

FRIENDS OF GUNNERSBURY PARK & MUSEUM



DOUBLE SUCCESS FOR GUNNERSBURY!

Gunnelsbury has secured both grants for which it bid earlier this year and both the Park and the Museum will receive Lottery funding of nearly £9 million. In early July a grant of £4.7m was awarded under the *Parks for People* scheme, jointly managed by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the Big Lottery, as part of the £7.6m funding needed to start restoring the Park. At the end of July an award of £4.1m through HLF's *Heritage Grants* scheme was approved for the restoration of the Large Mansion and the revitalisation of the Museum. This is the best news we have had since the Friends were founded in 1981!

The work is scheduled to be carried out between 2015 and 2018, resulting in a mixture of improvement, restoration and transformation. The historic “core” – the gardens around the two Mansions – will be restored and the west Horseshoe Pond re-instated. Many of the Park structures – arches, walls, gates, paths – will be repaired, including the Orangery. Volunteers are already creating a Kitchen Garden and there are plans for an orchard. The centre of the park will be opened up. A new café will be built on the site of the existing one, with an extension to house the Museum's Transport Collection (including the Rothschild carriages). Together with Capel Manor College and supported by the Friends, the Park will provide new opportunities for volunteering, training and apprenticeship. Most of the Large Mansion will be opened up to create a virtually new Museum celebrating the past lives of the people of the Boroughs of Ealing and Hounslow. The three grand rooms facing the Park will be restored and made available for functions and there will be a new set of rooms set aside for learning programmes.

Friends' Chairman, James Wisdom, commented that these grants should help create a secure foundation for the future of Gunnelsbury. He offered his congratulations to the councillors of Ealing and Hounslow who have worked more closely together than ever before. Their commitment to the regeneration project ensured that funding was allocated for planning the proposals and developing the grant applications as well as for their implementation. We know that they are already considering how to raise funds for work on later phases of the regeneration of Gunnelsbury, particularly the development of sporting facilities. The Friends will be supporting the implementation of the HLF-funded scheme and keeping an eye on plans for the future of the Stables for which English Heritage has now contributed further funding, and on the Small Mansion.

In the future Gunnelsbury will need commitment and creativity. HLF recently published a study they commissioned on *The State of UK Public Parks* (<http://tinyurl.com/klosfy5>). It shows the need for new forms of engagement, management and funding to enable parks to survive and flourish in the future.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 2pm 14 September 2014

Our Annual General Meeting will take place in the Terrace Room of Gunnelsbury's Small Mansion on Sunday, 14 September, when we will take the opportunity of celebrating the achievement of two Lottery grants. Besides the usual formal business, the Committee is proposing an increase in the subscription to £10. This has been £5 since 1981 though many of you generously also send donations towards Friends funds each year. At last year's AGM we agreed that subscription income should cover all the costs of running the organisation each year, making this proposal necessary.

All fully paid up members of the Friends are eligible to attend and vote. *Please note* – to save money on postage, we have not sent out your membership cards separately this year, but unless you have paid in the last ten days or so, your membership card is included with this Newsletter. If you have forgotten to renew your membership you will find a reminder slip instead!

OUR MUSEUM CURATOR RETIRES

Vanda Foster, Curator of Gunnersbury Park Museum, retired at the end of June. She was given a very affectionate send off with a tea party in the old Kitchens of the Large Mansion attended by many staff, volunteers, friends and colleagues.

The staff presented her with plants and handsome blue pots for her garden and a wonderful replica Victorian photo album depicting staff, volunteers and colleagues dressed in replica bonnets, mob caps and other historic costumes! The Friends gave Vanda a framed sample of a beautiful hand printed wallpaper by Marthe Armitage, inspired by the Willow Pattern. This seemed appropriate as the work of a local crafts-woman and as a subject that depicts a historic garden!

Vanda was born in Ealing and brought up in Abinger Road in Chiswick. She studied for a BA Hons in English Literature and the History of Art at the University of Leeds, then for a professional qualification, the postgraduate Diploma in Museum Studies at Manchester University and she became an Associate of the Museums Association. Vanda's specialist expertise is in historic clothing and textiles and her first post as Assistant Keeper, then Keeper of the wonderful Gallery of Costume, kept her in Manchester from 1974 to 1979. During this time she published an article on the influence of the clothing of Dolly Varden from *Barnaby Rudge* in *The Dickensian* no 73 in 1977.

