

# FRIENDS OF GUNNERSBURY PARK & MUSEUM

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# NEWSLETTER

## THE LONDON MELA

**This year's London Mela will be held in the Park on Sunday 8 August between 1pm and 8.30pm. Admission is free.**

The London Mela is sponsored by the Mayor of London's office, O2 London and BBC Radio, and managed by Ealing Council. There will be nine zones with urban, classical and experimental music, DJs, circus, dance, visual arts, comedy and the Magic Mela kids area, as well as the wonderful food stalls and fabulous funfair. The line-up this year promises to be as exciting as ever with a host of recording stars and performers from the UK and around the world, all mixed together with dance, theatre and classical performances.

Gunnersbury Friends have commented enthusiastically over the years about the rich colours and beautiful banners which transform the huge sports field area, the lively music of every kind and the fantastic food!

You can find more details on the Mela website at [www.londonmela.org](http://www.londonmela.org). There is usually a huge parking area but everyone is encouraged to come by public transport if possible as this speeds up entry and departure. Don't forget that the southern park gates by the A4 are only a short walk along Lionel Road South from Kew Bridge station (South West Trains) and the many buses running along Brentford High Street/Chiswick High Road. Or the E3 bus stops outside the Popes Lane gates and there are trains to Acton Town (Piccadilly Line).

## 29 YEARS' SERVICE

One of our founder members in 1981, Joan Catterall has been our Membership Secretary from the start. She has just handed over the role to David Bush, already a member of the committee, and his address now appears at the end of this Newsletter.

A lifelong Brentford resident, Joan has had a part in all the Friends have done during that time. She ran many of our early events (including summer fetes in the Park), usually with her little daughter, Lucy, in tow.

She worked with Marianne Booth on fund-raising bric à brac stalls until the growing number of charity shops reduced the amount of good material available to sell. Joan and her husband, John, have also toiled tirelessly as volunteers on projects in the Park, including planting thousands of bulbs.

She served for many years as one of two observers from the Friends on the old Gunnersbury Park Joint Committee until it was wound up in April 2007.

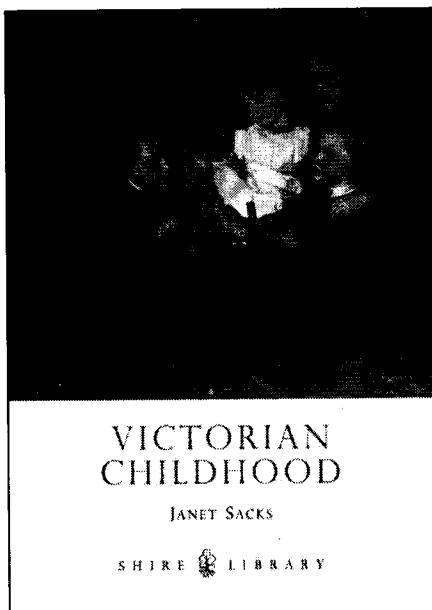


Because they live on the edge of the Park, Joan and John often found themselves on the receiving end of people's complaints which should have been directed at the Park's management.

On her retirement Joan studied for a fine art degree. She was delighted when she and John both obtained part-time posts as stewards in the Museum; they have been there faithfully on many weekends and Bank Holidays, offering visitors a warm welcome.

The Friends owe Joan a huge debt of gratitude for all her work on behalf of Gunnersbury Park and Museum.

## VICTORIAN CHILDREN by Janet Sacks



This new Shire publication is now on sale in the museum shop at Gunnersbury at £5.99. It is attractively designed with numerous illustrations – do buy a copy!

While researching the book the author, Janet Sacks, visited Gunnersbury Park Museum and was very impressed with quality of the Victorian children's items in its collection. As a result a large number of these have been professionally photographed to be used as illustrations in the book. The Museum has been provided with copies of the high quality digital images which it will be able to use for its own purposes.

