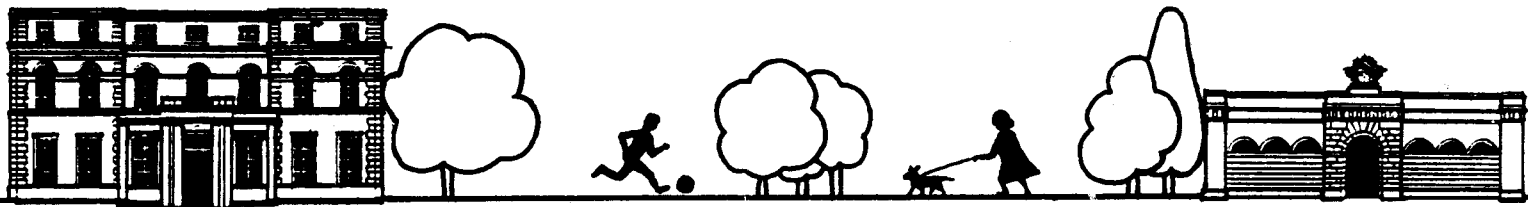


FRIENDS of GUNNERSBURY PARK & MUSEUM

No. 15
August 1985

NEWSLETTER



SUMMER FETE 31st AUGUST

It's Summer Fete time again (if we can find some summer). Please come along and support us - even better, come along and help us. We will be organising various stalls for ourselves: a Book Table, a Raffle, a Tombola, a Cake Stall, a table selling flowers and plants, Bric-a-Brac, and Food and Refreshments. Also, if we can find the volunteers, a Friends Information Stall. There are many ways you could help: donating books or bric-a-brac, making some jam or marmalade, baking a cake, delivering some leaflets, helping on a table, helping to set up in the morning, or just come for the last hour to pick up litter (that's a terrible job if you've been busy all day!) Why do we do it? To raise money and attract people to the Park to enjoy themselves. There will be pony rides, a steel band, a children's roundabout, games in the arena like 'Throwing the Welly', Skipping and Sack Races, Egg & Spoon Race and Tug of War. Mayors from Ealing and Hounslow will be there. It's the last big local event before the children go back to school. If you can help, phone Joan (560 4262) or Eva (993 2692) or Jean (567 5523).

OPEN MEETING ~ SUNDAY 8th SEPTEMBER

We are holding an OPEN MEETING in the end room of the Pavilion Cafe at 3.00 on Sunday 8th September. If the Councillors go ahead with their scheme to convert the Small Mansion to a Gallery with Studios (see elsewhere in this Newsletter for details) they have been advised that they will have to apply to the Lands Tribunal to vary the Covenants over the Park. (This will cost them a fortune and take months if not years.) It is vitally important for the Friends to come to a decision about this, and to assist us we have delivered a complimentary copy of this Newsletter to every house in Popes Lane and Lionel Road which might have rights under the covenants. We will invite Paul Butler along to describe his scheme. Also we will discuss any other matter that members wish, such as the operation of the Cafe, the future of the Riding School, the Fete, ducks, geese, lead, anglers and fishing line, and ideas about the future of the Orangery.

Please come along for a chat, to renew your sub. etc; we will try and organise a tour round the Small Mansion to see the vacant rooms.

The Small Mansion

The Councillors on the Gunnersbury Park Joint Committee have decided on the future of the vacant rooms in the Small Mansion. They have accepted a proposal from Paul Butler (L. B. Hounslow's current artist-in-residence) to use the main room as a Gallery and to use the other rooms as studios for 5 or 6 artists (painters, sculptors, print makers etc) who will exhibit their work in the Gallery and who will supplement their income by providing classes, workshops, summer schools etc. The capital costs will, he hopes, be met by grants from bodies like the Greater London Arts Association; the running costs will be met by rent from the artists, fees from

teaching and commission on sales in the Gallery. When established it is expected to pay a rent in the region of £5,000 p.a.

This decision, as you may have seen in the local papers, was taken in secret without any public consultation. The GPJC decided it was dealing with tenders (which are usually confidential) rather than a matter of public interest. Despite our protests we were forced to leave both the meetings at which the plans were discussed.

What were the alternative schemes? All we know is their title and a one-line description. There were proposals for two Nursery schools on Montessori principles, a Children's Day Centre and a Drama College. Under the heading 'Religious or Community Use' there were two proposals from Sikh organisations, one a Meeting and Social

Centre, the other a Cultural and Educational Museum. There was a proposal from a local firm to use the rooms for auctions, craft fairs, wedding receptions, banqueting and conferences. A proposal came from the West London South Asian Arts Forum to use it as a Resource Centre. A major scheme was proposed by a company wishing to propagate plants by advanced scientific methods which so reduces the cost that existing nurseries will soon seem old-fashioned. This scheme would also have involved the nursery at Gunnersbury becoming a garden centre.

