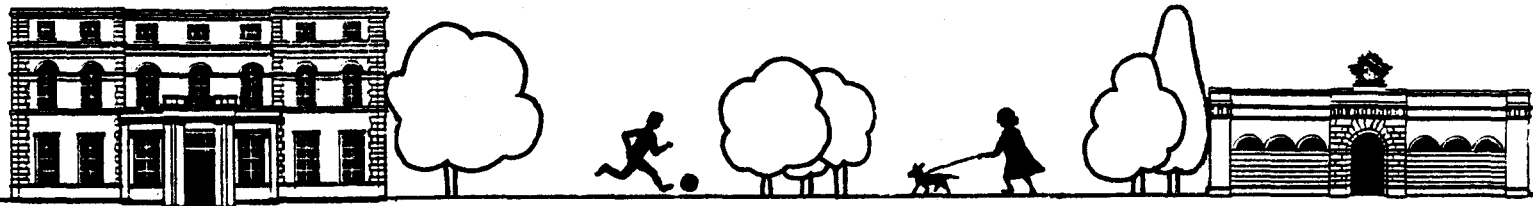


FRIENDS of GUNNERSBURY PARK & MUSEUM

No.6
Dec. 1982

NEWSLETTER



Evening Open Meeting ~ Friday 14th Jan.

Have you seen the kitchens in the Large Mansion yet? They are a suite of rooms containing the largest cast-iron cooking range you can imagine. The museum has a large collection of household equipment which is either stored in the basement or on display, sitting rather uncomfortably in the fine rooms of the Large Mansion. Recently the Joint Committee gave permission for the Museum to use these kitchens and so an exciting opportunity has arisen. In order to get this project underway the Friends have volunteered to do the basic cleaning and preparatory work. In the end we all hope that this will result in a fascinating new display that will be open to the public.

As a change from our usual practice we are holding our next Open Meeting in the Museum at 7.30 p.m. on Friday 14th January. We have invited Valerie Bott, Keeper of the Grange Museum (the local history museum for the London Borough of Brent) to give us a talk on the way that large Victorian kitchens operated. We are hoping that she will be able to use some of the exhibits from the stores in her talk. She will be talking about the storage and preparation of food, cookery and cooking equipment and the world 'below stairs'. To fortify you against the inevitable cold of a winter evening we will be offering mince pies and a glass of wine, for which a modest charge will be made.

We will be starting work on the Kitchens on Saturday 29th January at 2.00 p.m. and we will be there every Saturday and Sunday afternoon from then on. Please come along and see what the project involves - without obligation! If you would like to join the roster of volunteers you will be very welcome. We can use as much or as little time as you can give. This really is a very interesting and worthwhile project, and it should also be great fun. If you want further details, please contact the Chairman, James Wisdom, 25, Hartington Road, W.4.; 994 4231.

Summer Fete

In the last issue of our Newsletter there was not room to give a full account of the Summer Fete, held in the Park on 24th July 1982. Joan Catterall has prepared the following for this issue:

The Friends' First Annual Summer Fete attracted stalls from over 40 local charities and societies. Amongst those who participated were the Round Table with their "Dinosaur Derby", two local churches - St. James' and St. Dunstan's, the NSPCC, Ealing National Trust, the 4/21st Chiswick Scouts, the Green Dragon Lane Housing Co-operative, St. George's Community Association, ROSE, the RSPCA, Imperial Cancer Research, West Chiswick Residents' Association and the Brentford and Chiswick Times.

The Mayor and Mayoress of Hounslow, Mr. and Mrs. B. Price, attended as did the Mayor and Mayoress of Ealing, Mr. and Mrs. N. Pointing, and we were very grateful for the time they spent with us as they have very busy schedules. The Rampant Brass Band provided us with music and Anne Stead gave pony rides while David and Terry Martin brought along their pony and trap - the demand for rides

kept all three busy throughout the afternoon. The Metropolitan Police had a stand with a police car which kept the children very happy as they could sit in it and work the siren! There was a Fancy Dress Parade for children and the races organised by the Round Table with their Dinosaurs caused a great deal of amusement.

