

To keep up to date, please register at the Friends' website: [www.gunnersburyfriends.org](http://www.gunnersburyfriends.org)

# NEWSLETTER

## 31<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 16 Sept

The Friends' Annual General Meeting will take place in the Terrace Room of the Small Mansion on Sunday 16 September from 2.30 to 4.30pm. This is timed to ensure that we know whether both HLF applications have been successful and if we have, then there will be a small celebration after the business meeting! *Please note:* you will only be entitled to attend and vote if you have paid your 2012/13 subscription – a renewal slip is enclosed for subscriptions due from 1 April 2012.

## First success for Gunnersbury in lottery funding bids!

On 2 July the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the Big Lottery announced a grant of £321,330 from the *Parks for People* scheme for Gunnersbury Park. With a further £87,200 from other sources, this will support the preparation of a fully developed and costed bid for Stage 2 funding. To be submitted by February 2014, this will seek a grant of about £4.3m for a project costing just under £8m in total. As four out of five applications succeed at Stage 2, this is a huge vote of confidence in the restoration project. HLF will decide on a separate application to restore the Large Mansion and upgrade the Museum later in July.



*Friends on a guided walk trying to envisage where the Horseshoe Pond was, 2011*

The electronic application for the grant comprises 283 megabytes of data, so what follows is a simple summary. The project team has calculated that the Park has 600,000 visits a year, and after restoration hope to attract one million visitors, many of whom would stay for longer than they do now.

The bid makes the case for the historic value of the park and its buildings, with its links to architects William Chambers and Sidney Smirke, landscape designer William Kent, and the Head Gardener under the Rothschilds, James Hudson. It notes its two most important owners, Princess Amelia and the Rothschild family, and describes the buildings and landscapes from the mid-17th century to today. It sets out the condition of the buildings and garden structures – arches, walls, steps and gothic ruins – and makes the case for their urgent restoration. But it also reports many positive features such as the 2,500 mature trees, the ecology and wildlife, the breadth and variety of garden features and historic landscapes and the deep affection in which the Park is held by its many visitors and users.

Two proposals would make significant changes to the Park and greatly improve visitors' experience. The first is relocating the pitch-and-putt from the centre of the park to the top of the large sports field, opening up the

*continued overleaf*

## OUR SPORTING LIFE

Running until 28 August 2012, this is one of several London-wide shows on sporting history, created by the Sports Heritage Network for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Ealing and Hounslow are home to a variety of sports, including boating and rowing on the Thames. Two clubs have flourished for over 100 years – the Brentford Football Club and Acton Swimming Club (of which Leopold de Rothschild was a patron).

Wimbledon tennis champions from Ealing Lawn Tennis Club and stars of the Brentham Club – cricketer Mike Brearley, footballer Peter Crouch and tennis player Fred Perry (who won the Wimbledon singles title 1934-6) – make an appearance, along with other local sporting heroes like runner Mo Farah, cyclist Eileen Sheridan, and John Disley CBE, a founder of the London Marathon.

The exhibition features Sir Bevy's winner of the 1879 Derby, from the Rothschilds' Gunnersbury racing stud.



The Museum welcomes those who would like to share their sporting memories and the heroes who have inspired you. Donations of objects relating to local sports are also welcome. Leave your thoughts and ideas via [www.oursportinglife.co.uk](http://www.oursportinglife.co.uk)

## Gunnersbury film

A short film has been produced, celebrating what people enjoy about Gunnersbury. You can find it here: [www.youtube.com/gunnersbury2026](http://www.youtube.com/gunnersbury2026)

## LOTTERY SUCCESS, *continued from page 1*

landscape in a wholly new way and almost doubling the historic core. The resulting changes to routes through the Park would be significant, amazing and delighting those who know the Park well.

The second proposal is the restoration of the western half of the Horseshoe Pond to complement a restored Orangery. This pond was developed from the 17th century "canals" of the formal garden into the major feature seen from the garden front of the mansion occupied by Princess Amelia. Divided in half by the piecemeal sale of the estate in the early 19th century, it was not re-constructed when the Rothschilds reunited the estate later in the century. The eastern half was filled in first, the west only about 50 years ago.

The Orangery restoration would involve building new toilets, a food serving area and a brides' changing room against its back wall. In the 19th century there was a glazed structure here, with long hot-beds of decomposing horse dung and compost growing luxury fruits, like pineapples and grapes, for the Rothschild household and to take to their bank in the City. This work and the new pond would create a fine setting for functions. The Friends' website has been getting a stream of enquiries from prospective brides, so we know the demand is there and the income could be very important.

