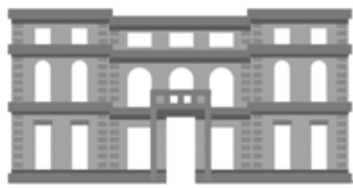


FRIENDS OF GUNNERSBURY PARK & MUSEUM



NEWSLETTER

NO 97
MARCH 2014



FRIENDS' NEWSLETTER AND WEBSITE RE-DESIGNED

Welcome to our new look newsletter. The re-design of the Friends' website, launched in January, introduced a new font and a new style, so we have matched the Newsletter to it. The heading is a re-drawing of the design we used when the Friends began in the 1980s. Please join as a subscriber to the website, even if you were a subscriber on the old site. You will then receive an email each time a news item is added. We have tried to keep members up-to-date by emailing those whose addresses we have, but this is clumsy and via the website updates would arrive immediately.

GUNNERSBURY EVENTS DIARY

- 15 March 12- 4pm** **Drop-in session** at the Café in the Park, where the project team will be available to discuss the newly-submitted Gunnersbury planning applications
- 16 March 2pm** **Roman Brentford** a talk by Bob Cowie of Museum of London Archaeology, who has been involved in excavations at Syon Park over several years. The talk will be at the Museum. £3 per head, no advance booking
- 19 March 2-3pm** **Presentation on the planning applications** in the Small Mansion. Please inform Richard Gill on 020 8583 4083 if you wish to attend
- 13 April 3pm** **In Praise of Chocolate!** a talk at the museum by Annie Gray, £10 per person, payable on the day. Please phone 020 8992 2247/1612 to book a place.
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PARKS FOR PEOPLE APPLICATION SUBMITTED

The Stage 2 application for lottery funding for the restoration of the Park was submitted at the end of February. Work is still being completed on the application for the Museum refurbishment. Ealing and Hounslow Councils have now applied for planning permission and listed building consent to:

- o restore listed structures like the Orangery, the archways and the terrace,
- o reinstate lost park features such as Horseshoe Pond,
- o make changes to current use of spaces in the museum, converting former flats for museum use,
- o make physical changes to the current structure, for example, improving access with a lift, and removing partitions in a former flat to recreate a large room for learning, and
- o build a replacement for the café because the Heritage Lottery Fund has agreed to a request for a larger grant for this purpose.

You will be able to view the documents in the very near future under reference number 00885/C/S1 on the planning section of Hounslow Council's website <http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/planning>

REPORT ON PROJECT UPDATE PRESENTATION, 11 FEBRUARY 2014

At this meeting in the Terrace Room of the Small Mansion, several members of the Project Team spoke about the project to regenerate Gunnersbury Park and Museum, and in particular about the plans which will soon be submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund. The plan for the Park will be submitted in late February and that for the Museum in April. The event relied on a slide presentation which can be downloaded in full from the Friends website here: <https://tinyurl.com/nterah4>. The presentation emphasised that the current applications only represent the first phase of a programme of regeneration and refurbishment which they aim to complete in 2026. Later phases are as yet unplanned and additional funding will be required. There was some new information, and questions were raised on such issues as:

- The condition of the Large Mansion has been found to be worse than expected (and therefore more expensive to restore) whereas the condition of the Stables has been found to be better than expected. £280,000 has been allocated to spend on the Stables, and the work is under way. There are no plans for the future use of the Stables, and the Project Board are considering a marketing exercise (as they did with the Small Mansion). A further £330,000 has been spent on the roofs of the two mansions, the West Lodge and the North Lodge.
- The proposal is to appoint a Head Gardener, one of whose tasks will be to integrate Capel Manor College more into the life of the Park.
- Despite recognising that cycling in the Park is a divisive issue like Marmite (either love it or hate it) the Project Team's view is that they can manage it well, using London Mayor's funding for restoring 2 main paths for mixed pedestrian/cycling use, and integrate the Park into the London Cycle Network.
- The Project Team is trying to bring the major sporting bodies together to fund the reinvigoration of sport in the Park, including building a "hub" somewhere on the west side, now identified as the sports side of the Park.
- Putting a small kitchen to support functions at the back of the Orangery is too expensive and has been dropped. £120,000 will be included in the Parks for People bid to re-landscape the area around the existing café. However, they are considering completely replacing the café with a building which could also house the carriages. HLF does not give funds to replace what should be commercial investment (though it might support the carriage display) so additional money will have to be found.
- Six species of bat have been identified around the Potomac Lake, and future plans are to conserve it as a wildlife area.

