



FRIENDS' ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 10 October 2015

All paid up members are welcome at the meeting, from 10.30am to 12 noon on Saturday 10 October. This year Capel Manor College is generously providing our venue; access is through the gate in the wall opposite the main Gunnersbury car park. The start of the refurbishment contracts at Gunnersbury has meant that our original booking in the Small Mansion could no longer be honoured. In addition to the business meeting and review of the year, there will be an opportunity to discuss the plans for sports in the Park. *Please note* that membership cards are enclosed with this *Newsletter* for those who have joined or renewed their subscriptions in the last few months.

OPEN HOUSE AT GUNNERSBURY, Sunday 20 September 2015

As part of the annual London Open House weekend, there will be opportunities to explore and discover more about future plans for Gunnersbury between 11.30am and 4.30pm on 20 September. The free activities include exploring The Temple and Princess Amelia's Bathhouse, visiting an African Arts themed art installation in Princess Amelia's Bathhouse by Gunnersbury's Youth and Children's Panels, joining a Landscape Architect Tour of the Park to discuss the restoration project at 2.00pm and following an Architect-led Tour of the Large Mansion at 11.00am and 1.00pm on the restoration project for the Museum. *Please note:* Advance booking is essential for the two tours, by phone 07803 454813 or by email gunnersbury@ealing.gov.uk.

INSPIRATIONAL EMBROIDERY DAY, Friday 25 September

A relaxed and enjoyable sewing day, running from 10.30am to 3.30pm in The Small Mansion. Led by expert members of the Isleworth & District Branch of the Embroiderers' Guild, you will design and create your own embroidery piece, using the parkland and museum collections as inspiration. Materials will be supplied, as well as tea and coffee; participants need to take lunch and pay £25 in cash on the day for their ticket. Advance booking essential: gunnersburylearning@ealing.gov.uk or 07803 454813.

GUNNERSBURY REFURBISHMENT AND RESTORATION UPDATE

The remaining short-term contract museum staff and the Gunnersbury learning team are now all based in The Small Mansion and will remain there until they can move back into the Museum in 2017. All of the events of which they have notified us have been listed on the Friends' website gunnersburyfriends.org. The posts of Curator and Head Gardener have been advertised; full details on the new Gunnersbury website at visitgunnersbury.org/about/work-for-us/ – closing date 21 September.

Mesh fencing has been erected around some areas for public safety as work begins in the near future on landscaping and on the Large Mansion. You can still get about in the Park but it is a little complicated. The main contractor appointed went into liquidation before even beginning the work, causing a delay.

Emergency repairs to the Stables alongside the North Circular Road have been completed, but no decision has been taken about their future use; Jonathan Kirby, the Ealing Council officer managing the project, has said for some months that he expects to prepare another application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for an Enterprise Grant. There will also be another marketing exercise for both The Stables and the Small Mansion which we hope will be more open and effective than the last one with the failed deal with the Falcons School. However, his focus at the moment is upon obtaining funding to support the enhancement of Gunnersbury's sports facilities on which there is a report inside.

THE MELA

This year's Mela took place on a warm Sunday afternoon in early September. Changes in the pattern of public funding from the Mayor of London and in sponsorship meant that an admission charge was made for the first time.

The charge did not appear to deter the crowd who came to enjoy the stalls, with the usual wonderful food, arts activities, the music stages and the funfair. For the many young people who attended the fee represented good value for money to see so many live bands.

The parking area was well managed and Transport for London's additional bus services made all the difference. Copies of the souvenir programme were hard to find – it would have been helpful if these had been available at the ticket booths.

There were probably fewer commercial stalls than in previous years but good numbers came along and the crowd was very good-natured.



Indian Army troops

The National Army Museum put up an excellent display on British Empire soldiers in two World Wars; an Indian army re-enactment group turned heads as they patrolled the event in uniform. The Museum of London and the Gurkha Museum were also there.

CAPEL MANOR AT GUNNERSBURY

The student awards ceremony was held at the end of June. Each year the Friends sponsor a prize for the student who has contributed the most to Gunnersbury. This year's winner is **Christine Nicholson**. The College drafted this citation:

"Chris joined us as a Royal Horticultural Society student in September 2013. She immediately made an impression on both her tutor and fellow classmates and proved to be a very capable and enthusiastic student. Chris has completed all 3 components of the RHS modules and has achieved her Level II Diploma in Horticulture. She continues as a Gunnersbury student, turning her talents to Floristry.

