

# NEWSLETTER

## FROM THE EDITOR

My first task is to wish everyone all the best for the New Year!

You will notice that this is the first Newsletter of a new design. I hope you like it and find the typeface easy to read. The old title had been used since the Friends began in 1980, though the page layout had changed several times. It seemed appropriate to mark our twenty-first year with a new look!

## FRIENDS EVENTS 2002

We are working with the Museum to put together a programme of events for 2002-3. Where possible these will be related to the Museum's programme and to current work in the Park. All will be open to non-members as well as Friends.

We aim also to use these events to raise funds to support the Park and Museum as well as to raise their - and our - profile. A charge will be made to cover the cost of refreshments and evening staffing of the Museum. Details of the first two events are given below - the programme for the coming membership year, from April 2002, will be in the next issue of the Newsletter. Do come along!

**21 MARCH 2002**  
7.30pm at the Museum

***Princess Amelia's  
Bath-House and other  
Grottoes***

an illustrated talk by **Diana Reynell**, who has made a study of grottoes and advises on their restoration.

**18 APRIL 2002**  
7.30pm at the Museum

***From the City and Back:  
Gunnersbury and The  
Rothschild Archive***

an illustrated talk by **Melanie Aspey**, showing how the Rothschilds' collecting instincts contributed to the diversity of the archives in her care

Tickets for both events can be ordered in advance at £5.00 each. Please send a cheque made out to the *Friends of Gunnersbury Park & Museum* with an SAE to 25 Hartington Road, London W4 3TL or buy them at The Museum.

## THE ROTHSCHILD ARCHIVES

Melanie Aspey, the Archivist at the Rothschild Archives, will be our April speaker. Housed at New Court in St Swithin's Lane in the City, where the Rothschild family business has been based for nearly 200 years, the archives are now the responsibility of an independent family trust. They hold a wealth of material, covering the businesses (banking and wine-making) and the family and their homes. The archive provides information about the daily life of the household (which was used by Ann and James Collett White to produce their book about the Rothschilds at Gunnersbury)\* while many of the family portraits and paintings in the collection once hung in the Large Mansion!

*\*copies still available at £5 each from the Editor*

## OPEN HOUSE DAY

Both the Large Mansion (the museum) and Princess Amelia's Bath-House were open for one of the London-wide Open House Days in September. Museum staff provided tours of the Large Mansion during the afternoon

while James Wisdom and Val Bott acted as stewards in the Bath-House. An information sheet was provided for each building and, since the Bath-House had not been opened to general visitors since the first phase of restoration was completed, a small display about the building was set up. Decorating the bath itself with night-lights in small coloured glass holders, tucked into alcoves and hollows in the flint, helped to create a magical effect, as candles would have been the only lighting in the past.

A grand total of 177 visitors were shown round the Bath-House during the afternoon. Interestingly quite a lot of them remembered using it as a den as children - so they had found it magical even when it was derelict! Talking to people and trying to explain what they were seeing was very instructive - we learnt a lot which needs to be incorporated into future interpretation of the building for visitors.

## **THE MATSURI**

The special Japanese Festival or "Matsuri" at Gunnersbury was an extraordinary event which drew crowds to the Park. There were martial arts and archery demonstrations, food stalls, flower arranging and other cultural activities which drew people from across London, including members of the Japanese community. A special feature was the launch of the Japanese garden restoration project with a formal Buddhist ground-breaking ceremony. This involved representatives from the Japanese Embassy, plus the Mayor of Ealing and the Chairman and members of the Gunnersbury Park Joint Committee. Court musicians in traditional costume came from Japan specially for the event.

