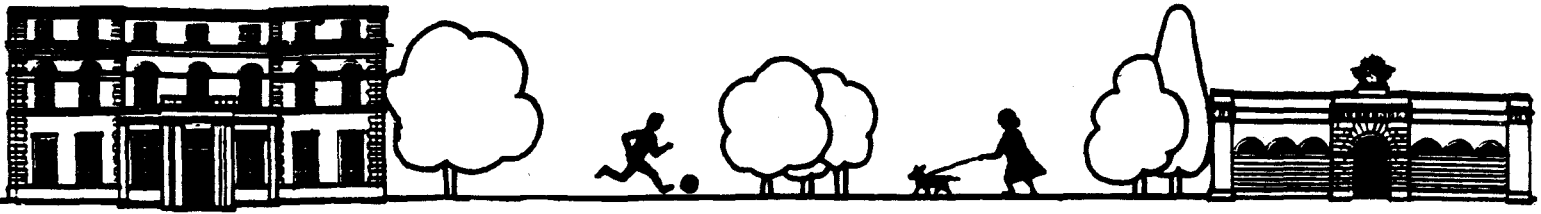


No.28
Nov. 1989

NEWSLETTER



ARBITRATION OVER THE STABLES

In the last Newsletter we reported that Ealing was in favour of the "Swakeleys" scheme but Hounslow was opposed. Since then pressure from Ealing, from English Heritage, from the Brentford Community Council and from the Friends on TV news and in the press has persuaded Hounslow to agree to arbitration.

An arbitrator from the Royal Town Planning Institute will soon be appointed. At present, both Councils are agreeing the terms for the arbitration. They could be specific (should the Swakeleys scheme be built?) or general (could profit from offices be used to restore the buildings?).

The Friends position is this: Having struggled since 1981 we can see that neither Council will put any real money into Gunnersbury (because of the split political responsibility); that the condition of the Stables is so bad they need real real money; that the Museum must be able to shift its Transport Collection to get any real development; that speed is now essential (the state of the buildings, imminent changes in methods of funding); that there is no other credible scheme in the pipeline; that the office development of the Swakeleys scheme is against the spirit of a public park but in the circumstances is the only solution and offers the highest level of public benefit.

THE CHRISTMAS CRACKER

The Friends' Christmas Bazaar, "The Christmas Cracker", will be held in the Temple on Sunday, December 3rd, from 11 - 4 o'clock. We will have stalls offering Christmas presents, jams, cakes, plants, marmalade, Christmas cards and bric-a-brac. We will also be inviting our friends from Imperial Cancer Research, Guide Dogs for the Blind, the Cats Protection League, the PDSA and the Southfields Community Centre to bring their stalls. Come in and see us - perhaps renew your subscription!

THE CHRISTMAS CARD

With this Newsletter we have included a complimentary copy of the new Christmas Card of the Large Mansion, with envelope. It is available from the Museum at the remarkable price of £1.99p per packet of 10.

NOTICE BOARDS

In October we donated £900 to the Park towards the cost of the new Notice Boards. We received the money from a film company which used the Cafe while we were running it. They adapted it to look like a Brighton seafront cafe for a scene in the film "The Fruit Machine". Coincidentally this film was shown on ITV in the same week we made the donation. It starred Robert Stephens and Robbie Coltrane and surprised us by the quantity and variety of sex, violence, bad language and dolphins!

THE MUSEUM

There are two displays in the Museum's temporary exhibition room - "Burnished Gold" and "Putting Pen To Paper" (about illuminated manuscripts and calligraphy). They will be there until 7th January. When you visit you will be able to see the final touches being put to the Mural (on a temporary partition in the Museum). It shows figures from the past and present of Gunnersbury Museum. It may be on show for some years - the room behind it needs major repair and there is no money for the work.

The interiors of the Museum have recently been upgraded from Grade II to Grade II* ("particularly important buildings of more than special interest"). This means that grants for repair work are more easily available. Only 4% of our listed historic buildings come into the category. The dry rot outbreak in the Museum is now being treated. Both Councils found the £42,000 needed and fumigation work has started though it will be weeks (or months) until the re-building work is finished and the main parts of the Museum re-opened.

THE FRIENDS COMMITTEE

After the first meeting of the Executive Committee elected at the AGM the names and positions of the members of the Committee are: James Wisdom, Chairman (994 4231) Ian Harmer, Vice Chairman (568 7159) Ken Hawkes, Secretary (568 2717) Andrew Brown, Treasurer (948 1340) Joan Catterall, Membership Secretary (560 4262) Marianne Booth, Fund-raising (992 9891) John Brace (948 7017) Jean Clark (567 5523) Vivien Winning (940 4116) Joan Fenton (579 5997) Pauline Tett (992 2177) and John Catterall (560 4262).

GRANT FOR THE ORANGERY

Work on the restoration of the Orangery had halted while English Heritage were consulted about the details and they have now granted £10,000 to complete the work to their requirements. The Friends would like to thank the developers, Crowngap Ltd, for the contribution they have made to improving the Park. Now the question arises - how should this Orangery be used? We may have to do a fund-raising campaign to get a good solution.

SCULPTURE IN THE PARK

Now that the sculpture exhibition is over..... The Small Mansion Arts Centre had 5,000 visitors..... The vandals smashed everything they could..... Anything dug in the ground or cut in the grass has survived..... The amazing smell around Princess Amelia's Bath-House was milk powder and water..... We must consider a major commission in the Park for the future..... Our pig started off as a joke about litter and ended as a comment on vandalism..... Let's hope the artists try it all again soon.....

TREES & PLAYGROUNDS

We collected money to replace the trees damaged in the great storm. 20 oaks were planted last year (along the back of Lionel Road) but the dry summer was hard to them. To be planted in the next months are - 15 new oaks and some replacement oaks, a silver birch, a cherry, a willow, 2 cedars and possibly a hornbeam. The new shrub border in the children's playground has survived the summer.

Some new playground equipment is going in (at last!). A timber tower and slide with sand around the base has been up for some time. A Roundabout for disabled children will arrive soon (the rubber base has already been laid).