Within a couple of months of joining, Chris offered her services as a volunteer in the Walled Garden and despite having a busy private life and homework from her studies, she has found time to put in many hours tending plants, propagating and generally helping out. She is often the first to volunteer for Open Days and Plant Sales at the weekends. She has personally managed a new labelling project, applying her IT skills and new knowledge to start a plant database for the Campus.

With her organisational expertise and a natural talent for Horticulture, Chris kindly stepped into the breach when the Centre's Horticultural Support staff member had to take sick leave. She proved very capable in the role and was well liked by other members of staff.

She also makes outstandingly good cakes on a very regular basis that are enjoyed by both staff and her fellow students!"

Advice Sessions for potential students at Capel's Gunnersbury Centre from 10am–3pm on 3 Oct and 5–7.30pm on 16 Nov 2015.

An RHS Silver Gilt Award was given to Capel Manor students at the 2015 Chelsea Flower Show with this magnificent version of their Gunnersbury Stumpery, described in our *Newsletter* 100.



There's a Stumpery information sheet here:
<http://www.capel.ac.uk/rhs/stumped/welcome-to-stumped.html>



Chris Nicholson, who won the Friends' Prize

RICHARD GILL, Gunnersbury Regeneration Manager

Richard left his post in July, following a restructuring due to the budget cuts. He told us he had had seven distinct roles at Hounslow Council over 23½ years, at sixteen different desks, under 12 managers and through ten restructures. He was planning to have a holiday in New Zealand before deciding what to do next.

PROPOSED GUNNERSBURY SPORTS FACILITIES

Since our last *Newsletter* two consultation sessions have been held at Gunnersbury on the proposals for improving Gunnersbury sports. Our Chairman, James Wisdom, discussed the plans in *Newsletter* 100 and asked for the subject to be placed on the agenda of the June meeting of the Gunnersbury Park Joint Advisory Panel (GPJAP). Unfortunately the change of chairman at that meeting meant that the request was lost and the GPJAP will not have had a chance to discuss the proposals until after the planning application has been submitted later this month.

Some Friends committee members attended the July and September consultations. We have uploaded Ealing Council's *Frequently Asked Questions* paper on the Friends' website; an updated version of this was added after the July consultation meeting.

Jonathan Kirby from the Ealing Project Team and an officer from Hounslow's Public Health/sport development team introduced the proposals, supported by the Chief Executive of the Brentford FC Charitable Trust. Key messages were that there is still considerable support for the scheme from the national sport governing bodies and the likelihood of some funding from this source. In the new centre there would be facilities that anyone who walked in could use as well as bookable pitches for clubs and teams. There would also be free fitness facilities in the Park, something the Friends were particularly keen to see. Both councils saw the development as very important in helping fill what had been assessed as the provision needed for 600,000 people in two boroughs in relation both to sport and to health and fitness. We were not told about the business plan, merely that it had been prepared by a consultant accredited to Sport England, so we have no sense of the degree of risk involved.

Many of the people present at the September meeting represented sports clubs in the area and there was general approval, indeed even enthusiasm, from them. A number were very anxious about their future in the short term, however; some had been given very little notice of the loss of pitches, some had fewer bookings and some had had none. Some teams might be able to change elsewhere and still play at Gunnersbury but it was thought that the sport governing bodies' rules might preclude this. There did not seem to be alternatives for them to use while work proceeded. Jonathan promised to investigate whether the astroturf pitches might be usable earlier than others but pitches on the big field would only be available in the 2017/18 season.

The amount of parking provided and how busy the Popes Lane gateway could become made others, especially Popes Lane residents, very anxious - a transport study was being undertaken. These residents

were more concerned that the golf course and astroturf pitches, with floodlighting, were now going to be too close to their homes, putting their security and privacy at risk. Jonathan indicated that the lighting design would have minimal impact, but no-one seemed convinced.

An earlier study during the Options Appraisal suggested placing the golf course at the bottom of the field to draw people to an area seen as isolated. This has been discounted because English Heritage is worried that light pollution could spill across the historic gardens. Jonathan said that everything had now been approved by EH and the governing bodies and could not be changed.