## **CAPEL MANOR PRIZEWINNERS**

NVQ2 Decorative Horticulture  
**Kylie Heather**

NVQ2 Nursery Practice  
**Allen Peck**

City & Guilds Organic Gardening  
**Hannah Pratt**

C&G7802 Creative Balloon Display  
**Lisa Balcombe**  
C&G7900 Creative Balloon Display  
**Sara Andreou**

RHS General Certificate:  
Fast track **Sylvia Biles**  
Easter start **Graeme Keirle**  
Evening class **Linda Willoughby**

Foundation for Garden Design  
**Gill Cousins**

C&G Plants and Planting  
**Sarah Roberts**

C&G Garden Design  
**Susan James**

Friends of Gunnersbury Award  
**Alan Gardner**

## **CAPEL MANOR: Annual Presentation of Awards**

This event took place in the college's premises within the walled garden at Gunnersbury on 2 November. As the Chairman of the Governors was ill and unable to be present, James Wisdom, the Friends Chairman and a member of the college governing body, hosted the evening.

The Principal, Dr Steve Dowbiggin, presented a short review of the year to show how the Gunnersbury branch of the college had been developing. New classroom and computer facilities have been planned to enable work on the Gunnersbury site to expand and take over some of the work which results from the closure of Norwood Hall College.

He praised the maturity of the Gunnersbury students and paid tribute to the success of their fund-raising open day which had attracted over 1000 visitors.

The guest speaker was Mike Rowan, Principal Parks and Promotions Officer. His talk about the origin of his interest in gardening as a schoolboy and his traditional apprenticeship in horticulture in Yorkshire was humorous and engaging.

Jason Drewitt, who manages the Gunnersbury site for Capel Manor, had the task of reading out the lecturers' citations about the students who had won awards and many of them were present to receive them in person. Each year the Friends donate a sum for a book prize for the student who has contributed most to Gunnersbury during the year and this year it was presented to Alan Gardner.

The evening ended with an impromptu speech from Cllr Mel Collins, the Deputy Mayor of Hounslow and last year's Chairman of the Gunnersbury Park Joint Committee. He expressed his very personal appreciation of the natural world and of Gunnersbury in particular and was very warmly received.

## **GUNNERSBURY PARK JOINT COMMITTEE**

The Committee which manages the Park and Museum met on 28 September and 7 December. This is a short summary of the matters which were considered at these meetings.

The Friends have two observers on the Committee, positions which are currently held by James Wisdom (Chairman) and Joan Catterall (Membership Secretary).

The Business Plan for the Museum in the coming year was agreed. In addition, museum staff are drafting a longer term Forward Plan. The GPJC agreed that consultation meetings should be held as part of this process involving local businesses and community groups. (The Friends have agreed to support these).

The Curator submitted proposals for the Museum's use of two vacant flats in the upper part of the Large Mansion which were approved. These would offer additional storage and workspace and may temporarily accommodate the Local History Collections for Brentford and Chiswick, currently housed at Chiswick Library, while it is rebuilt.

Proposals for the future management of the Round Pond were agreed and a programme of expenditure on building maintenance for 2001-2 was approved.

A proposal for a major event in the Park in May 2002 was also considered in some detail. The event would run for three days and would be based around Playstation computer games, attracting an audience of families and young people. The discussion concerned details of the management of the event to ensure smooth running, minimise damage, avoid inconvenience to local people and the amount payable to the Committee by the organisers. Final agreement would be subject to the organisers satisfying these requirements and obtaining the necessary licences.

The Committee also agreed the details of a new lease for the Small Mansion Arts Centre, the lease and rent arrangements for the area within the walled garden occupied by Capel Manor College, a request for electric and fibre-optic cabling to be laid across the Park and a licence for an access gate into the Park from a new office block on the A4.

## **STAFF RESTRUCTURING**

In the last Newsletter we mentioned the fact that Community Initiative Partnerships, the charitable company which manages Gunnersbury Park, was revising its staff structure.

The proposals were considered by the GPJC at their September meeting; they were supported and it was also agreed that service provision at Gunnersbury should be monitored over the next year to assess their impact.

At the time of writing, this is still in progress. Some existing staff have been confirmed in new posts but others were being interviewed for the remaining posts in the new structure.