Other elements of the proposals include restoring boating to the Round Pond, re-landscaping the area around the cafe and improving the toddlers' play area, setting out paths to give access to the new parkland, creating nature trails, restoring and improving views, upgrading entrances, signage, and the setting of the two Mansions.

On the east, between the two walls and into the area north of the Stables, the scheme would introduce a community kitchen garden, at the same time improving the steps down from the Terrace to the Rose Garden and new garden, with disabled access.

The North Lodge at the Popes Lane gate would be restored as a base for volunteers. The Potomac Tower would be repaired for safe occasional use, while the landscape around it, which incorporates artificial Pulhamite rocks, would be restored.

A large component of the project is to increase the amount of community activity within the Park, to build up the role of volunteers and to increase opportunities for learning in the Park, both by extending the Museum's successful schools programme and for informal learning. The Park is very fortunate in having Capel Manor College on site and there will be many opportunities for closer partnership and greater involvement with the college and its students. The work between now and the second round will be a full range of surveys and detailed specifications for the work the Park needs, along with public consultation and engagement.

## CAPEL MANOR COLLEGE

Gunnersbury students of Capel Manor built a garden at the 2012 Chelsea Flower Show. Called *Mad About Meadows* it had 8 different meadows and won a Silver Lindley medal in the environment section. Course info at <http://www.capel.ac.uk/gunnersburypark>

## ARCHAEOLOGY AT GUNNERSBURY . . . & NEARBY

### Geophysics in the Park

In May Birbeck University students worked in the Park for four days, learning how to do geophysical archaeology surveys.

They scanned the north lawn between the mansions and Popes Lane for traces of earlier buildings, and explored the walled area by the North Circular, seeking evidence of the old garden layout. Martin Roseveare, their supervisor, wrote a summary of their findings, stressing that more evaluation is needed and suggesting a small number of additional trenches to be dug once the information from the geophysical surveys had been analysed.

On the *north lawn*, he said, the results are intriguing but hard to interpret. There is evidence for brick walls or brick-filled robber trenches under the western half; these seem to relate to John Rocque's map of the 1740s or later plans, but are unlikely to be the 17<sup>th</sup> century mansion.

These could be service quarters of some kind, especially if the stables were matched on the west side by another building. Most of the area seems to have been open space with a large number of later services inserted.

In the *east walled garden* the survey found no evidence of a formal walled garden layout – this might have included continuous walls, plots divided by paths, a central pool for watering and heated walls for fruit. Only a wide section of path or the floor of a structure was found, east of the north-west gate.

### Festival of British Archaeology 2012

#### Hands-On Archaeology!

**Free Family Activities in the Museum, 22 July 11am – 4.30pm**

Meet archaeologists and see some local finds from Gunnersbury Park Museum and the Museum of London. There will be hand-on activities for children – dress as a Roman legionary or Queen Boudicca, handle 2,000-year-old objects, join a quiz trail and see what 'finds' you can dig up in the Museum's special sandpits.

More information from the Museum education department, phone 020 8992 2247. No advance booking, but entry subject to capacity. Children taking part must be accompanied by an adult.

*Jointly hosted by Gunnersbury Park Museum and Museum of London*

#### “Archaeology Live” at Syon Park

**Also on 22 July, 11am – 4pm**

A chance to see the end of the Museum of London's summer dig at Sir Richard Wynn's 17th century house in Syon Park.

---

## MARKETING THE SMALL MANSION

The Gunnersbury Project Board plans to “market” the Small Mansion, which is in a very poor state. For several years, while today's restoration scheme has been under development, it has been clear that restoring this building will cost more than the local authorities can afford.

The aim should be to dispose of it to a body committed to using it well. Any new use must fulfill the Park's Conservation Management Plan and respect its Listed status. Since the restoration proposals were first made public, various people have approached the councils (operators of private schools and a ballet school, for example).

Friends' representatives have raised the following issues:

- anyone investing a large sum in a derelict building will expect to influence, if not control, the management of the land around it, so an agreement on a disposal must be extremely sensitively handled to avoid the loss of public access to any part of the Park,
- viable schemes which open up the Small Mansion to public use, like a restaurant or conference centre, should be given priority,
- the value of the Small Mansion may be negative now but will rise if the HLF grants come through and its surroundings are

to be significantly up-graded – an opportunity could be lost if the marketing happens prematurely,

- and disposal threatens the Museum's learning programme because the ground floor is used for teaching and the all-important lunch spaces which make a school's day visit work well. The provision of portakabins for this purpose has been suggested, should the Mansion be sold, but speedy disposal could drastically reduce the current level of use before permanent new facilities have been provided, making it harder to achieve the planned increase in learning provision. These issues were specifically raised with officers before the formal decision was taken by councillors – the response was that there was no way it could be delayed as procrastination had got us where we are today!!

