

FROM THE EDITOR

The first few weeks of 2004 have sped by – but it is still appropriate to begin this Newsletter with best wishes to you all for the New Year! 2003 was a difficult year for Gunnersbury – let us hope 2004 brings successes.

This time we have only a two-page Newsletter, but as usual there is a summary of museum activities overleaf. Two flyers are also enclosed, with details of our forthcoming talk on the history of lace and of a special bulb walk in the park put on by Capel Manor College. We hope to see lots of Friends at these events!

CHRISTMAS IN THE GROTTA

Having seen how good it was to open Princess Amelia's Bath-House and Grotto for Open House we put on a Christmas fund-raising sale on Sunday, 7 December. With good quality bric-a-brac, cups of tea and mince pies and short tours of the little bath it was a huge success! We raised over £240 in two hours, packed in hundreds of visitors (it was so busy we couldn't count them) and had a jolly time!

We placed nightlights, some in coloured glass jars, in the nooks and crannies of the flint, pebble and shell decoration of the bath, and used a torch as a spotlight to show up the details, which looked magical. There was huge enthusiasm and support from those who visited for the restoration work to be completed.

Special thanks must go to everyone who made this a success – especially Anne Hobson and Val Bott, who gathered together the goods for sale and set up the event, to Sonya Leydecker who ran the tea stall and James Wisdom who explained the history of the building over and over again all afternoon! Our thanks also to the Museum which encouraged those attending a book launch held on the same day to come over to join our event before going home. We hope to be able to do similar events in the future.

WORKS IN THE PARK

A working group of three, (the Gunnersbury estate manager and curator, L B Hounslow's conservation officer and a representative of English Heritage) is defining the brief for the preparation of a conservation plan for Gunnersbury. This is essential before bids can be submitted for funds to pay for the plan.

Despite public enthusiasm, completion of the restoration of the Bath-House is unlikely for some time, as it is not seen as a high priority by this group. It has already proved impossible to spend a small grant from the Leche Trust towards works there within the time limit and this has been returned. Recently however, the area nearby has been turfed, lavender bushes planted and the steps down from the Terrace have been remodeled to make them safer.

GUNNERSBURY PARK JOINT COMMITTEE

The Joint Committee met on 12 December. They agreed an Events Policy and plans for 2004 events – the 2nd London Mela on 15 August, and at least one classical concert probably in July. They considered a report on recent Park and Museum activity; this included improving storage for the archaeology collection and discussions with the Arup consultancy about future planning for the estate.

They discussed the budget for the forthcoming year; Ealing Council will be reducing their contribution, with the knock-on effect that Hounslow Council will do so too. We also understand that proposals for the restoration of the Stable Block are to be invited by advertisement once again.

The next meeting of GPJC will be on 19 March at 6.30pm at Gunnersbury.

BRENTFORD MEMORIES

In September 2004 the Museum will be putting on an exhibition to celebrate 100 years of Brentford Football Club at Griffin Park. They would like to include memories from Brentford supporters old and young and would be especially grateful for the opportunity to borrow souvenirs, photographs or other items which could be included in the displays. The museum staff are looking for the following information:

- How old were you when you first went to a match?
- Who took you?
- How did you get there?
- Do you have any special memories of days out at Griffin Park?
- Have you lived near the ground and watched all the supporters go past your door?
- Have you seen any really special matches?
- Have you played or worked for the club?
- Have you any items which you would be prepared to lend for the exhibition?

If you can help please get in touch with Vanda Foster at the Museum, on 020 8992 1612 or email her on Vanda.Foster@cip.org.uk.

Letters and contributions to the Newsletter are welcome.

NEXT ISSUE APRIL 2004

To contact Val Bott, the Hon Editor, write to 25 Hartington Rd, London W4 3TL or email ValBott@museums.freeserve.co.uk

MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS

60 Years of the Ealing Liberal Synagogue (till March)

A history and celebration in photographs and memories

Isleworth Remembered (till March)

Exhibition courtesy of the Isleworth Society

Lace at Gunnersbury (March 2 – September 26)

Highlights from the Lace Guild collections, with costume from the museum's own collection, plus

- **Friends' talk 10 March 7.15pm** (see enclosed leaflet)
- **Free Lace Identification Session with Gwynedd Roberts: Saturday 8 May, 1-5pm**

Behind the Scenes at the Theatre (April 3 – Sept 13)

75 years of the Questors Theatre in Ealing

Bread Street (April 9 onwards)

Bread and bread makers from different London communities.

(Photos by Sara Hannant for London Food Link)

Brentford Football Club (Sept 7 – March 2005)

100 years of football at Griffin Park

Celebrating Poland (Oct 15 – Jan 30 2005)

on Polish people in West London and Poland's accession to the European Union

MUSEUM OPENING HOURS

November to March, open daily including Bank Hols 1– 4 pm, April to October, weekdays 1– 5pm, weekends & Bank Holidays, 1– 6pm. Phone: 020 8992 1612 **ADMISSION IS FREE**

MORE VANDALISM

In mid January the toilets at the Farm Changing Rooms were vandalized, with toilet bowls smashed and spray paint everywhere.

These Changing Rooms were already only partly operational because of last year's fire damage and this is the second lot of toilets to be closed because of vandalism. This is a serious problem for the Park – and it will take time to get the toilets repaired and back in action.

MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

If you are already a Friend, please encourage someone else to join! If you are not, 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 and the stronger our voice. Subscription forms are available in the Museum or simply send your cheque with your name and address to the Membership Secretary, Joan Catterall, by post at 39 Lionel Road, Brentford, Middlesex TW8 9QZ.

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