanced with the

creation of new routes, on-site interpretation, and the publication of leaflets and guides. One of the first, and most important, aspects of the project to be implemented will be the appointment of a Community Warden.

The warden's role will be centred on developing links with all the local communities, increasing public involvement in the project, and building a programme of walks, talks, and other events.

The Heritage Lottery Fund is expected to announce its decision on the application in the spring of 2004. While the deliberations are underway CAMS will not be idle. Work is ongoing to ensure the mechanisms are in place for long term care and management of the restored landscape, whilst consents to undertake work to listed buildings or within the Site of Special Scientific Interest also need to be obtained. Another increasingly important aspect of the project and the work of CAMS is to secure the 25% partnership funding required by HLF.

Significant grants have already been secured from English Heritage and, of course, CAMS has its own funds committed to the project. In addition CAMS has submitted a substantial bid to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister under the Thames Gateway Sustainable Communities Plan. The Government has awarded £4.5m across Thames Gateway Kent to improve the quality of the environment by creating a network of open spaces and links to the countryside. Building on the success of CAMS, it is hoped that the Cobham Park Heritage Project will become a focus of Green Grid and the emerging Regional Park (see back page).

The History of Cobham Park, Part II

One of the key considerations in the development of the Cobham Park Heritage Project has been to take a fresh look at Cobham, to provide new information on the Park and its history in order to provide sufficient information to influence the restoration process.

CAMS regulars will be aware of the work that has already been done with historic maps and documents, and will also know of the basic level archaeological survey of the Park by Birmingham University Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) to define the nature and extent of the historic features and make recommendations for further research. One of BUFAU's recommendations was that more detailed attention needed to be paid to the gardens and pleasure grounds. English Heritage, instrumental in the development of CAMS approach to archaeology in Cobham Park, agreed to conduct a very detailed analysis of the archaeology of Lady Darnley's Garden and the South Pleasure Grounds. The survey of the surviving earthworks in these areas was combined with information from historic maps of the Park to produce a series of snapshots of the development of the Park and gardens.

Repton modelled Lady Darnley's Garden on the small flower



Lady Darnley's Garden Terrace.

garden at Nuneham Courtney near Oxford, to which it bears a striking resemblance. However, when the plan of the earthworks in Lady Darnley's Garden was overlaid onto the historic maps it was revealed that some earlier 18th century features, such as the Menagerie, can still be discerned in the garden. Surprisingly some pre-Park features are also still clearly visible: the large terrace in the south of the garden is the re-used remains of a pre-Park field boundary, possibly Roman or even prehistoric in date.

The study of the South Pleasure Grounds also revealed pre-Park features and elements of pre-Repton gardens, as well as later 19th century alterations, which have influenced the current design. The relative importance of all of these earlier features and later alterations have to be considered as part of the restoration process.

It is intended to continue the survey programme and examine the complex earthworks in the North Pleasure Grounds. Historic maps show that these grounds also include the remains of a very large 16th century garden, in the vicinity of the North Lawn. A geophysical survey of the area is to be commissioned to try to locate

this early garden and determine what if anything survives beneath the current garden.

A further geophysical survey of the area of the Roman villa will help to define the extent of the Scheduled Ancient Monument. Analysis of aerial photos of the Park has shown that the villa appears to be linked to a pre-Park field system in West Park, and other early field systems can also be identified elsewhere in the Park. Study of this information and other evidence that continues to become available will take some years to come to fruition. CAMS intends that the results of all the surveys will be made available as a future management, education and research tool, offering enormous potential for future applications of the information.

It will take time before we can tell a new tale of Cobham's past but already we can say that not everything is as we perceived it.



Nuneham Courtney, engraving by William Watts dated 1777 after a painting by Paul Sandby.

