

FRIENDS OF GUNNERSBURY PARK & MUSEUM

NEWSLETTER NO III JANUARY 2019



BEST WISHES TO ALL FRIENDS FOR A HAPPY 2019!

PARK WALK

The next Friends event will be a walk on Sunday 3 March. Meet at the Café at 10am for a gentle exploration lasting about an hour and a half. Our December walk drew a friendly crowd, seen here slightly dazzled by the bright winter sun – do join us for to the next one! All welcome, just turn up.



THE RETURN OF LOVEBOX AND CITADEL

The CIC has agreed to the Lovebox and Citadel festivals returning to the same area of the park as 2018 on 12, 13 and 14 July. The Ealing Events announcement stated that several key aspects will be changed in the light of feed-back from residents, statutory authorities and other stakeholders. It refers to better management of pedestrian access to and from the park, improving parking arrangements and managing traffic. It promises other changes, details to come and a better consultation process with residents.

Last year they brushed aside the fears of the local residents on the grounds they were highly experienced organisers, then afterwards made a series of abject apologies for the distress they created around the Park. If they are truly listening this year, the consultation meetings will be important. We will circulate the dates when we have them.

'KINGDOM OF THE ICE AGE'

Animatronic woolly mammoths will be moving into the Park in the spring. The contractors will be setting up the exhibits from 27 March onwards and paying visitors will be admitted between 6 and 28 April. Everything will be off site by 7 May. The attraction is aimed at families in the school holidays. The CIC knows that the same operators left a shambles and unpaid debts after the last Chinese Lanterns event at Chiswick House and that there were problems with their dinosaurs at Osterley. They aim to manage this closely, refusing them access to the site unless the full fee has been paid in advance.

SPORTS UPDATE



The white steel frame of the new Sports Hub is rising as this recent photo shows. Once it has been clad and is solid, this will feel very substantial. Recent press comment about the financial difficulties of main contractor,

Kier, have been worrying but they are still on site. Some elements of the work are to be managed differently, however, with the car park construction being undertaken directly by Ealing Council. Though the new tennis courts have been in use for some months, delays in the landscaping works mean that that it is unlikely that the turf planted on the best of the new pitches will be available for use until September 2020.

The Ealing Council Project Manager will be giving a public briefing on the sports project in the Museum at 6pm on Wednesday 13 March.

THE CURVE

In 2018 the developers of this site at Chiswick Roundabout, beside B&Q, appealed against Hounslow Council's refusal of their planning application.

The Friends gave evidence at the appeal because the tallest element, at 32 storeys, would tower 100m above the level of the Terrace behind the Mansions. The applicants had manipulated the photos to suggest that it would not be intrusive.

The Inspector submitted his report to the Secretary of State by the 12 December deadline, but we have heard nothing yet about what he has recommended or what the politicians' response will be.

PARK UPDATE

The Horseshoe Pond has now been fully fenced off for some weeks because of serious damage to its perimeter. Dogs have been allowed to run in and out of the water, resulting in the shingle on the gradual sloping edge being washed repeatedly into the Pond and uncovering the underlying protective membrane. It is a shame that this has been spoilt so soon.

The CIC Board undertook an evaluation of the likely impact of the proposed GoApe course near the Children's Playground, and asked them to review the design by Christmas. GoApe have now indicated that they are unlikely to proceed with this in the immediate future. The CIC is considering how to bring boating back to the Round Pond, how to manage angling on the Potomac, and hopes to put on a Dog Show in June!

Candidates to join the CIC board of directors will be interviewed at the end of January. They advertised for someone who would not only bring valuable expertise but who might also be interested in chairing the Board in future. Meanwhile, a major restructure of Ealing Council's senior management will lead to the departure of Keith Townsend, Executive Director, Environment & Customer Services, who has overseen the Gunnersbury restoration and serves as Acting Chairman of the CIC.

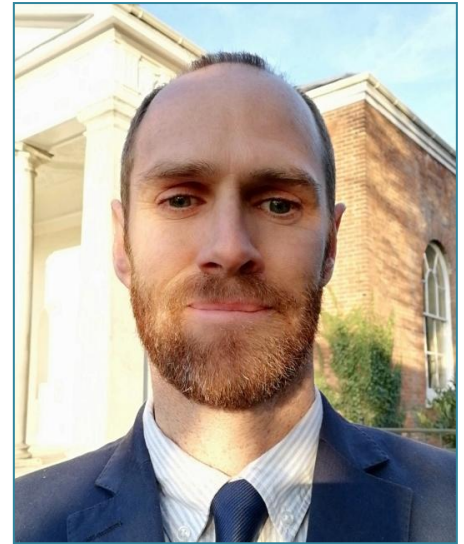
Work in the community garden, on the North Circular Road side of the Park, continues. If you would like to join in the garden work, you are welcome on Wednesdays between 10am to 12 noon.

GUNNERSBURY'S NEW HEAD OF OPERATIONS

Simon Cranmer has recently joined the CIC team as Head of Operations & Commercial Activity. He brings a good deal of relevant experience just as the Gunnersbury CIC becomes established and new ways of managing the Estate are introduced.

After a history degree, he worked for English Heritage, first for 3 years as Deputy Manager of the Wellington Arch and Apsley House in London and then for 6 years as Visitor Operations Manager at Kenwood, the stately home, art gallery and estate in Hampstead. Subsequently he took on roles with the National Trust. For 2 years he managed retail, catering, learning, visitor experience, tenancies, interpretation and parks/gardens as Deputy Property Manager for Morden Hall Park in south London. His next role with the NT was as Property Operations Manager for a portfolio of places in north Essex comprising Hatfield Forest (a 1,000 acre deer park and SSSI), a Tudor wool-merchant's house & garden and medieval tythe barn in Coggeshall and a watermill in Colchester. Most recently he spent almost a year as Head of Operations & IT at Dulwich Picture Gallery, where he was covering a period of maternity leave.

