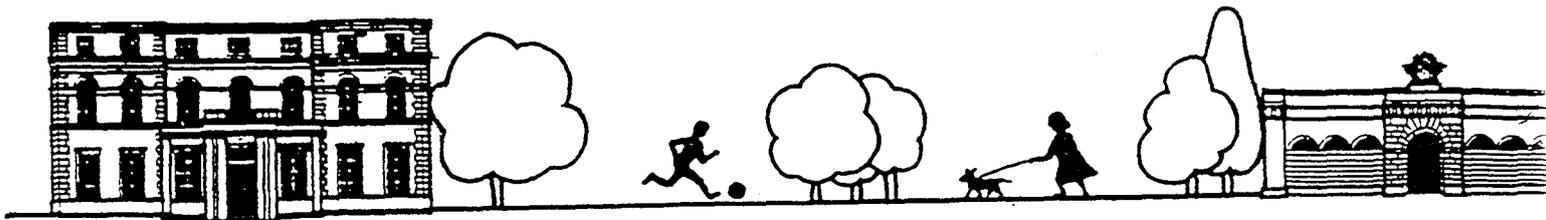


FRIENDS of GUNNERSBURY PARK & MUSEUM

NEWSLETTER



FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Friends

Welcome to the February edition of the newsletter: the month of daffodils, spring-cleaning, not to mention Valentine's Day... Enclosed is a reassuring *Guardian* newspaper feature concerning future Lottery park funding. We have an article by Gillian Mobbs from Chiswick House Grounds too, and material about the invaluable young New Deal workers. You'll also see the usual details of enjoyable events inside.

A reader has gently reminded me that the newsletter sometimes arrives too late to attend a particular event. I do apologise for this and will do all I can to get the newsletter out earlier - one of my New Year's resolutions!

Solutions proposed by readers to the query in the November issue concerning local croquet facilities have varied, from consulting Yellow Pages and Hounslow's Leisure Services to contacting Lammas Park. If you have any queries or would like to contribute to the newsletter, please contact:

*The Editor, 14 Manor Gardens,
Gunnersbury Avenue, W3 8JU*

Thanks
Ed.

CAPPEL MANOR

Have you ever fancied trying your hand at beautiful bouquets?

Here's your chance! The one-day introduction to Flower Arranging on Saturday 20 March at Capel Manor (9.30am - 4.00pm).

Please call Jason Drewitt for further details on 0181 993 6266

NEW DEAL WORKERS

New deal workers are part of the Government's campaign to get young people into work. The participants are all aged under 25. The scheme is working very successfully at Gunnersbury Park, where there are six or seven Trainees. They are managed by the British Conservation Trust Volunteers; each Trainee spends six months learning gardening skills to enable them to enter full-time employment. They help with pruning, basic work and restoration, in fact importantly uncovering lost landscapes in the Park.



MUSEUM LOTTERY UPDATE

We are hoping the Museum will be able to submit its proposals within the second phase of the overall plan which is now being prepared.

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The Friends of Gunnersbury Park recently commissioned a Landscape Architect to carry out historical research into what type of planting would have been suitable for the main drive. This is the first of three installments to appear in the Newsletter. These are the results:

LEOPOLD'S GUNNERSBURY : A PLANT LIST FOR THE DRIVE

In the 19th century the Rothschild gardens spanned Europe - each was characteristic of the late Victorian and Edwardian eras when a combination of formal design and flamboyant plants was fashionable. This was an exciting time for gardeners and botanists with a constant stream of 'new' plants arriving in Europe from distant countries, and when plant collections were all the rage.

The Rothschild's were themselves passionate plant collectors, including Leopold, son of Lionel and Charlotte de Rothschild. At the turn of the last century, with his gardener James Hudson, he developed the gardens at both Gunnersbury and Ascott, including the widely acclaimed Japanese Garden (1900-1906) and the Bamboo Garden (1899). However, while much of these gardens is well recorded, little remains of the 19th century shrubbery that extended along the main drive apart from a few remaining overgrown yews and holly. What would this area have looked like at the turn of the century?

The use of yew and holly to provide structure is typical of Victorian shrubberies. This type of planting could be reintroduced today with the addition of other Victorian favourites such as *Aucuba japonica* 'Fructo-albo'; holly, *Ilex x altaclarensis* 'Camellifolia'; privet, *Ligustrum ovalifolium* 'Aureum'; *Phillyrea angustifolia* f*. *rosmarinifolia* and yew, *Taxus baccata* 'Dovastonii Aurea'.

Leopold would have certainly have wanted to make an impression on the visitor and this would be their first glimpse of the gardens. He would most likely have planted the latest introductions with an emphasis on oriental plants such as; *Buddleia asiatica*, *Camellia japonica* 'Paolina Maggi' *Hamamelis mollis*, *Rhododendron johnstoneanum*, *Syringa pekinensis* and *Viburnum henryi*.