This is very worrying since placing the golf course across the north of the Park will prevent the new CIC (which will run the Park in future) from managing events on the effective model of the Mela. Access from Popes Lane for cars parking on the field and for bus passengers is essential but is unlikely to be possible if a golf course has been laid out there.

Finally there is no plan for the future of the early 19th century model farm which housed the old changing rooms - another gap in the proposals.

DEVELOPMENT TRUST

The membership of the Trust has still not been finalised; two approved trustees and one potential trustee had a briefing in the summer, and the Trust will meet in shadow form at the end of September. Hounslow Council has still formally to agree a nominee. The Trust will oversee a great deal of fund-raising supported by Hounslow's excellent grants team, so its charitable status needs to be approved soon.

GP Joint Advisory Panel

Future meetings are on 16 Oct 2015, 22 Jan & 15 April 2016. Agendas appear on the Hounslow website, 7 days in advance. No venue is yet confirmed.

USEFUL CONTACTS

There is plenty of information about the way the Park and Museum will be managed and how to book events on visitgunnersbury.org but for those who do not use the internet, here are relevant phone numbers and addresses:

Events: obtain permission for an event at Gunnersbury from Ealing Festivals & Events Team Perceval House (1st floor SW) 14-16 Uxbridge Road W5 2HL 020 8825 6640

Filming: obtain permission from Reel Film Locations on 0845 402 2998 or email at film@reelfilmlocations.com

General Parks enquiries including grounds maintenance issues 020 8825 6999 or email parks@ealing.gov.uk

Learning programme: contact the learning team on 07803 454813 or gunnersburylearning@ealing.gov.uk

Press inquiries to Hounslow Council on 020 8583 2196 or communications@hounslow.gov.uk

Sports: at the moment no bookings are being taken for any of the pitches

And . . .

Capel Manor College: for courses at the Gunnersbury Centre phone 08456 122 122 or email the college on enquiries@capel.ac.uk

MUSEUM INTERPRETATION WORKSHOP

In early August the team working on the new museum displays held a workshop style afternoon to which they invited people who had been museum volunteers in the past, archaeology and history experts and a number of active local historians from Ealing and Hounslow boroughs.

Following presentations on their aims, the group was let loose on the summary papers outlining content of themed sections of the exhibition and the likely objects which would relate to this. We were given post-it notes to add our comments and suggestions on specific themes and topics, object lists and story-lines.

A huge amount of work has been done, but it was clear that there is still a long way to go. We missed Vanda Foster's wide local knowledge now that she has retired.

In the final discussion, there were strong feelings that though a great deal of information had been assembled, it was so strongly separated into disjointed themes that there was no clear narrative about the two boroughs. In addition, some themes were driven by the objects in the museum collection rather than the story which could be told, so that a great deal was missing. Opportunities for strengthening the storylines by using images and documents from the two boroughs' Local Studies Libraries had been missed.

We were also worried that the Victorian history of the Gunnersbury estate was dominant, probably because it was important to present the Large Mansion itself. But this gave the impression that almost nothing had happened before the Rothschilds came in the 1830s. Details about the 17th century mansion and gardens, and the 18th century estate, when Furnese and then Princess Amelia lived there – some of which survive in the landscape – seemed to be absent.

The papers have been made available to participants along with notes of the day, and some participants are trying to add or clarify information to put these short-comings right.

Val Bott

MEMBERSHIP

Subscriptions fell due on 1 April 2015 and it is pleasing that many of you have renewed your membership. Special thanks go to those who also included a donation to our funds.

Please do encourage others to join at this exciting time for Gunnersbury or buy membership as a gift. More members ensure a stronger voice. The subscription is £10 per person and an application form can be found on our website and printed off. Send your completed form, with a cheque made out to *Friends of Gunnersbury Park and Museum*, to The Membership Secretary, 55 Park Drive, London W3 8ND.

NEWSLETTER 102

This will be prepared in late November. Your contributions – short articles, Gunnersbury stories, photos and memories are always welcome. Please post them to The Editor, 25 Hartington Rd, London W4 3TL or send them by email to info@gunnersburyfriends.org.

**The Friends of Gunnersbury Park & Museum
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