After expenses the money raised was in the region of £450.00 and this the Friends have offered to the Park for a large sign-board which is needed to provide details of all the Park's facilities, with space for posters for special events, museum exhibitions, etc. The Friends would like to thank everybody who helped to make the day such a success, particularly Mr. Stockdale and the Park staff and Mr. Hobbs and his staff for all the help they gave and the interest they showed during the organising and the running of the Fete.

We have been given permission to hold our Second Annual Fete in the Park on 23rd July 1983 - we hope it will be as successful!

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In order to make sure that the Summer Fete raises more money for the Park and Museum we need to run many more stalls of our own next time. This is where you can help! While we shall need volunteers to help to run our stalls we also need lots of good ideas for games, competitions and other stalls to provide a good variety of things to do. If you have helped to run a good stall in the past, or been to someone else's fete and taken part in a particularly entertaining game let us know - anything will be considered!

The Community Riding School

After lengthy negotiations, Mrs. Anne Stead received permission to run a Community Riding School in Gunnersbury Park during the summer of 1982. The East Nursery site near the old Stables in the Park was earmarked for this purpose; the land was cleared by volunteers and a man from Hounslow Council with a bulldozer and Anne would like to thank them very much indeed for all the hard work they put in. A chain-link fence, donated by the Golf Construction Company, was erected by the Ealing Community Action Training Scheme to form a paddock. The 3 ponies - Smokey, Strawberry and Lucky - came to the Park on 22nd July and for the next two weeks, whilst awaiting a visit from the Environmental Health Department's Veterinary Inspector, free rides were given to all comers. The Veterinary Inspector came on 4th August and, to everyone's delight, granted the licence so that Anne was then able to charge for rides and lessons.

During the course of the following weeks Anne and her helpers were kept extremely busy feeding, watering, grooming, cleaning the paddock and giving both rides and lessons. The lessons were fully booked until the ponies left the Park on 26th September and the riders ranged in age from the very young (under two, with mum holding on tight to child and pony!) to over seventy. Everyone, including the ponies, thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

On the afternoon of 25th September a barbecue was held in the Stable Yard for helpers, riders and Park staff as a way of saying thank-you for all the help and support Anne received. A special mention must be made of the support and enthusiasm shown by Parks staff and their families.

The experimental riding school was conducted entirely on the derelict land near the Stables but Anne was allowed to use part of one stable block to store equipment and food for the horses. Anne's scheme showed how riding could take place at Gunnersbury without causing interference to activities in the rest of the Park and proved that there is a demand for this very popular attraction. The school covered its costs and also made a small profit. Having proved that such a scheme can be run successfully in the Park it would be a great shame if it completely faded away; it is hoped that the Gunnersbury Park Joint Committee will respond favourably to the letters they have received asking for it to continue.

It should be possible to set up a school permanently, to operate all the year round and perhaps to arrange day rides out on a Sunday to encourage the more competent riders and break the monotony for the ponies.

Joan Catterall

At the meeting of the Gunnersbury Park Joint Committee on 10th December the Councillors considered a report prepared by their officers which stated that it would cost approximately £21,480 to set up a permanent riding school with three ponies in the Park. They considered that this was too expensive. However, as Mrs. Stead's riding school had been so successful and as there was clearly a demand for this in the area, they decided to advertise for a suitable operator to run a summer school for 1983 at no cost to the Committee. Mrs. Stead has agreed to assist the officers from the experience she gained during the summer.

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Friends' Activities

Fund-raising continues. At a fair at St. Barnabas' Church, Ealing in September we took a stall and raised £25. Our major event recently was the Jumble Sale at St. Faith's Church Hall, Brentford, on 23rd October. It was a great success, we had many willing helpers and raised £120. The success of jumble sales depends on the number of people who deliver advertising leaflets beforehand - our special thanks to them.

At the Save the Children Fund fair in Chiswick Town Hall in November we ran a "Tea-time Tombola" with home-made cakes, biscuits, jams, etc. and made another £50 for the Friends. Finally, the West Middlesex Federation of Townswomen's Guilds, who visited the Museum, toured the Park and had a lecture in the Temple in August, have sent us a generous donation for our efforts to entertain them that evening.

Historic Buildings

Friends will have seen from the last Newsletter that we agreed to consider proposals for the future of various buildings in the Park which are being prepared for the Joint Committee. We have been expecting these proposals to arrive at any time and we have promised to publicise them and to hold an open meeting to discuss them as soon as they are ready. We learnt from the GPJC meeting on 10th December that a working party of council officers has been meeting on this matter and that it will present its report to the next meeting of the Joint Committee in the spring. So we are assuming that we will have something to report in the near future.