Taking up the post of Senior Assistant Keeper, Costume and Textiles, Vanda left Manchester for The Museum of London where she worked from 1979 to 1981. While she was bringing up her children, Vanda acted as museum consultant for the *Russian Costume* exhibition at the Barbican Art Gallery in 1987 and began writing books. *Bags & Purses* (Batsford) appeared in 1982, *Crinolines & Crimping Irons* (Peter Owen) was written with Christina Walkley and published in 1985 and *A Visual History of Costume: The 19th century* (Batsford) came out in 1992.

Next Vanda took several part-time and temporary posts working locally. In 1992 and 1993 she was part-time Temporary Museums Officer, working at Pitzhanger Manor, and in the spring of 1993 part-time Education Interpreter at Gunnersbury Park Museum. During 1994 she catalogued the Martinware Collection at Southall Library. During April to September 1997 she was a volunteer and then a part-time casual worker at Gunnersbury Park Museum, before leaving to spend a year as part-time Museum Officer at Pitzhanger Manor.

From December 1997 to June 1998 she was part-time Assistant Curator of Gunnersbury Park Museum, then Deputy Curator until 2006, and was then designated Acting Curator. It was only in 2010, when the second of the contractors which ran Gunnersbury Park Museum finally recognised that she was running everything without a Deputy (because of continuing cuts to Gunnersbury's budgets), that she was appointed Curator.



Vanda unwrapping the Friends' gift

Vanda's long connection with Gunnersbury spanned more than 20 years. She has been unfailingly cheerful, keeping the Museum going through some very hard times. Particular achievements include the series of significant grants which she obtained in order to help develop the Museum and its collections, working especially with various minority communities in Ealing and Hounslow and her long-term work with NADFAS (Ealing) volunteers on the costume and textiles collections.



She was as likely to spend her day on research for a new special exhibition as she was to be implementing the Museum's emergency drill, the latter being a rather grand way of describing skills which ranged from rescuing a painted ceiling when a first floor tenant's washing machine overflowed to positioning buckets during a down-pour after roof lead had been stolen. In recent years, there has been no park manager based at Gunnersbury so Vanda also dealt with all sorts of problems and crises as the most senior manager on the spot representing the contractors, Laings or Carillion.

During her career, Vanda has been Secretary of The Costume Society, Secretary of The Group for Costume and Textile Specialists in Museums, Treasurer of the West London Museums Group and a trustee of both the Howard Trust and of the William Hogarth Trust.

The Friends have found her a delight to work with, welcoming when we offered help or advice and thoughtful when we discussed ways of funding new acquisitions or specialist equipment for the Museum. We believe that without her intelligent input into the proposals for the future of the Museum which underpinned the HLF grant application, the bid would not have succeeded.

CAPEL MANOR COLLEGE AT GUNNERSBURY, PRIZE DAY 2014

Every year the Friends fund a prize for the student at Capel Manor's Gunnersbury Centre who has contributed most to Gunnersbury. This year the award went to Christopher Stacey. In the citation read at the ceremony his tutors commented on his commitment (which included a 2 hour walk to Gunnersbury during a tube strike) as well as his enthusiasm and diligence. A member of the team which built a "stumpery", a large new garden of tree stumps and unusual planting, Chris contributed his talent for design to the planning of the project. The stumpery team also received an award.



Chris Stacey, centre front and the stumpery team

Tony Monaghan, the head of the Gunnersbury Centre presided over the awards ceremony. He retired from his post at the end of term, but will keep in touch as a member of the Friends. We look forward to meeting and working with his successor on the regeneration of the Park.

Next event: 22 August, 1-4pm, A-level results advice day at Capel's Gunnersbury Centre

INVASION OF THE PARK

On Sunday evening, 8 June, a convoy of vehicles with caravans drove into the south west corner of the Park. Carillion's facilities manager was alerted and the Park was closed for day while Hounslow Council quickly served the necessary legal notice. Some of the invaders made a bit of cash by clearing builders' rubbish from local sites and dumping it in the Park. They moved off to Blondin Park on 11 June, from where Ealing Council also evicted them.