Autumn Forum

A large contingent turned out to Cobham Hall for the 11th CAMS Forum in October. Paul Pattison of English Heritage outlined the considerable amount of continuing work that has gone on to understand the archaeology of Cobham Park. In addition to an update on the progress of the HLF project and an introduction to the Regional Park concept, the audience were entertained by videos of the CTRL opening and the Darnley Mausoleum's starring role on BBC TV's Restoration series. Lord Darnley, who once again chaired the

meeting, announced that Ted Allett of Union Railways was stepping down from the chairmanship of CAMS after 6 years now that CTRL Section I is open, and offered his thanks for the personal commitment that Ted had made to CAMS. Ted is not the only member of the CAMS Steering Group to step down this year. John Chesshyre, the National Trust's representative, who for 5 years has made a great contribution to the progress of CAMS and the HLF bid, is moving on to another National Trust project. Both Ted and John will be sorely missed.



John Chesshyre and Ted Allett.

Activity at Ashenbank Wood

Many of you who have walked through Ashenbank Wood over the last 2 years will have noticed that the Woodland Trust has been carrying out woodland management works. Following extensive consultation with the local community during 2000, whilst revising the Management Plan for the wood, the need for a more welcoming atmosphere at Ashenbank Wood was taken on board. Although, Ashenbank Wood being a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), any work proposed also required English Nature's consent.

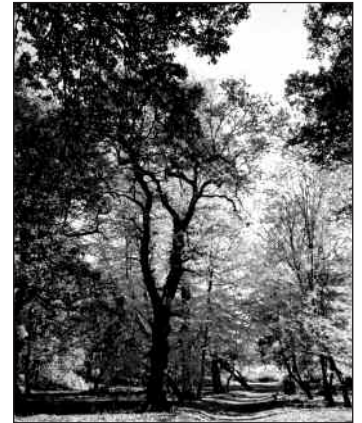
The implementation of the Management Plan started in 2001 by opening up the tree canopy along several main tracks leading off the car park adjacent to

Halfpence Lane, so creating a wide ride habitat. The World War 2 bunkers, the ponds, and the Bronze Age Barrow, were also cleared around to help protect them from damage caused by falling trees and their root growth. In addition the Woodland Trust re-opened the car park off Halfpence Lane and, in partnership with Kent County Council, staff from Shorne Wood Country Park currently open and close the car park at the start and finish of every day and keep it in a clean and tidy state.

The Woodland Trust in managing Ashenbank Wood has no desire to turn the clocks back and restore the woodland to its wood pasture "openness". Those areas covered by secondary woodland will

remain as woodland, whilst the semi-open bracken areas will be kept as open areas by rotational cutting. This will allow the development of scrub species in between each cut. The first of these bracken areas to be cut was carried out in September this year. Within this area were many windblown trees from the gales of 1987 and 1990, some still alive, but many were dead and providing very useful deadwood habitats. The tree trunks of the biggest dead trees were mainly left where they lay, whilst the smaller windblown trees were taken to the edge of the open area and placed in deadwood habitat piles.

Over the next few years, further works will go ahead



Wide ride habitat

to continue to manage this important woodland to improve its biodiversity, and also to make it a beautiful and interesting place to enjoy.

The Darnley Mausoleum - media star!



Visitors to The Darnley Mausoleum

In September the Darnley Mausoleum featured in the major BBC2 series Restoration, competing as one of thirty buildings for a 'Restoration Fund' of over £3 million. The monument's appearance on the programme was seen as a great success for CAMS as over 1500 'Buildings At Risk' across England, and many more in the rest of Britain, were eligible for the series; the Mausoleum was one of only three buildings to be selected from the south-east region.

CAMS was delighted when the Darnley Mausoleum was selected to appear on 'Restoration', hoping

that the publicity would highlight the sad state of the building, its importance to the community and beyond, and the opportunity to rescue it from dereliction. Despite losing out in the south-east regional heat to Wilton's Music Hall in London's East End, Phillip Smart, CAMS Project Manager, remained jubilant that the programme had provided a massive boost to the public profile of the monument.

The Mausoleum was opened to the public on two successive Sundays to coincide with the broadcast and with National Heritage Open Days, and proved so popular that the CAMS team extended the opening by several hours. More than 200 people made the long walk to the Mausoleum on each day, many had travelled from all over the south-east to get there. There were local visitors who'd never seen it before, but others who had known it in the past were shocked and saddened to see the building in its current condition.

The support from those who were unable to attend the open days was also overwhelming, people from all over England, and several from Europe, wrote enquiring about the project.

