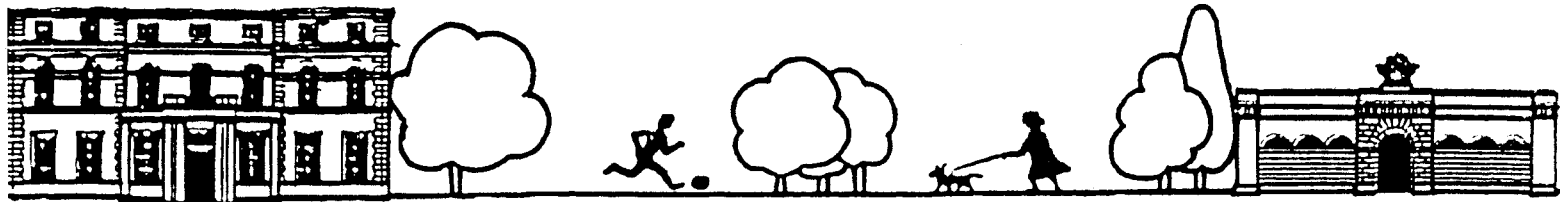


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NEWSLETTER



EDITOR'S NOTE

An article in the *Hounslow Chronicle* for 17 May described the experiences of an art student who set out to study how friendly strangers at Gunnersbury Park were! A Scot now based in Brentford, Jenny Clarke has been jogging in Gunnersbury Park since last summer and likes the setting. For one of her projects at Central St Martin's School of Art she did 25 runs at different times of the day to test people's reactions, measuring how many looked away, how many acknowledged her and how many said "hello".

About half acknowledged her when the weather was fine but that dropped to as little as 12% when it was overcast, windy or raining. Although most people made eye contact few smiled or returned her greeting. People were more awake and willing to talk in the morning but hardly acknowledged her in the afternoons or evenings.

The newspaper report said Jenny was pretty shocked by how unfriendly a place it was, but she was planning to try the same test in some other locations. Gunnersbury Park is big and there are some areas where you can get away from everyone; some people will enjoy the sense of privacy that this offers, while others will think of these as lonely and less safe places. Jenny says that people in Dunblane, where she comes from, say hello even if they don't know each other. The experience of many suburban Londoners is that people tend to keep themselves to themselves much more than they would in a small town. Indeed, I think I would find it quite irritating if I had to engage with everyone who jogged past – and I suspect they would too! But there are some circumstances where you do talk to strangers. Activities such as walking a dog or taking small children to the playground or to feed the ducks provide natural opportunities where it would be churlish not to chat to those doing the same nearby. In fact, in our last issue we reported on the new web-site aimed primarily at dog-walkers.

What do you think? What is your experience of the "friendliness" of people in the Park? Should we all be working harder to make people feel welcome – or should we stick to the suburban etiquette which in some areas means neighbours rarely speak?

Val Bott

SPECIAL FRIENDS EVENT, Saturday June 9

A special preview of restoration work on the Italian Gardens and Princess Amelia's Bath-House has been arranged for Saturday 9 June. This is a chance to see some of the work which has been described in previous newsletters over the last year or so (and overleaf). You will be able to see the re-discovered pool, the new metal fittings to support garlands of wisteria and clematis, and other planting in the Italian Garden behind the Temple which is not yet open to the public.

And at the Bath-House, where archaeologists worked alongside the restoration contractors, you will be shown the newly-discovered elements of the structure and those which have been restored so far.

We will meet Mike Rowan, who will be our guide for the morning, in front of the Temple at 10.30am. The visit will be over by about noon.

•Remember that the Café will be open for coffee beforehand or for lunch after the visit!

THE ITALIAN GARDENS AT GUNNERSBURY PARK

Helen Sayers of CIP reports on the work that has been going on in the Italian Gardens during April and May.

"The cracks in the pool walls have been repaired and both the pool walls and the floor have been coated with a waterproof slurry mix.

The connection to the main water supply has been reinstated and we are currently testing the waterproofing of the pool.

The restored sundial will be installed on 30 May and the resin bound gravel surfacing will

be laid on the footpaths shortly.

The pool will be filled with natural stone pebbles to reduce the water depth and a low railing will be installed around the inner edge of the box hedging to prevent access by toddlers and small children.

