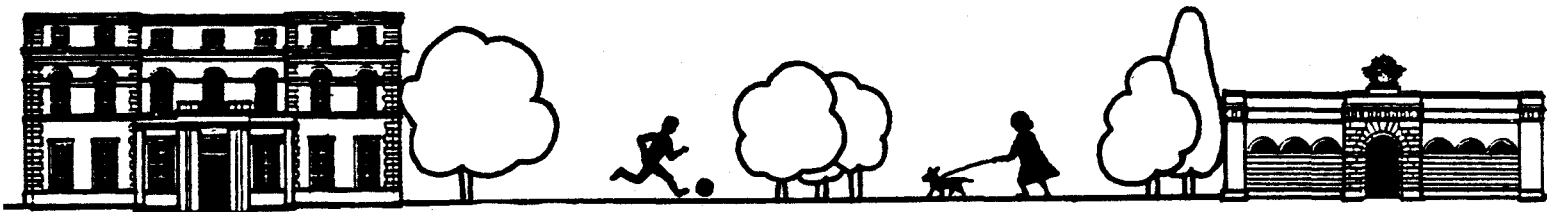


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NEWSLETTER



GUNNERSBURY GOES TO WATERMANS!

This is the text of the publicity for a new exhibition at the Watermans Arts Centre in Brentford called "A FEW SURVIVING HEDGES". It has been organised by Julia Shelley (the Museum's Assistant Curator) and Nicholas Usherwood (an art historian) and will run from 15th April to 22nd May.

"The title of this exhibition, taken from John Betjeman's elegiac poem *Middlesex*, is a reminder that even less than 50 years ago there were still parts of the Boroughs of Ealing and Hounslow that retained an essentially rural and agricultural character. Even now on Horsenden Hill, in the churchyards at Perivale and Heston and on the green at Norwood it is possible to feel something of how that beautiful landscape must once have looked before the tide of bricks and mortar moving west finally engulfed it.

Through paintings, prints and watercolours this exhibition draws on the remarkably extensive art collections at Gunnersbury Park Museum (the first time they have ever been displayed en masse) to show, not only how the landscape of the district must once have looked but also how first canals, then railways, roads and industry gradually transformed it into an urban environment. It records, too, how much the old centres of trade and commerce like Brentford were overtaken by the early 20th century industrial expansion of Acton, and how the grand villas and houses of Ealing and Hanwell gradually gave way to "large-scale" high density housing.

The quality of the work on show is remarkably varied with both some highly regarded artists like Paul Sandby and William Payne and also less well-known figures like E. F. Brewtnall and H. Davis Richter contributing splendid images of the life and look of the West London landscape over the last two and a half centuries. But it is more often works by unknown artists that capture the eye and provide a considerable amount of the pleasure of the show. For the look and feel of how it was "in the olden days" we are largely dependent on these individuals who, with their brushes, pens and cameras went out and recorded local scenes, often purely for pleasure, not realising their value for future record. Fortunately, thanks to the generosity and foresight of local collectors, many of these images have found their way into local museums for the public to enjoy.

Gunnersbury Park Museum opened in 1929 and purchased many superb paintings from a fund supplemented by donations from visitors and from fund-raising events. This excellent collection of approximately 120 works will be on show for the first time in Brentford. It should prove fascinating to anyone living in the district and anyone interested in good painting."

The PRIVATE VIEW of this exhibition is on Thursday 14th April, between 7.00 and 9.00, at the Watermans Arts Centre, 40 Brentford High Street, and The Friends of Gunnersbury Park and Museum have been invited. Please come along - we look forward to seeing you there. If you cannot manage to come, the Gallery is open until 8.30 on weeknights and 9.00 at weekends.

TREES

The photograph is the culmination of our TREE APPEAL. It was taken on the day when we presented Councillor Fred Dunckley (the Chairman of the Gunnersbury Park Joint Committee) with cheques for £600, bringing the grand total of money raised to £1,100!

The photo shows Mrs Anne Stephenson with her children Laura and Andrew (who planted a tree near to the Boating Lake), Joan Catterall (the Friends Membership Secretary), Cllr. Dunckley and James Wisdom (the Chairman of the Friends) with the cheques, then lurking behind are John Catterall and Andrew Brown (the Treasurer) and in front is Mr. Gatley, the Chairman of the Hanwell Prince of Wales Angling Society. This society had donated £300 from a sponsored competition, during which they had fished about 1,000 lbs of fish from the Boating Lake (which is also used as a breeding pond) and transferred them to the Potomac Lake. The society supervises the Potomac, sells the licences, keeps the area clean, teaches youngsters how to fish and pays the Joint Committee a healthy fee for the honour!

We had a lot of donations following our last Newsletter, and we put some of the Friends' funds towards the project. It will take some time before all the trees are planted - some will be bought and planted next winter - and even longer before they are established. It has been heartening to see how many people have shown how much they care about the Park - and daunting to see how much needs still to be done! Thank you all for your donations.



Photo courtesy of the Brentford, Chiswick & Isleworth Times

THE STABLES: We should have more news in our next Newsletter, but we know of two schemes which are in the early stages of consideration - they both offer "public benefit" (the Museum extension, Craft Centre-type proposals) with commercial use to finance restoration - one is restaurant/banqueting, the other antiques/auctions.

THE PAVILION CAFE & THE TEMPLE: Friends will be delighted to hear that our manager, Tony Marren, has obtained the licence to operate the Park Catering. We wish him well in this venture. The Cafe number is 992 0543.

PHONE NUMBERS: The Chairman (James Wisdom) can be contacted on 994 4231; the Membership Secretary (Joan Catterall) is on 560 4262.