Public open events will continue to be held at the Mausoleum, including during the actual restoration works. Details of these, and other events, will be circulated to the CAMS mailing list.

Q&A

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS FROM THE FORUM

In a question and answer session to round up the Forum it was confirmed that:

☛ CAMS will continue to supply information on its activities and the progress of the HLF application through newsletters, the Forum, and other literature. A leaflet outlining the HLF phase 1 project will be issued in due course.

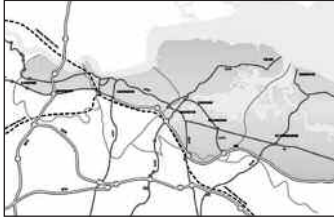
CAMS will also endeavour to ensure that information is presented in a format that is understandable to the widest audience.

☛ The completion of the HLF funded restoration project will not mean the end of management works in Cobham Park. All

parties involved in the Park and the project will sign agreements to ensure that both buildings and landscape are maintained, and that any future damage is repaired. Experience has shown that reversing the culture of vandalism is a slow process but it is evident that CAMS is having an effect and turning the tide. As public confidence and the number of legitimate visitors to the Park and woods increases matters will further improve.

☛ Kent County Council has received a financial contribution from Union Railways to develop the widening scheme for Old Watling Street from Thong Lane to Halfpence Lane. The scheme is on course for completion in 2004.

The Thames Gateway 'Regional Park' Study



The concept of a 'regional park' in north Kent has been developing for some time. In the past a range of ideas have been put forward, most notably by Gravesham Borough Council, but more recently the success of CAMS has provided a model for a

possible scheme. Around north Kent a number of other projects are also being developed. The growth in development planned for the Thames Gateway area in Kent, which includes Dartford, Gravesham, Medway, and Swale, has added impetus to the ideas and all the local authorities in north Kent are now supporting the regional park initiative.

To take the concept forward Kent County Council has commissioned a scoping study,

supported by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, to examine the different ideas for what a regional park could be. Although it is generally agreed that the concept should encompass the Thames Gateway area, not just one location within the area, one of the problems is that the local authorities have slightly different perceptions of what 'regional park' means. The study will also try to identify the social and economic benefits it could bring to the Thames Gateway. The study is

expected to be completed in spring 2004 and the proposals will then be communicated to a wider audience for consultation, CAMS will be involved in the consultation process.



A New Face

Maggie Morgan has replaced John Chesshyre as the National Trust representative on CAMS.

Maggie has been active in community development and regeneration in south-east London for many years. She started her career in retail before moving to the voluntary sector, and was joint Chief Executive of the Forum @ Greenwich until joining the National Trust in 2001.

As National Trust Area Manager for Kent, Maggie is responsible for some of the most beautiful and historic assets of the country and welcomes the Trust's involvement in CAMS, which she sees as an exciting partnership initiative that will make a difference to Kent. Maggie is looking forward to joining a team that is implementing an innovative concept, with an excellent standard of work and great potential for the future.

Channel Tunnel Rail Link

The Kent section of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link opened for business in a blaze of publicity in September. Trains on the route are now regularly beating the old speed record as they pass the CAMS area and residents and visitors alike have been relieved that, as predicted, the noise level is barely noticeable.

Unfortunately the news is not all good. There have been incidents of

vandalism on the line in the Singlewell area, which are being pursued through the courts, but the most serious incident occurred near Cobham Woods only a few weeks ago.

A car was stolen in the Cobham area and driven along the A2 to the east of Cobham Woods where the thieves cut through barriers which had been erected

specifically to try to prevent this type of intrusion. They then broke through the

security fence along the line and rolled the car down the embankment towards the track. Fortunately the design of the line kept the car at the foot of the embankment and prevented it from rolling onto the track so that a potentially disastrous incident was averted.

A reward of £5000 has been offered for information leading to the conviction of the individuals concerned, and anyone who has any information about this or any other incidents is asked to contact British Transport Police, or Kent Police, before further serious events occur. Anyone who has any suggestions or recommendations for techniques or programmes to address these problems and prevent them recurring are also asked to contact Union



Ted Allett and Phillip Smart at the CTRL launch

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