## THE 10th LONDON MELA,

The organisers are planning something special for the Mela's 10<sup>th</sup> year – they promise a spectacular carnival, a Philharmonia Orchestra concert, an exhibition (see below) and a firework finale. This year's special guests are *Red Poppies*, women drummers from China known internationally for per-

## Gunnersbury Park, 1 – 9pm, Sunday 19 August

forming at the Beijing Olympics opening and closing ceremonies. As well as the huge range of music, there will be the usual high quality food stalls and a funfair, plus activities for younger visitors. An *In Conversation* tent will host interviews with artists, performers and guests at the Mela. See <http://www.londonmela.org> for details. And **Watermans Arts Centre** is running free carnival workshops for kids aged 9 to 13 to make costumes for the Mela parade. They are on 14 – 17 August, 10.30am – 4pm. Book a place on 020 8232 1010

## IN THE MUSEUM

### The London Mela: Celebrating 10 years of the London Mela in 7 July – 24 September 2012

Every year since 2003 the London Mela has been held at Gunnersbury. Featuring music, food and entertainments from the Indian subcontinent, it has become a major annual event. This exhibition of photographs and ephemera will celebrate some of the highlights of past Melas. Were you there? Come and re-live it!

### Gunnersbury People – a photographic exhibition

**Oct 3 2012 – Jan 30 2013**

Joggers, dog-walkers, footballers and toddlers – portraits of the variety of people who come to Gunnersbury for the many things on offer there.

**Museum admission is free**

**Open 11– 5, April to Oct & 11– 4  
Nov to March 020 8992 1612**

## DIGITAL Gunnersbury

Groups of English learners from *Action Acton* have developed two leaflets and MP3s on the history of Gunnersbury and Walpole Parks which were launched on 27 June.

## NEXT ISSUE

**The next issue of the *Newsletter* will be compiled in September 2012 and, as always, your contributions are very welcome.**

Contact Val Bott, Honorary Editor, 25 Hartington Rd, London W4 3TL  
[ValBott@museums.freemove.co.uk](mailto:ValBott@museums.freemove.co.uk)

## SUMMER HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

*For these activities, children must be accompanied by an adult at all times, but accompanying adults are admitted free of charge*

### Vikings!

**Tuesday 24 & Wednesday 25 July 10.00am – 4.00pm**

*A one-day workshop – the same content offered on 2 different days*

Could Gunnersbury have got its name from a Viking princess, Gunnhilda? Join this drama and craft workshop for children aged 8 – 12, to discover exciting Viking stories and make your own model Viking longboat to take home! Places limited, advance booking is essential on 020 8992 2247.

*Generously funded by Ealing Decorative & Fine Arts Society*

### Toys & Games from Around the World

**Sunday 12 August 2 – 3pm**

Have fun discovering and playing with toys from around the world. Meet Matryoshka the Russian doll, play the Maori game of rakau, and solve the mystery of the Japanese puzzle box! For children aged 4+. No advance booking, places allocated first come first served, £1 per child, payable on the day.

### Toys & Games of the Past **Sunday 26th August 2 – 3pm**

Discover the toys your great-great-grandparents might have played with – china dolls, teddy bears and clockwork toys. Are you skilled enough to win the cup and ball game? Or fast enough to keep a whipping top spinning? Learn Victorian parlour games to play with your friends! For children aged 4+. No advance booking, places are allocated first come first served. £1 per child, payable on the day.

### **Advance Notice: Stir- up Sunday, Nov 25 2012**

In the Victorian Kitchen, the Museum will be preparing food for a traditional Christmas on the last Sunday before Advent, known as Stir-Up Sunday.

## FRIENDS of GUNNERSBURY PARK & MUSEUM

**A warm welcome to those have joined us recently!** Longer-standing members' subscriptions expired at the end of March so with this *Newsletter* comes a renewal form. If there is no form, you have already paid – thank you. Please send your cheque, made out to *Friends of Gunnersbury Park & Museum*, to The Membership Secretary, Friends of Gunnersbury Park & Museum, 55 Park Drive, London W3 8N  
**Registered Charity no 286310**