One of the advantages of having a long-established local museum is that the collections began to be assembled when items which are now high value antiques were still just "old-fashioned" – the result is that the collections are not only very large but also very rich. However, the long-term lack of resources for the Museum to invest has meant that many of these wonderful objects remain in store for want of suitable showcases and lack of staff time to create new displays.

## CAPEL MANOR SUCCESS

The College's annual prize-giving is usually held in the autumn, after many students have left, but this year it took place on 15 July, in a marquee within the College's walled garden premises. It was one of the windiest days of the summer and there were times when it seemed that the marquee would take off!

In the presence of the Mayors of Ealing and Hounslow, the course tutors read citations for their best students and presented their awards during a packed afternoon.

Each year the Friends sponsor a special prize of books for the student who has contributed the most to Capel Manor at Gunnersbury Park. This year's winner was John McMahon who is pictured (on the right in the photo) receiving his certificate and books from Simon Vyle, the Deputy Head of Horticulture at the College.

The award for the *Advanced Botanical Illustration* course was presented to John Hall. We were delighted to discover that students on the course use specimens from within Gunnersbury Park.

It is also pleasing to report that a Capel Manor College garden won



awards at Hampton Court Flower Show this summer. Designed by Michelle Duxbury, it was put together by students from Capel Manor courses at Enfield and Gunnersbury Park. One of a number of gardens following the event's Shakespearean theme, it was based upon *The Merchant of Venice*. It won a Gold Medal and was also judged "Best Shakespeare's Comedies Garden".

Within it, three large wooden vessels float like gondolas amidst dark pools and a swirling sea of grasses. Filled with flowers and foliage in shades of gold, silver and lead, the vessels represent the caskets from which Portia's suitors must choose to win her hand. High above the planting three tall striped poles support muslin drapes inscribed with Shakespeare's guidance to all would-be suitors. You can see slides of the garden on the college website at <http://tiny.cc/ew9y>.

## TREES IN THE PARK

In mid June, we received a letter from Michelle Morley of John Laing Integrated Services, the contractor which now runs the Park and Museum, announcing the outcome of a tree survey. It was accompanied by a series of plans and a complete schedule of all the trees which need specialist work. They also wrote to residents adjoining the park and planned to display information in the Park, Museum and café about the work that was to be implemented.

The letter reported that the trees in Gunnersbury Park were recently inspected by Continental Landscapes working on behalf of JLIS. The team of arboriculturalists inspected 2,492 trees and 74 groups of trees in the park. The survey identified 58 requiring removal as a matter of urgency as they were found to have significant levels of rot and decay, creating a hazard to users of the Park. This represents 2% of the trees in the Park. In addition, the letter said that a further 213 trees required remedial works, representing another 8% of Gunnersbury's trees.



You can see the map that gives the location of these trees on the Friends of Gunnersbury Park & Museum web-site, together with the schedule giving priorities for works. Together these show that there are trees with problems in every part of the Park and this is an ambitious programme that is being undertaken.

Hounslow Council officers agreed that there was no option but to fell some trees as quickly as possible to reduce the risk of potential accidents, as well as pruning others. The necessary planning forms were submitted because the Park is in a Conservation Area. Notices were placed upon the trees to be felled and also around the park. Work has been in progress for several weeks and the whole programme is likely to take a period of six to eight weeks to complete.

The letter suggested that those with any concerns or questions should contact John Laing Integrated Services on 0845 456 2796 or by email at [hounslow-info@laing.com](mailto:hounslow-info@laing.com).

## EDWARDIAN COLOUR PHOTOGRAPHS

We reported in an earlier *Newsletter* that, to mark the centenary of colour photography, a special exhibition was held in 2009 at Exbury in Hampshire, where Lionel de Rothschild created a beautiful garden in the 1920s.

The photographs are autochromes, an expensive but particularly beautiful technique which created exquisite soft colour images. The images in the exhibition were selected from the hundreds of pictures taken by Lionel which are now in the Rothschild Archive; some show Gunnersbury Park when it was still the private estate of a Rothschild mansion.

Now the Museum is negotiating with the Rothschild Archive for the exhibition to be shown at Gunnersbury and the early indications are that this will happen in 2011.