Despite the future governance of the Park and Museum being critically important for the success of the two Lottery bid, plans are still being worked out. The two leading proposals are for a joint venture company set up by both boroughs, and a separate development trust to lead on fund-raising.

On the business plan, it is clear that about £1m per year of additional income will have to be earned, through events, functions, a better Museum shop and so on, if the quality of the work is to be maintained beyond the life of the Lottery funding.

The Project Team were challenged on the honesty of their public consultation process when it was clear that the major decisions had already been made (in order to support the Lottery bids). Only 69 people responded to the consultation, and you can read the report here: <https://tinyurl.com/qjyrhnb>.

NEW GUNNERSBURY PARK USER GROUP

The Landscape Architect responsible for the HLF application for the Park, Jan Anderson, has set up a User Group which met for the first time on 5 February 2014. The invitation came at short notice but we emailed as many members as we could and about 30 people attended. In the invitation she wrote:

"Gunnerysbury Park is such a large park it has a wide variety of features and attractions for local people, local groups and organisations who all come to use and enjoy it. We'd like to get everyone together to discuss your many and varied suggestions and concerns, whether it be heritage, gardening, sports, play, nature...or pot holes!

We hope that this meeting will become a regular event so that local people and park user groups can meet each other, meet the park officers, share ideas and make good things happen there."

If you didn't attend but would like to go to future meetings or have any burning questions, Jan invited people to email the Gunnerysbury Project team at gunnersbury@ealing.gov.uk, promising they would do their best to respond promptly.

HERITAGE TREE SURVEY

As part of the preparation for the *Parks for People* submission, The Landscape Group at the University of East Anglia have conducted the most detailed and thorough survey of the park's trees – when they were planted, why they were planted. From their work we can see the various landscapes of the Park,



as their report is rich with evidence from images and maps. Here is just a taster from the survey report:

- two yew trees have survived from the late 17th or early 18th century,
- in the 19th century the park was famed for its cedars and conifers; today there are 77 cedars, many of which are mature, and 9 of which have a trunk diameter in excess of 100cm,
- there are also 8 mature swamp cypress, giant redwood and coast redwood,
- 5 common oaks are at least 150 years old,
- of 113 limes, some common limes are around 200 years old,
- other species of interest include a very large beech, sweet chestnut and plane as well as Gingko, 43 walnuts, mulberry, magnolia, chusan palm (*trachycarpus fortunei*), indian bean tree (*catalpa*) and tulip tree (*liriodendron tulipifera*),
- the chinese oak (*quercus dentata*) near the stables is registered with the Natural History Museum as there are only 5 of these in the country.

We are delighted to have been given the whole report to place on the Friends' website where you can read it at <http://gunnersburyfriends.org/the-heritage-tree-survey>

FOOTBALL STORIES

John Porter has asked the Friends for help with a sports history project. He writes:

"I am planning to write an article about Gunnersbury's local football heritage. I would love to hear from anyone who has played in the park for local amateur football teams or from anyone who remembers watching particular games. I plan to write this piece for the Sporting Memories Network (www.sportingmemoriesnetwork.com), a fantastic charity that uses memories of sporting events and sports people to improve the lives of people with memory issues such as Alzheimers. The Network encourages sports history writing that can make a real difference to people's lives, using articles in reminiscence groups and workshops.