PLAYGROUND VANDALISM

Sadly the main playground at Gunnersbury Park had to be closed on 26 June after crushed and broken glass was left on many of the items of play equipment. A mum taking her children there to play quickly alerted a gardener in the Park. He taped off the playground because the scale of the clearing up needed was substantial. Local parents commended this member of staff for his quick response to the situation.

UNEARTHING OUR FIRST WORLD WAR HERITAGE

Young people aged 14-21 years are invited to join the Museum's creative First World War *Arts Award* project to achieve their Bronze *Arts Award*, a nationally-recognised qualification. Participants will have the chance to share ideas with other creative young people, work alongside a professional artist to create an art installation for public display, go behind the scenes at the Museum and gain new skills and work experience.



The workshops take place at the Museum from 18 to 22 August, 11am to 5pm, free of charge but advance booking is essential on 020 8992 2247 or 020 8992 1612. The moderation day will be during school half term on 30 October. Please note - if you join the project you have to attend all 5 days of the workshop as well as the moderation date when the project is assessed for the Arts Awards. To find out more about *Arts Award* visit www.artsaward.org.uk

GUNNERSBURY TOUR & TEA:

Hounslow Older People's Festival, 2pm, 16 October

The Victorian Housekeeper will take participants on a tour of Gunnersbury Park Museum and its handsome Victorian Kitchens, providing a fascinating insight into life below stairs during the 19th century. The tour will be followed by tea and cake and a chance to chat about the tour. Tickets cost £3, payable in cash on the day; advance booking is essential on 020 8992 2247 or 8992 1612

OPEN HOUSE LONDON

at Gunnersbury, 11.30am to 5pm, Sunday 21 September

This is your opportunity to see inside some of the beautiful garden buildings at Gunnersbury as part of Open House London: The Temple by the Round Pond, Princess Amelia's Bathhouse (near the Small Mansion), and The Orangery, down the lawn from the Museum. The Museum in the Large Mansion, built in 1802 by Alexander Copland, a wealthy Westminster building contractor, and extended by the Rothschild family, will also be open as usual. Admission is free with places offered first come, first served and no advance booking. Please note that children must be accompanied by an adult at all times.

Activities will include:

- World War I themed art installation by Gunnersbury's Youth and Children's Panels in the Orangery,
 - tours of the Victorian kitchens of the Large Mansion,
 - an architect-led tour of the Large Mansion on the Museum restoration project – meet there at 11am,
 - a landscape architect's tour of the Park to discuss the restoration which will start in 2015; meet at the museum at 2pm, and
 - a chance to meet costumed character Princess Amelia in the Bath-house to hear about the 18th century fashion for plunge baths. Amelia was George II's daughter, owned Gunnersbury and lived in the 17th century mansion there.
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EDITOR'S NOTE

One of the best ways of keeping up to date with Gunnersbury news is registering with the Friends' website to receive email updates when news is added. This Newsletter is partly a compilation of pieces first published there. A second way is to make sure we have your current email address; the cost of each *Newsletter* mailing is quite expensive, so sending out occasional digital news directly to members saves us a great deal. We hope, nevertheless that you still enjoy receiving the printed *Newsletter*. Please note that a complete archives of our Newsletters is available on the website.

The next issue of the Newsletter will be assembled in October 2014. Your contributions are welcome – short articles, reviews of Gunnersbury events or exhibitions or Gunnersbury photos and memories. Please send them to the Editor, 25 Hartington Rd, W4 3TL or by email to info@gunnersburyfriends.org

FRIENDS' SUBSCRIPTIONS

The subscription fee remains at £5 a year subject to a decision at the AGM for implementation in 2015. Do please encourage others to join as more members ensure a better income and a stronger voice. The form can be found on our website, and should be sent with a cheque made out to *the Friends of Gunnersbury Park & Museum* to The Membership Secretary, Friends of Gunnersbury Park & Museum, 55 Park Drive, London W3 8ND.

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