Which would you have chosen? Without knowing the proposed rents who can say? The Friends had sent the GPJC some guidelines on the sort of use we would have preferred. One of the most important elements was that we wanted any scheme to have a 'public face' - something the public could use or benefit from directly. Clearly some of these proposals were 'private'. It is amazing and distressing to learn that the GPJC nearly chose one of the 'private' schemes. But then, behind doors with the Press and public excluded, the GPJC does not have a very good track record.

Where do we go from here? Firstly there will be a lot of work setting the Gallery and Studios up. Secondly, the income from that scheme is unlikely to pay for the restoration of the Orangery. So if they want to keep that listed building standing (and some of the Ealing Councillors clearly don't) then they will have to find the money from the rates. They will moan that they can't, that it's all someone else's fault, but really it is simple. It is a 'public' building; by bad management they have left it to rot; the public now has to pay over the odds to restore it.

The Park

Mike Rowan

Anyone who thinks that gardening is a peaceful occupation has obviously never worked in the Nursery at Gunnersbury Park in the Spring. As June 1st looms nearer, heralding not only the summer sale but also the date by which the bedding and hanging baskets must be ready for distribution to the parks we serve. Since March 1st the houses have been groaning, bulging at the seams, as yet still more seeds are sown, more seedlings pricked out and plants potted.

'There isn't any more room for such and such' is the familiar shout in the Nursery, which is of course blatantly untrue.

'Put them next to the geraniums'.

'We can't; the petunias are there'.

'Put the chlorophytums on the floor and put them where the chlorophytums were'.

'The chlorophytums are already on the floor'.

'Well, move the antirrhinums into the frame'.

'The frame is full'.

and so it goes on. So if anyone knows where we might acquire some skyhooks, we in the Nursery would be very grateful.

But its not just the seedlings - other things make life difficult behind the Nursery walls. I don't know if anyone else has noticed, but Angela Rippon has been very difficult of late. I first noticed her in February, not looking her best, I must admit. Still, it was early so I wasn't unduly worried. But last week I noticed her again, almost naked - sorry, perhaps I should explain (before this begins to resemble a tabloid newspaper). Angela Rippon is a fuschia, and our only stock plant was decidedly reticent to throw some cuttings.

Being an enthusiast of fuschias (we now have 100 different varieties) and spending a lot of time taking cuttings and potting up the young plants, set me wondering about some of the names, just how much do the flowers resemble their 'nom de plume' (or should that be 'nom de bloom'?)

'Angela Rippon' is certainly a bright and charming flower, and 'Miss California' is large and showy; 'Dollar Princess' exudes richness and sophistication but what about the more modestly named fuschias? Who could decide that a flower could resemble 'Harry Grey', 'Major Heapley', 'Lena Dalton' or perhaps my favourite 'Nelly Nuttal' - a lady I would love to have met, simply to see what inspired the breeder of such a lovely bloom.

Talking of names, I was amused to talk to a lady who had taken my mention of dogs in the last Newsletter to heart; she said that her adorable dog Tess now rejoices in the kennel name 'Gunnersbury Queen' - watch out Crufts!

Many thanks for all the compliments at completion of the Rest Garden, which I hope will look superb this summer. It is now up to you to make this once neglected area a well-used feature in the Park and watch it develop; perhaps you will see some ideas to use in your own gardens. In case you are wondering what happened to the rustic frame in the Rest Garden that I waxed lyrical about in the last Newsletter, I'm afraid that as the nurseries were out of stock of the climbing roses we decided not to make the frame and change the design of the rose beds.

The idea I liked the best from the Winter Garden has got to be the variegated ivy, hедера helix 'Glacier', with a sprinkling of deep purple crocus 'Whitewell Purple' - the ivy is a long curved shape and the crocus planted haphazardly throughout, certainly this is an idea I will be repeating elsewhere.

The Winter Garden still looks a little bare but it will take about three years to develop, and then we should have a new feature in the Park which I believe people will make a detour to see.

Having put up with pot plants placed precariously on warped planks in the conservatory, I decided a face lift was in order. Three more white troughs will complete the new design which together with the bright paintwork will, I feel, be a huge improvement.