His preference was for bold plants - the bigger, brighter and more scented the better. Plants such as *Prunus laurocerasus* 'Magnifolia', introduced in 1869 and the largest-leaved laurel of them all, would have undoubtedly met with his approval, as would the bold-leaved and brilliantly coloured flowers of *Paeonia lutea* and the heavy sweet fragrance of *Jasminum nudiflorum* and *Osmanthus delavayi*. At Ascott, he collected variegated plants, creating a golden garden of yew, holly, *Cupressus*, privet and *Thuja*. Variegated plants such as *Osmanthus heterophyllus* 'Aureomarginata' and *Sambucus nigra* 'Aurea' might also be suitable.

So a shrubbery that incorporated Victorian staples with the latest introductions from the East and variegated or golden foliage seems suitable and a list of plants that fit these criteria has been created so that a planting plan can be drawn up.

* f. denotes a forma ; a distinct form occurring in the wild. Other distinct forms include subspecies and varieties.

GUNNERSBURY PARK AND MUSEUM EVENTS

- **Mrs Beeton's Business**

Victorian home life as revealed by the Beetons. *Begins November 1998*

ALSO

- **Mrs Beeton's Dressing - A Crinoline on the Catwalk**

Discover the life and times of Mrs B through the clothes she would have worn, while our expert dresses as a live model. Enjoy a private view of the Exhibition followed by refreshments. *Saturday 6 March (3.00pm). Cost - £6, conc. £4.50*

- **Ink to Internet**

From pens to printing, modems to mobiles - an exhibition about changing forms of communication. *March onwards (1-4pm)*

- **Kitchen Capers**

Meet the Victorian servants of the Mansion as they spring clean our original 19th century kitchens. Children can dress up as footmen and maids and join in. There will be tours of the house, and for the first time we will be joined by the Harrods Coach and Horse Team who will drive carriages round the park.

Sunday 11 April. Victorian Kitchens, galleries open 1 - 6pm. Kitchen sessions 1.30, 3.00 and 4.30pm. Tours 2.30 and 4.00pm. Cost - Donation Only!

- **Too Many Cooks?**

Explore Gunnersbury Park Museum's 19th century kitchens and see the cook demonstrating traditional Victorian recipes. Cream tea to follow!

Sunday 23 May - for further info. and tickets pl. phone 0181 992 1612

Teachers may be interested by the Museum's education programme

- **Children**

Come and discover what it was like to go to school in Victorian times!

- **Victorian Kitchens II**

The butler or maid will help visitors experience the reality of life below stairs. *Booking essential*

- **Workshops cover:**

The Romans, The Victorians, World War II, The 50s & 60s, Science Alive, Tudors

For more info. call Sue McAlpine or Adam Senior on 0181- 992 2247

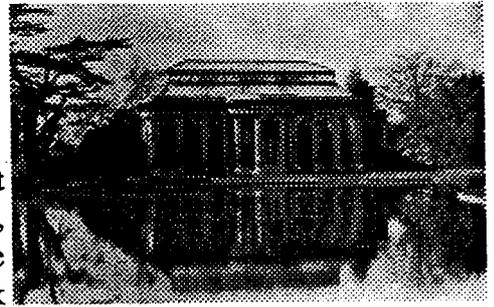
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NEWSLETTER QUARTERLY ISSUES:	
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February	Spring Lecture details
May	Summer Gala details
August	September Fete details
November	Christmas event details

Newsletter edited by: H Poskitt, 14 Manor Gdns. Gunnersbury Avenue, London W3 8JU

The Orangery



**Gunnersbury Park
Joint Committee**

The Rothschilds, who brought Gunnersbury estate in 1835, quickly set about improving the estate. One of the first park buildings built was the Orangery. Designed by Sydney Smirke who was also responsible for several other features around the park such as the enlargement of the Large Mansion, the Orangery was built in 1836. It was intended to be viewed across the horseshoe pond to give it an appearance of floating. Unfortunately, the lake got bombed in the Second World War and ended up being filled in.

The Orangery was built to complement other buildings within the park. It would have been important that an estate such as Gunnersbury had an Orangery as place for growing plants from the Orient and New World as well as being a focus point for visitors to stop at when walking around the estate.

The Orangery is a single storey building that was once in two parts. The eastern part that remains today is a rectangular building, with large sash windows and glazed roof, a semi circular glazed porch adjoins which would have been the main entrance to the Orangery. The Orangery structure is stuccoed (stucco a cement for coating walls or moulding into decorations) with the semi circular porch having four Doric styled pilasters (pilasters a rectangular columns projecting slightly from the wall).

Very little remains of the western part of the Orangery although evidence of its size and structure can still be seen by looking at the original base and the Doric pillar and lintel at the north end. This side of the Orangery was also glazed with large arcaded windows. Although it is unsure what this side of the Orangery was used for it could have had vines, palms, or other ornamental plants. You can still see the low red brick beds which are attached to the present Orangery wall and above these beds can be seen the steel eyes which would have carried the wires on which the climbing plants would have grown. The eastern part of the Orangery was fully restored in the early 1980's with further work done to the stonework in 1991 and 1996.

Lottery Bid

At present the Orangery is let for functions such as wedding receptions, parties, filming and photo shoots. It is hoped that with lottery funding an extension can be built onto the existing Orangery following the lines, levels and details of the original demolished section of the building. This would accommodate an entrance foyer, cloakrooms, toilets and a kitchen preparation and serving area.