We have also had the Temple pillars cleaned and some brickwork repairs have been undertaken on the perimeter walls around the Italian garden. The garden will remain closed for most of June but as reported on page 1 the Friends will be getting a preview

FORTHCOMING CLASSES AT THE MUSEUM

Two Birkbeck College classes will be taking place at the Museum from 26 September. Each lasts for two terms, with 20 weekly sessions, and the cost is £98 (£49 concessions).

The Country House and its Garden will look at the way houses like Gunnersbury's related to their community, how they changed through the 19th century and what impact the growth of London had upon them. This will run between 10.30 and 12.30 each week.

The Archaeology of Early Mediaeval England will look at the development of England from the Norman Conquest to the thirteenth century, mainly from an archaeological perspective. It will consider themes such as government, fortifications and architecture, monasteries and churches, art and urban and rural settlement. This will run between 2.30 and 4.30pm each week. Just turn up and register on the 26th.

MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS 2001

Southall – A Home from Home *till September*

Dennis Morris photos take us back to 1970s "Little India" (photos recently purchased with a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund)

So Southall: So Celebrate *June-September*

To complement the Dennis Morris exhibition, photos of Southall life in 2001 taken by students from 4 local schools

Window Shopping *on now*

Local shops and shop displays from 1880 to 1930 with photos and objects from the collections of Ealing and Hounslow local history libraries as well as the museum.

Second Skin *from July*

From silkworms to lycra, an exhibition about the materials our clothes are made from, with 19th and 20th century costume and accessories

Brentham: Pioneer Garden Suburb *from Oct*

Celebrating the centenary of this Ealing suburb with photos, designs and memories.

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES 2001

Animal, Vegetable, Mineral

Free family workshops at 2.30pm and 3.30pm on the first and last Sunday of the month.

Lace Marathon, *Sunday 8 September*

See lace-makers in action, 1-5.30pm (This event coincides with the Japan Day (see last page)

Open House Day, *23 September*

Tours of the Rothschild mansion, 1-5pm

Victorian Kitchens *weekends only, April to Nov, 1-6-pm*

See where the servants worked to keep the household at Gunnersbury running smoothly. (NB Friends provided the volunteer labour to restore the kitchens some years ago)

Museum opening hours:

Nov-March, daily (incl Bank Hols) 1-4pm

April-Oct, weekdays 1-5pm, weekends and

Bank Hols 1-6pm **ADMISSION IS FREE**

Remember – subscriptions were due on 1 April 2001 – have you paid yet?

THE GUNNERSBURY PARK BIRD CHECKLIST

Marina Pacheco of CIP reports on a new wild-life initiative at Gunnersbury.

"To commemorate the RSPB's national 'wake up to birds week' from 26 May to 1 June the Park Wardens at Gunnersbury have produced a checklist of all the birds that have been seen at Gunnersbury. It comes to a

grand total of 65 different birds. Free copies of this checklist are available from the North Lodge Information Centre; they provide an ideal accompaniment to a bird identification handbook. If you discover a bird in the park which is not on the checklist please tell the Park staff and we will add it to the list."

CAPEL MANOR AT GUNNERSBURY

As most Friends will know, the West London branch of Capel Manor, the horticultural college for Greater London, has been based inside the walled garden at Gunnersbury Park for several years. In addition to running a variety of courses (phone 020 8993 6266 for full details of these) the college also puts on short courses and events. Their June/July events are listed below.

Summer plant sale and courses advice day Saturday 2 June, 10.30am-4pm

Sale of plants grown by the students with a pots and containers stall run by a local group. Includes 2 special talks by David Riddle: *The Wild Flower Garden* at 12.30 and *Garden Bugs and Beasties* at 2pm. Admission free

A Taste of Organic Gardening, Saturdays 2 and 9 June, 10.30am-3.30pm

This short course is a taster for the City and Guilds course starting in September. Helen Pitel looks at basic techniques, compost making, building soil fertility, growing food organically and wildlife in the garden. Cost: £55

All Sculptures Great & Small – Introducing Balloon Artistry,

Saturday 2 June 10am-pm

Top balloon artist Tope Abulude takes you through the principles and design aspects of this special skill creating decorative features with balloons! Cost: £45 plus about £10 for materials

The Magic of the Meadow – Wildflower Gardening, Saturday 23 June, 10am-4pm

David Riddle looks at a variety of habitats and the wildflowers which thrive in them, and offers advice on how to imitate these in your own garden. Cost £32

Saturday 7 July, two events:

- **Fuschia Workshop, 1.30-4pm**

Jason Drewett explores the magic of these beautiful plants and gives you the chance to take you own cuttings to start off your collection! Cost £25 (includes all materials)

- **Herbs for Healing, 10am-4pm**

Letta Jones introduces healing plants, including their history, plants used in aromatherapy and homeopathy and healing plants of today and tomorrow. Cost £45

Evening Courses Advice Session,

Tuesday 17 July, 5-7.30pm

A chance to discuss forthcoming courses – and your potential career – with Capel Manor staff.