## **22<sup>nd</sup> West London Local History Conference**

**Saturday 9 March 2002**  
**Montague Hall, Hounslow**

## **GARDENS & GARDENING IN WEST LONDON**

*Subjects covered include the Royal Horticultural Society's Victorian grounds in Chiswick, the development of Marble Hill's gardens in the 17th and 18th centuries, Poupart's market gardens in Twickenham, the Ronalds' nursery gardens in Brentford and war-time allotments in Wandsworth*

Tickets £7.50 in advance from  
**J McNamara, 31B Brook Road South, Brentford TW8 0NN**  
(Please send SAE and cheque payable to "West London Local History Conference")

## **MARINA PACHECO**

Marina, who was Information Officer at Gunnersbury Park, has left for a new post.

She writes: "I have enjoyed my time at Gunnersbury and will miss all the people there. I'm heading off to work for the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) as Outer London Area Manager, which means I'll be working with the Friends of Dukes Meadows so hopefully I'll still be able to keep in touch with people in Hounslow!"

## **A LISTED PARK!**

The park has been listed Grade II\*, an important recognition of the significance of the historic landscape which underlies the modern public park.

This is a result of recent research which has increased our knowledge and understanding of Gunnersbury and informed the development of the plans for Park restoration.

## FRIENDS' COMMITTEE PROFILES

Members may be interested to hear a little about recent recruits to the Committee.

**Sonya Leydecker** was co-opted to the committee last winter and has now become our Hon Treasurer. Sonya lives nearby and uses the Park regularly. She works as a lawyer.

**Renée Tyack** has lived near the Park since 1991 and has been a member for some years, joining when there was a dispute about the covenants which relating to the Park and local housing. She has taught English as a second language and worked with people with learning difficulties. She now lectures part-time lecturer in access to higher education.

**Anne Hobson** lives in Fulham and has been a dealer in antique toys. She was first brought 7 years ago by a friend from the Dolls' House Society to see the kitchens at Gunnersbury. She became involved in the Temple Trust when it was based in the Park and has worked with the Friends of the Accademia Italiana and the Friends of Queen Charlotte's Hospital.

**Linda Bery** has lived in Ealing and in Brentford is another regular visitor to Gunnersbury. She is working as a volunteer for Mencap and has worked in similar roles for other groups.

## MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

If you are already a Friend, why not encourage someone else to join? If you are not a Friend, do sign up and join our mailing list to receive the Newsletter regularly. The subscription, at £3, is very modest - but the more members we have the better the income! In addition, a bigger membership gives the group a stronger voice. For existing members the subscription year starts in April. **The Membership Secretary, Joan Catterall, can be contacted at 39 Lionel Road, Brentford, Middlesex TW8 9QZ.**

To contact the Editor please write to 25 Hartington Road, Chiswick, London W4 3TL

The Friends of Gunnersbury Park & Museum is a Registered Charity no 286310

## JAPANESE GARDEN RESTORATION

A brief has been agreed for Stage I of the feasibility study which is needed as the next step of the planned restoration of the Japanese Gardens. The work, by CIP's landscape architects, will begin in January. Liam O'Brien who has been involved in the Japanese Gardens project from the beginning, is being co-opted onto the Friends' Committee. (You may have seen him at the Matsuri demonstrating Japanese archery.)

## MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS

*On now*

### Window Shopping

Shopping in Ealing and Hounslow 1880-1930, with photos and objects from the local history libraries as well as the Museum collections.

### Second Skin

From silkworms to lycra, an exhibition about the materials our clothes are made from.

### Brentham: Pioneer Garden Suburb (until April)

Celebrating the centenary of this Ealing suburb with photos, designs and memories, an exhibition put together by museum staff in partnership with the Brentham Heritage Society.

*Opening early February and continuing until October*

### Where were you in '52?

An exhibition to mark the Queen's Jubilee, looking at life in the year of her accession and family memories of that era.

*Forthcoming - May to September*

### The Japanese in Britain

A travelling exhibition of photographs showing the history of the Japanese living in this country.

## MUSEUM OPENING HOURS

November to March, daily (including Bank Hols) 1-4pm, April to October, weekdays 1-5pm, weekends and Bank Hols 1-6pm

☎ 020 8992 1612 ADMISSION FREE