The area in front of the Small Mansion was originally designed as a painter's palette, each round bed containing a different colour. This year we have decided to emulate the original intention and using flowering plants hope to show the range in lighter and darker shades of the primary colours, as perhaps one might expect to see on a palette. A notice will explain this and hopefully an interesting and eye-catching design will result.

The Riding School

The drama of the future of a riding school in the Park is almost as exciting as learning to ride! After Alan Job's school was closed the right to operate was awarded to a Mr. Sutton, and all was set fair for the summer. But Mr. Sutton's brother fell

ill and he was called back to take over the family business. So the GPJC decided to re-advertise (the adverts will be in Horse and Hound in the next few weeks). But what to do over the summer? Into the breach steps Mrs. Andrea Sanders with the offer to run a small summer school on the lines of Anne Stead's original scheme. 'Yes' says the GPJC, on the 26th July.

Clear the ground, sort out the damage left by Alan Job, insure the school, get a phone, buy the food, summon the volunteers, do the posters, phone the papers, bring in the ponies, open for business.....

Andrea Sanders and Anne Stead have done it. It is happening, now. Go down and see them, send the children, and thank heaven that there are enough capable people around to make the good things happen.

The Café

This Newsletter is a good place to give a progress report on the Cafe. The Friends of Gunnersbury Park and Museum (which is a registered charity) has set up a trading company - called Gunnersbury Enterprises Ltd - to run The Pavilion Cafe (near the Boating Lake) and the Coronation Chalet (by the changing rooms). Some of the Executive Committee of the Friends are the unpaid Directors of the company and the profits,

FRIENDS OF GUNNERSBURY PARK AND MUSEUM

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL FORM

The subscription rate is £3 per member for the year beginning 1st April.

NAME:.....(Block Letters Please)

ADDRESS:.....

SIGNATURE:.....

Please send this form to the Membership Secretary, Mrs. Joan Catterall, 39, Lionel Road, Brentford.

We sometimes need volunteers for different aspects of the society's work and we are assembling a list of people on whom we can occasionally call. If you are willing to be added to this list, please put your phone number here:

.....

after the wages of the staff in the Cafe have been paid, will go to the Friends to be spent on the Park and Museum. The losses are covered by a loan guaranteed by members of the Executive Committee.

We had three ambitions - to improve the standards in the Cafe (which we have done), to expand the service within the Park (which we have started to do) and to make a healthy profit (which we are still waiting for).

The latest position is that we have completely redecorated the Coronation Chalet in time for the start of the football season. This involved scraping mould from the ceiling and the floor! We have been given, by Charringtons the brewers, 44 metal chairs of the same type as we are using in the Cafe. (By the way, these now need painting! If you want to volunteer, phone James Wisdom on 994 4231). We have been granted permission to cater for functions in the Temple and in the Lecture Room in the Small Mansion, so you could spread the word about to people who are looking for new and interesting places for children's parties, receptions etc. Also we have a good sized space in the Cafe itself (it can seat 40 comfortably) for groups to use. This is the space on the other side of the partition, with a separate door. It can also be used by artists or craftsmen

displaying and selling their work. Do you know of anyone looking for a space like this? Its great advantage is that it is always supervised.

We are always interested in suggestions, comments or advice on how the Cafe is going. We will be having a meeting there soon to discuss these things with members of the Friends (the details are elsewhere in the Newsletter). Or you could phone James Wisdom (994 4231). For booking functions, looking at the Temple etc. please phone the manageress at The Pavilion Cafe, Mrs. Kate Knight (992 0543). We all very much want this venture to succeed - it could make such a difference to the Park, in so many ways.

By the way, can anybody do anything about the weather? One spot of rain and the park is deserted! So if you want 180 acres all to yourself, you know when to turn out - to really appreciate the Park you have to see it in all its moods - windy, rainy, cold and baking hot; and remember, the Cafe is always open for a cup of tea and a cream scone!

By the Potomac...

If you have been walking in the Park on a Sunday morning and have been down by the Potomac Lake you will probably have seen

FRIENDS OF GUNNERSBURY PARK AND MUSEUM

DEED OF COVENANT

I,.....
of.....
hereby covenant with THE FRIENDS OF GUNNERSBURY PARK AND MUSEUM that for a period of
years from the date hereof (or during the remainder of my life, whichever is the shorter)
I will pay to the FRIENDS OF GUNNERSBURY PARK AND MUSEUM on theday of
.....(month) such a sum as after the deduction of income tax will amount to
f.....

Signed, sealed and delivered.

SIGNATURE:..... DATE:.....

In the presence of:.....

Signature of witness:.....

Address of witness:.....