To provide a bit more information on myself, I am from the London Borough of Ealing (Greenford) and am very interested in the area's sporting heritage. I have already contributed a piece to the Network on the AEC factory football team at Southall and would love to add a new piece about the area's vibrant park football scene. I'm particularly keen to explore the idea that Gunnersbury Park, with its large number of pitches, was a real hub for local football in both Ealing and Hounslow, in many ways it was West London's Hackney Marshes! I'd love to hear individual stories and recollections to enrich the piece I am putting together. So, please do get in touch with any vague or crystal clear. I'd love to hear from you." Contact John via the Friends on info@gunnersbury.org and we will pass messages on. We hope also to be able to use the results of his research in the new Scrapbook section of the website.

INJURED HERON

For several weeks an injured heron has been living near the Round Pond. It was reported by Museum staff as soon as they discovered it was there and the RSPCA were asked to come and deal with it. They have made a number of attempts to do this, all of which have so far failed. Despite its injuries the heron is strong and flies away every time it is approached. Herons are extremely large birds with a wide wingspan, so they are difficult to handle. We hope the RSPCA officers will eventually manage to catch the bird and treat its injuries.

MUSEUM OPENING HOURS

From January to March the Museum is closed to visitors on Mondays to allow for essential work to be undertaken to the collections, buildings and gallery spaces. (It has hitherto been open 7 days a week.) Carillion, the contractor which manages the Park and Museum, seeks your comments on this arrangement. Email them at hounslow.info@carillionservices.co.uk. Please remember that planning the future and preparing funding applications is a huge task and if the grants come through the Museum will close later this year to implement the restoration of the building and creation of the new facilities.





London Borough
of Hounslow

Roman Brentford

Join us for an illustrated talk by archaeologist Robert Cowie on recent excavations in Syon Park which revealed discoveries on themes including Roman buildings, dress, food preparation, agriculture and burials. A selection of archaeological objects from Gunnersbury Park Museum's collections will be on show on the day.

Robert Cowie is a Senior Archaeologist with Museum of London and has been actively involved in field archaeology for over 30 years. He has supervised several excavations in and around Syon Park.

Where: Gunnersbury Park Museum, Gunnersbury Park, W3 8LQ

When: Sunday 16th March at 2.00pm

Cost: £3.00 per person, payable in cash on the day.
(No advance booking)

For more information contact: 020 8992 2247 / 1612



In Praise of Chocolate!

Sunday 13th April



Food historian Dr. Annie Gray will be talking about drinking, eating and cooking 'the divine bean'! Introduced into England during the Civil War, chocolate has been associated with luxury, sex and guilt since the 1650s. This talk looks at the tensions over chocolate's early consumption, and the way in which it was used in the past. Annie will also provide a demonstration in Gunnersbury's Victorian Kitchens of how to prepare an historic chocolate drink. (Please note the recipe includes milk, nuts and spices.)

Dr. Annie Gray is a consultant, writer and broadcaster. She is a regular panellist on Radio 4's *The Kitchen Cabinet*, as well as appearing as an expert on programmes such as *The Great British Bake Off*.

Where: Gunnersbury Park Museum, Gunnersbury Park, W3 8LQ

When: Sunday 13th April at 3pm

Admission: £10.00 per person, payable in cash on the day
Advance booking essential

Contact: 020 8992 2247 / 1612



FRIENDS' SUBSCRIPTIONS & DONATIONS

Subscriptions are due for renewal on 1 April - the price remains at £5 which is modest and intended to encourage recruitment. More members ensure a better income and a stronger voice. The membership 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.

Funds are always needed to support the Park and Museum, even more so when partnership funding for the two HLF grants is going to be required over the next year or so. Do please consider sending an additional donation or making a bequest to the Friends. In the near future we hope to be able to identify and promote the opportunities for contributions from individual donors to support specific elements of the regeneration projects.

EDITOR'S NOTE

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

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