A few of the photographs appeared in Ann and James Collett-White's *Gunnersbury Park & the Rothschilds*, published for the Museum in 1993 by Hounslow Council. If you can't wait for the exhibition the Rothschild Archive has published a special book of the photographs, *Colours of Another Age*, by Vic Gray. You can buy it for £10 including postage, from the Rothschild Archive at New Court, St Swithin's Lane, London EC4P 4DU.

## GUNNERSBURY PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Though the election was in May no meeting of the Gunnersbury Park Advisory Committee has yet taken place or been announced. The last one was held in November 2009. There appears to be no sense of urgency about Gunnersbury's plight.

According to Hounslow's web-site the committee's members are Cllrs Joanna Dabrowska, Kamaljit Dhindsa and Yvonne Johnson from L B Ealing and Cllrs Matt Harmer, Elizabeth Hughes and Adrian Lee from Hounslow.

## IN THE MUSEUM



A new display of **Victorian dress** from the Museum's collection shows the range of clothes which a fashionable Victorian woman might wear in any one day. While today it is fashionable to look casual, and to wear the same clothes throughout the day, a 19th century woman would have changed her clothes several times a day if she could

afford to do so. Strict etiquette ensured that formal outfits were usually made of expensive fabrics, legs were to be covered at all times and low necks and short sleeves were only suitable for the evening.

A selection of clothes for a single day begins with her starched white cotton nightdress decorated with white-work embroidery which maintains the modesty of the wearer. Her combinations, corset and bustle show how women created the angular silhouette of the 1880s. If she were going out, she had a choice of the cashmere shawl or the beaded mantle which are displayed.

For receiving afternoon visitors, she has a rich purple silk dress dyed with William Perkin's new aniline dyes, made in Greenford. For a grand reception or dinner there is a magnificent blue satin and plush gown, made by a top quality costumier. If she chooses to go out on her bicycle (all the rage in the 1890s) there is a special woollen suit with a hole in the skirt which fits over the saddle. Finally, there is a magnificent figured silk wedding dress, smothered in artificial pearls.

The exhibition was put on with help from a team of volunteers from EDFAS (Ealing Decorative and Fine Art Societies) and will be on show until the summer of 2011.

If you have been listening to Radio 4's **A History of the Word in a Hundred Objects**, narrated by Neil McGregor, the Director of the British Museum, you will know that the BBC has been inviting both individuals and museums to submit their own favourite objects to the BBC web-site. You can see the Gunnersbury Park Museum objects here: <http://tiny.cc/vf6r4>.

"Relic trails" have been provided in participating museums over the summer - you can pick up the trail which relates to the Gunnersbury objects at the Museum during the summer holidays and obtain a certificate if you can meet the challenge!

### OPEN HOUSE 2010

The special London Open House event, giving access to buildings not usually accessible to the public will be on 18 and 19 September. Brochures will be available in local libraries, or you can order one from the organisation's web-site at [www.londonopenhouse.org](http://www.londonopenhouse.org).

As usual some of the buildings at Gunnersbury Park will open and Vanda Foster needs volunteers to help supervise them. The work is enjoyable and if you would like to join in, contact Vanda Foster on 020 8992 1612 or via email at [Vanda.Foster@laing.com](mailto:Vanda.Foster@laing.com).

### FRIENDS of GUNNERSBURY PARK & MUSEUM

Welcome to new members who have joined us recently. If you are already a Friend, do encourage someone else to join. The subscription, at £5, is very modest - a bigger membership means a better income and a stronger voice.

We sent out reminders with the last Newsletter for the year starting on 1 April and many of you renewed very promptly - many thanks for continuing to support the Friends.

Please send your cheque, made out to "the Friends of Gunnersbury Park & Museum", to The Membership Secretary, Friends of Gunnersbury Park & Museum, 55 Park Avenue, London W3 8ND.

*DNV*

**We welcome contributions to the Newsletter; the next issue will be compiled in September 2010**

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