For your convenience we recommend that you make out a BANKERS ORDER in favour of The Friends Of Gunnersbury Park And Museum's No.1 account at the National Westminster Bank, Gunnersbury Park Branch, 12 Park Parade, Gunnersbury Avenue, W3 9BD to make a regular annual payment for the same period of years.

two grubby ladies in wellies, carrying black plastic sacks, grubbing in the water and the shrubbery. Don't panic! We are not after the birds for Sunday lunch, but after rubbish and discarded fishing tackle. Operation Clear-Up is in progress because, as you are probably aware, a replanting programme on the pond sides and the island was started this year by John Stockdale and his staff and this seemed a way of helping to give the plants and birds a chance.

If any of you have newts, frogs or toads in your garden and ponds and next year you have spawn we would be grateful if you would let us have a little bit for the Potomac. Before anyone rings to tell me that this is naughty, particularly the bit about introducing the new wildlife into the pond, when I was growing up there used to be frogs in the pond and we would like to see them back again. The only way to give it a try is to introduce spawn to the pond as older frogs and newts will, I am told, try to return to their spawning area where born.

I'll remind you again in our Christmas and Spring Newsletter, as it would be lovely to see the frogs back in the pond again.

Joan Catterall and Anne Stead

P.S. We would like to say welcome to Colin who has taken over the task of running the Nursery from our own Mike 'Capability Brown' Rowan who was promoted this year to Park Superintendent at Chiswick House. We wish them both well in their new jobs.

Also: We would like to thank Peter for the wood he provided for the Duck box which has now been installed in its allocated place.

FROGS Hop Out!

Terrie Martin

It was good of the rain to stay away when 14 'Frogs' travelled in a comfy minibus to enjoy a wonderful day at the Cambridge Botanical Garden on June 22nd.

The trip was made even more enjoyable by Mike Rowan who was a student there a few years ago. He is so well-informed he gave us all the names (botanical and common) of enormous trees, plants, shrubs, flowers and rockery plants etc.; without Mike's expert knowledge our education would have been sadly lacking.

The 40 acres of tropical and other species left us in awe. I especially loved the fragrant aroma of the hot-house flowers and plants. The bark of two trees were particularly fascinating. One, when you pressed your hand against it, bounced back just like a sponge. The other was shiny like mahogany - most unique! I fully expected to see pygmies alight from behind the leaves of the giant rhubarb!

Our break in the pic-nic area was a

welcome one. Fully refreshed and fortified we saw as much as time allowed, as we had yet to visit Kings College, a truly magnificent building, and the awe-inspiring Kings Chapel - one of the most beautiful I have ever seen.

From there we visited Queens College, an equally magnificent example of 1448 architecture. Our route then took us to St. Johns College and to round off the day, the Bridge of Sighs - a replica of Venice, or is it vice versa?

The punts alongside the colleges may not be as magnificent as Venetian gondolas but the straw boaters adorning the punters' heads were certainly a sight to behold.

Graduation Day on the forecourt of one college was so picturesque and reminiscent of Royal Ascot's finery, worn by the families and friends of the graduates.

Weary but oh so happy, we sunk into our seats gratefully promising ourselves another trip, perhaps in the autumn or winter, when Mike assured us it was just as beautiful then. I would certainly recommend a visit for it is smaller and much more compact than Kew Gardens. The rain bucketed down on the way home, some of our crowd snoozing, the rest of us wide awake, discussing the various plants and flowers that we would love to incorporate into our own gardens.

AGM Decisions

At the Annual General Meeting it was decided to raise the subscription to £3 per person per year. This was because the old rate (of £1 or 50p for OAPs) did not cover the costs of administering the society, sending out the Newsletters etc. Also, one of our aims is to make donations to the Park & Museum and it was felt that the subscription should include an element of donation. (Our current donation project is to equip the Park staff with walkie/talkies - this will cost over £1,000.) Finally it was decided to set up arrangements for covenanting subscriptions, to bring the Friends a small tax advantage.

The results of the elections at the AGM and the first Executive Committee meeting are as follows:

Chairman: James Wisdom, 25, Hartington Road, W.4. (994 4231).

Vice Chairman: Stephen Mark, 227, Popes Lane, W.5. (567 2494).

Secretary: Ken Hawkes, 18, Julius Court, Justin Close, Brentford. (568 2717).

Treasurer: Joyce Prince, 245, Popes Lane, W.5. (567 5521).

Membership Secretary: Joan Catterall, 39, Lionel Road, Brentford. (560 4262).

Chairman, Fund Raising Sub-Committee: Eva Swann, 152, Gunnersbury Ave, W.3. (993 2692)