Orangery Hire

If you are interested in hiring the Orangery for a function then please telephone either the

Lettings Section on 0181 862 5851

or the

Buildings Manager on 0181 992 1612

The Information Centre is open daily from 8.00am.
Telephone 0181 993 3508.

**THIS IS
JUST ONE
OF THE
INTERESTING
LEAFLETS
AVAILABLE
FROM THE
NORTH LODGE
INFORMATION
CENTRE ...**

**To contact us:
the Parks Information Officers
Tel: 0181 993 2055.**

Keep off the brass

A sneaky attempt to cut lottery cash for parks has been averted. **Maev Kennedy** reports

Mike Rowan would like to be standing up to his neck in water. Instead he is standing by an alpine rockery, shaded by a 40-foot Cypress tree. The rockery sits in place of what should be the glory of the garden, in the middle of what was once a horseshoe lake reflecting a listed Victorian mansion.

Rowan is in charge of the planned restoration of the 185 acres of Gunnersbury Park, in west London, a garden with medieval origins turned into a Victorian mogul's pleasure ground by the Rothschild family.

Civic Trust, warns: "Alternative sources of funding for townscape and urban parks programmes simply do not exist, and are unlikely to be provided if HLF does not support them."

The future of the programme has now been guaranteed for the next three years at least, and the programme director, Stuart Harding, believes that spending will actually increase, up to £100 million.

"What does seem slightly weird is that they had to wait for outsiders to tell them what a good and valuable programme it is," says a hugely relieved Dr Harding, garden design expert, and former municipal gardener in Bristol. "I could have told them that. I did tell them that."

The programme was designed to reverse the desolation of municipal parks, derelict after successive local authority spending cuts, abandoned to vandals and drug addicts.

The whole scheme, like the lost lake, almost sank without trace in political manoeuvring over the future of the depleted HLF.

Gunnersbury is among hundreds of British parks whose restoration was planned as part of the HLF's most popular and successful scheme, the Urban Parks Programme. The programme was thrown into chaos by the unpublished proposed axing of funding for the scheme.

There was consternation among municipal gardeners and garden his-

The history of Britain's urban public parks is the history of municipal pride and Victorian philanthropy. They were typically given by Victorian tycoons or bought by public subscription, and they often remain what they always were — the only open space in severely deprived areas.

The effects of the programme are dramatic. In just two years, restoration has begun on dozens of parks. The programme is hugely popular with the public: the restored park benches are once again seen as a safe and pleasant place for a read or a nap in the sun, and children are playing on land that was a desolation of broken glass and discarded needles. Young gardeners are queueing up to work for local authorities which have gone back to real gardening, instead of the boredom of fortnightly gang-mowing of swathes of grass.

tory enthusiasts alike, as they studied the small print of the HLF's recent policy review, in the weeks before Christmas.

This boasted of the success of the parks programme, but the bad news was buried in the columns of figures. Over £50 million has already been spent on parks. Spending in 1998/99 was projected at about £30 million, but this was set to fall to £11 million by 2001, with no funding at all assured after that.

It took a while for the implications to sink in, but the roar of rage from the Garden History Society, the Civic Trust, the Urban Parks Forum, and other concerned groups, has now reversed the proposed cuts.

Gardeners and pressure groups were equally concerned that there was, and remains, no statutory obligation on local authorities to fund parks.

Mike Gwilliam, director of the

Comprehensive restoration programmes have been drawn up for 70 more parks, including Gunnersbury.

Gunnersbury is a mixed blessing for any cash-strapped local authority. It straddles the border of Houn-

Local authorities have gone back to real gardening instead of the boredom of gang-mowing of grass

slow and Ealing councils, and has been a municipal park since 1926, when it was opened by the local MP, one Neville Chamberlain. It bears the marks of decades of enthusiastic

but misguided schemes, such as the suburban front garden rockery in place of the drained lake. It is also littered with decayed listed buildings, including two mansions, a temple, an orangery by Sidney Smirke, a folly boathouse, a grotto bath house, palatial stables built by the Rothschilds and an ornamental ruin built by their neighbours to hide it.

The latter is a particular thorn in Mike Rowan's side: the local paper keeps printing pictures of it as an example of the council's shabby treatment of the garden, despite his protests that it was built as a Gothic ruin.

All of the original garden features have been traced and mapped, and plans drawn for their restoration, at the behest of the HLF. Gunnersbury got just over £300,000, for the first of five planned restoration

phases, but feared the rest of the programme would never be completed. If the lottery funding had gone, the private and charity matching funding, responsible for a sparkling playground and a splendid cafe, would have followed.

Stuart Harding is anxious to pass on the word, to Mike Rowan and his peers, that the nation's bandstands can breathe a sigh of relief: the HLF band plays on. However, the affair has revealed how vulnerable major lottery-funded projects are to political sensitivities and perceived shifts in public opinion. The HLF has been squeezed, like the other lottery funds, by the Government's creation of a sixth good cause which has slashed its projected income, and by New Labour's spin on the people's lottery, and cash for individuals rather than capital schemes.