His range of experience in heritage properties and landscapes, will be valuable here as there has not been such a role before. He will be overseeing not only day-to-day operations in the Park, the maintenance of buildings, and relationships with the Café and Sports Centre



operators but also all major events and activities in the future. Simon said "I am really looking forward to playing my part in helping to further restore and maintain the Gunnersbury Estate and fund its improvement as a precious asset for the local community".

THE PARKS TEAM



L to R: Spencer Lewis, Kryssy Gajda, Monika Barry and Chris Ellis

We recently took Chris Ellis, Head Gardener, and his team on a walk around the historic gardens at Gunnersbury. All 3 new staff got to know the estate while studying for professional gardening qualifications at Capel Manor. One of the College's great strengths is helping people into new careers in horticulture which they come to love.

Monika Barry has a postgraduate qualification in tourism management, gained in Poland, which included a study of historic Stettin. In London she worked in finance before acquiring an allotment and dis-

covering her enthusiasm for gardening.

Krystyna Gajda (Kryssy) grew up in Doncaster and loved working in the garden at home with her Dad when she was small. After a degree in languages she worked as a journalist, in print then later in broadcasting for the BBC. She too has acquired an allotment which re-ignited her enthusiasm for horticulture.

Spencer Lewis has worked in retail and IT services for much of his life, most recently for an online retailer. Redundancy gave him an opportunity to take stock and he realised he had had enough of sitting behind a desk. While studying for an RHS Horticulture qualification at Capel Manor he was a volunteer at Gunnersbury and says he fell for the park!

They are easy to identify in their black fleeces with the lime green Gunnersbury logo. They are settling in well and have already got to know a number of Park users.

THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC PARKS

The publishers of *The London Gardener* (Vol 22, 2018) have very kindly given us permission to re-publish *Parks for People: gone for good*, an article by their contributor "Perambulator". It describes the sudden end of the Heritage Lottery Fund's programme to restore Britain's public parks. Gunnersbury got its HLF funding just in time.

The full article can be found on gunnersburyfriends.org. It describes the impact of austerity policies on local government funding – which may well have already destroyed the massive HLF investment – and the desperate solutions being proposed by some councils to move parks off their books and into trusts. Even with extensive commercial activities to support them, some of these trusts cannot succeed.

In 2016 one of the leading researchers into parks gave a lecture to the London Parks & Gardens Trust about all the strategies used to fund parks from their earliest days in the 19th century to the present. In many cases they had been bought by or given to local authorities in the first place as the last resort before they were developed, or to enhance the value of local building land nearby. The main alternatives to local authority funding (all of which have been tried in various ways since the 19th century) are the private sector, philanthropic giving, charitable trusts, the voluntary sector, community ownership, income generation, fundraising and sponsorship. When it was set up in the 1920s Gunnersbury hoped for reliable income from sport and recreation; today, big events are its lifeline.

In recent years there have been funded programmes to explore "Rethinking Parks" – to find new ways of supporting them. The central fact, both from the early days of public parks and now, is that core local authority funding can support top-up initiatives such as volunteering, but without it, such initiatives do not last. To read more go to:

- *Learning to Rethink Parks*, 2016 report, <http://tinyurl.com/ya2r8xlt>
- *Rethinking Parks Project* page: at <http://tinyurl.com/yann262v>
- The HLF *State of Parks* report, 2016, <https://www.hlf.org.uk/state-uk-public-parks-2016>
- *Town & Country Parks*, House of Commons, 1999, report from the Environment, Transport & Regional Affairs Committee: <http://tinyurl.com/yaxztphu>

ENCLOSURES

A copy of the latest edition of the handsome *What's On* brochure, covering the period from March to August 2019 is enclosed with this *Newsletter*. You will see that there is now far more going on after the restoration work than we can provide room for on this back page.

Please note that you usually need to book for events and activities. Do this through the website visitgunnersbury.org.

EDITOR'S NOTE

We will be preparing the next issue of this *Newsletter* in April. Your contributions of news, images, ideas and comments are always welcome.

Please send them to The Editor at 25 Hartington Road W4 3TL or info@gunnersburyfriends.org

CAPEL MANOR COLLEGE AT GUNNERSBURY

The next Open Day at the Gunnersbury Campus will be on Saturday 30 March 2019 from 10am to 3pm. It is your chance to see inside the walled garden, not just gardening but also a mini zoo for the Animal Care students. Probably some plants for sale too. Not to be missed!

GUNNERSBURY EVENTS

- On **Tuesday 5 February** from 11.30am, Head Gardener **Chris Ellis** will lead an hour's walk through the Park looking at historic varieties of plants and trees growing there, £6.00
 - On **Saturday 9 February**, 10am to 5.30pm, Laura Carlin's Adults' Ceramics Taster Workshop, aimed at beginners or those looking to develop their technique, focus on making a small set of animals or figures in the morning and exploring glazing in the afternoon, £50.00
- Booking for both is essential via visitgunnersbury.org**

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Our *Newsletter* is posted to all paid-up members and some individuals and organisations we want to keep in touch with 3 times a year. Subscriptions are renewable in April and cost £10, payable by Standing Order or by cheque. Subscriptions and donations via Gift Aid are welcome and we are pleased to discuss possible legacies. Do encourage others to join if you can, as greater numbers make us stronger. Find the form at gunnersburyfriends.org/friends/join-the-friends. Contact the Membership Secretary at 62 Creffield Road, London W3 9PS.

gunnersburyfriends.org • [@gunnersbury1](https://twitter.com/gunnersbury1) • visitgunnersbury.org • gunnersburytrust.wordpress.com

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