We understand our members' concern about the damage that delay is causing to the buildings - another part of the East Lodge has collapsed recently - but since the summer, when we agreed to this plan of campaign, the initiative on this matter has lain with the council officers.

The Museum

The next major temporary exhibition will be The History Of The Bath Road (which runs through the whole length of the borough of Hounslow) as part of the Hounslow Festival. The exhibition will open on 22nd April and close on 19th June.

In the Social History Room there is a new display of coopers' and saddlers' tools. By the end of January there will be a new display in the Long Gallery of prints and drawings of local views from the Museum's collection.

There are plans afoot to reorganise some other displays in the Museum. The big new showcase in the entrance hall will be changed but the major reorganisation will be in the Social History Room; this will cover aspects of everyday life in the area such as Leisure, Transport, Education and Agriculture.

Did you see the shots of the park and mansions in the Ealing Studios' film 'The Lavender Hill Mob', shown recently on TV? Do you know of any other films which used Gunnersbury as a location? Watch out for a comedy series coming on Channel 4 this spring. It is called 'Father's Day' and the 6th programme will have a 3 minute sequence filmed in the Museum and the Park; John Alderton is the star.

THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF MUSEUMS.

We have recently taken out a subscription to the British Association of Friends of Museums. This organisation was founded in 1972 and now has over 180 affiliated societies involving approximately 80,000 individuals. Margaret Schofield-Palmer was our representative at their Annual General Meeting in November at the British Museum and through her we have received a good deal of very useful information, particularly about the role of volunteers in publicly-owned museums. In general Friends organisations help museums in 3 main ways - with finance, with practical help and with 'PR'. We may possibly be unique in that we are Friends to both a museum and a park. We know of two other Friends of parks in west London - at Holland Park and Richmond Park. If anyone knows of similar organisations we would be pleased to be informed. B.A.F.M distributes an impressive Newsletter which we will file at the museum, where Friends may ask to see it.

THE NORTH CIRCULAR ROAD

Members will no doubt have seen in the Press the proposals of the Dept. of Transport for the development of the North Circular Road. A North Circular Road Action Group has been formed (Secretary: Mrs. Susan Dexter, 5, Warwick Dene, W.5. 840 1261). We are obviously concerned at the impact that these changes will have on the Park and we have written to the Dept. of Transport expressing our concern. It is very likely that a public inquiry will be held on proposals of this magnitude.

'SCULPTURE FOR A GARDEN'

You have until the 8th January to see the 17 pieces of sculpture displayed in the Park. This is an exhibition which was first brought together in Tatton Park in Cheshire. With financial support from the Greater London Arts Association it has been brought to Gunnersbury for a second showing in a new setting. The following paragraph is from the leaflet published for the exhibition: "The theme of the exhibition is based on the idea that a garden, or park, is a sculpture in its own right, comprising living plants and organic surfaces: in other words, environmental sculpture. Since earliest times gardens have been embellished and enhanced with decorative objects and man-made textures ranging from obelisk to garden gnomes. Yet the conventional view of sculpture is as something primarily destined for municipal sites and parks, public buildings, galleries and other 'art venues'. This exhibition aims to show the scope of imaginative sculpture and how well it can relate to the park or garden setting."

PATCHWORK.

Joan Catterall has plenty of fabric scraps available. Can any Friends convert them into patchwork, dolls' clothes, etc. for a stall at the Summer Fete? Contact Joan at 39, Lionel Road, Brentford; 560 4262.

COUNTRY LIFE.

Did you see the article on Gunnersbury Park in Country Life, Nov 11th? It was by Roger White, from the GLC Historic Buildings Division, and is the latest research on the history of the Park and its buildings. We are approaching Country Life for permission to reproduce it for sale to members.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

Jan 8th - Sculpture exhibition ends.
Jan 14th - Open Meeting and Talk, 7.30 p.m.
Jan 29th, and subsequent weekends - Work starts on the Kitchens, 2.00 p.m.
April 24th - Annual General Meeting, afternoon.
July 23rd - Second Summer Fete.