THE JAPANESE GARDENS AT GUNNERSBURY

To mark the centenary of the Japanese Garden in Gunnersbury Park, members of the Gunnersbury Garden Project Committee are working to raise the resources to restore it as far as possible to its original condition, which is well documented.

It was created in 1901 by Leopold de Rothschild to display his prize water lilies and included many plants and trees from Japan which were new to this country. It was acclaimed in the *The Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener* of 1901 as "the most strictly true and magnificent garden of

Japanese design and composition to be found anywhere in the Kingdom", and in the *Gardeners Chronicle* of 1905 as "a seat of progressive horticulture, rich in variety and interest".

This project has been warmly supported by the committee of the Friends of Gunnersbury Park and Museum and was reported to the Friends' AGM in 2000.

A number of fund-raising events have already been held in aid of the restoration. Leopold's great-granddaughter, Charlotte de Rothschild, a soprano, gave a concert of

Japanese flower songs in the Orangery last September and, and again in Tokyo, in November.

Working with CIP, Kew Gardens have also given expert support and have drawn up a site survey, identifying growth in the area of the Japanese garden which is not original. They will also prune the garden's Daimyo Oak, which is one of the earliest to have been planted in this country.

The voluntary Project Committee is helped by a number of volunteers but would be glad of more support. For further information please telephone the Committee on 020 8998 9438.

A more long term project of members of the same Committee, who are active in Anglo-Japanese work in this country, is the restoration of the dilapidated stables block to the rear of the Japanese garden. The Friends have been asked for their support for the plans to create a Japanese cultural centre here, promoting the whole range of Japanese cultural activities, from the traditional, including

SUE MCALPINE

Sue McAlpine, the museum's education officer, left for a new post early in May. Sue's drama skills and her enthusiasm for role-playing and imagining the past gave a very distinctive character to the Museum's educational work over a period of 10 years.

The Friends committee gave a book token

THE FRIENDS' COMMITTEE

In recent Newsletters we have been seeking additional committee members; we still have some vacant places. Please consider whether you could help on the committee – it is enjoyable work, meeting to discuss park and museum issues on the evening of the first Tuesday of each month, over coffee and cake. (There is a short break in the summer and the new year). In addition, our Hon Treasurer, Pauline Tett, will be stepping down at the next Annual General Meeting. If you would be interested in helping out do get in touch now – don't wait for the AGM!

NB CIP is the charitable organisation which runs the Park for LBs Ealing and Hounslow

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martial arts, tea ceremony, origami and calligraphy to the contemporary, such as the appreciation of Japanese 'manga' cartoon films. It is even hoped that the centre would include a new authentic Japanese garden.

Such a centre would obviously be open to the public and is the most exciting proposal around for the stable buildings, which have been so long under scaffolding.

- There will be a **Japan Day** in the Park on **Saturday 8 September (noon - 6pm)** to celebrate the Japanese garden restoration project and to make people aware of the Japanese centre proposals. Here we will be able to see some of the Japanese cultural pursuits mentioned above, such as Japanese archery. There will even be a formal Buddhist ground-breaking ceremony at the garden.

For details of this event please telephone 020 7221 6985. Again, the search is on for helpers for the day! We hope you will all come and support it.

as a leaving gift and in her note of thanks Sue emphasised that she had found the work enjoyable and stimulating and made lots of friendships and, though she will miss Gunnersbury, was very excited about the new job.

We wish her good luck for the future!

For the time being Val Bott is acting as Newsletter Editor. Both she and the Treasurer would be happy to meet anyone who is interested in knowing what work is involved. For the Newsletter you need access to a computer and basic word processing skills; we can show you how to do the layout, and enthusiasm is all you need to collect enough material for each issue. To be our Treasurer you need to be numerate and trustworthy and able to keep accurate records of our finances.

We look forward to hearing from you!