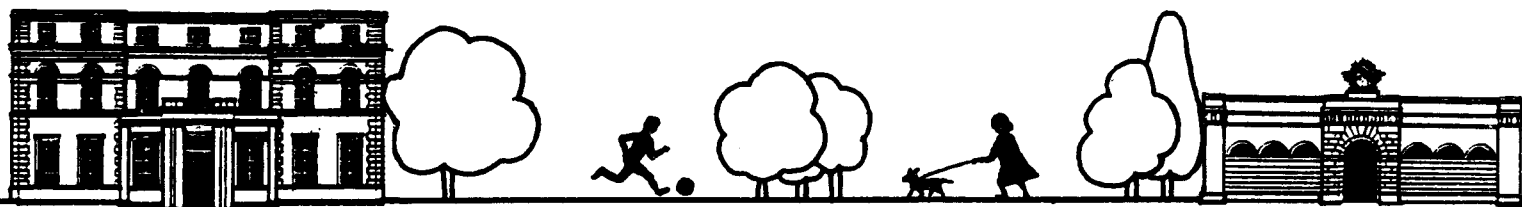


FRIENDS of GUNNERSBURY PARK & MUSEUM

No. 18
April 1986

NEWSLETTER



Future Events

The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING on Sunday 11th May is the most important of our 'future events'. It will start at 3.00 p.m. in the Temple, and last for about 1½ hours. The meeting will be asked to approve the minutes of last year's AGM, and will receive reports from the Chairman, Treasurer and Fund-Raising Sub-Committee Chairman on progress through the year. There will also be elections to the Executive Committee for next year, and nominations should be sent to the Secretary, Ken Hawkes, 18 Julius Court, Justin Close, Brentford or given to him at the meeting.

Please consider if you would wish to serve on the Committee - there will be some vacancies this time and we do need to be 'up to strength'.

The other events we have planned are:

Sunday, April 27th, 3.00, in the Temple: A slide show, followed by a Park Walk, on The History of the Park and the Plans for the Future, led by James Wisdom.

Friday, 16th May, 7.00 to 9.00, meet in the Museum Entrance: A 'Working Party' on the Rothschild Refrigerator! This is, in fact, an enormous wooden icebox, brought from one of their mansions in Tring, and lying in pieces in the Museum's Kitchens. The work will involve washing down, cleaning the metal parts, repairing tiles, putting it on its base, turning it over and adding the fixtures. This first meeting is to start the work, and to plan when the 'working party' will meet again.

Saturday 17th May, all day, starting from the Museum: A Coach Trip to Exbury. In Hampshire the Rothschilds have the most magnificent garden, which is devoted to the cultivation of rhododendrons. A film of this garden was shown throughout the Rothschilds' Exhibition last year, and after we organised an evening for showing this film, many of our members asked if we could organise a trip there. It will be an all-day trip (similar to our outing to the Cambridge Botanical Gardens last year). Cost: £1.30 + coach. Details from Eva Swan (993 1612), Joan Catterall (560 4262) or James Wisdom (994 4231).

Sunday, 1st June, 2.30, at the Nursery entrance: A Tour of the Nurseries, led by Colin Stewart. Colin manages the whole nursery operation, and as this is the weekend before all the bedding plants go out around the Borough, you will see the nurseries at the high-point of the year. This is a tour that should not be missed! Remember, the next big plant sale will be July 7 + 8, 10.00 to 4.00.

THE VICTORIAN KITCHENS will be open on June 28/9, July 26/7, August 23/4/5 and September 27/8, from 2.00 each day. Remember this is the Friends' major restoration project - a little bit more each year - and we have to provide volunteers to open these rooms. It is a very pleasant afternoon's 'work'; you don't have to know the history, just be there to supervise. Please volunteer to help - phone Joan Catterall (560 4262) or James Wisdom (994 4231).

MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS: The Domesday Book - on now until June 1st. Then: Down To Earth, on the neglected subject of soils, how they work and how we use them (very appropriate for a Museum in a Park!); from June 7 to July 6.

The Pavilion Café

The Friends manage The Pavilion Cafe for two purposes: to improve the standard of Park catering, and to make profits to spend on improving the Park. We are certainly doing the first, but when will the weather allow us to do the second? The wettest summer last year, and the rain this Easter.....

The good news is that we have appointed Tony Marren to the position of Manager, and despite the weather he has set to work with a will. Emerging from the kitchen has been a steady stream of home-made food - meat and potato pie, cottage pie, macaroni cheese,

cornish pasties, sausage rolls, jam tarts, apple turnovers split with cream, fresh doughnuts, enormous eclairs, jam and cream wedges, etc etc. Jelly and cream has been the favourite with small boys this Easter; some people have bought ice creams just to warm themselves up!

Over the Easter the Friends redecorated the interior of The Temple, an 18th century listed building capable of holding 75 people. We regard the paint and labour as a 'donation' to the Park, and the saving to the Joint Committee is an estimated £1,000. We have now agreed with the Joint Committee a reasonable fee for the use of this building for functions - small wedding receptions, 21st birthdays, anniversaries, buffet receptions, children's parties and so on. It is such a pity to see this beautiful building so little used, and we are hoping that we can build up a regular service in the Temple. Please do your best to publicise it. Tony Marren in the Pavilion Cafe can give you further details - 992 0543.

The Joint Committee

FISHING - THE POTOMAC POND: Over the last few years difficulties have arisen with the management of the Potomac Pond. The fishermen have left considerable amounts of litter, and discarded tackle has injured wildlife. Night fishing, with its associated damage to Park fencing, has not stopped despite prosecutions. There are no longer enough Park staff to supervise this area to a sufficiently high standard. Income from the fishing is about £3,000 p.a.

One solution to the problem is the idea of allowing a fishing club to manage the area, paying a fee to the Joint Committee, agreeing to maintain standards, and to operate a fair system of fees and charges, allowing casual users, encouraging youngsters, giving advice and education. Perhaps a club might do something intelligent and creative with the Potomac Tower (an 18th century pottery kiln, 'smartened up' by the Rothschilds to look like a Gothic Folly, and used as a boat house).

The Joint Committee advertised for clubs to put in bids, and the rights have been awarded to the Hanwell Prince of Wales Fishing Society. Let us hope that their talents and energy can work to make the Potomac a really attractive feature of the Park.

OX ROAST - The Joint Committee has given permission to the Rotary Club of Brentford & Chiswick to roast an ox in the Park for the Invalid Children's Association Keith Grove Project on 25th May.

MODEL BOATS: The Joint Committee has allowed the Whitton Community Association Modellers to use the Round Pond after 7.30 p.m. in summer and at any time in the winter, provided that they do not cause any pollution of the Pond. This could be an interesting feature in the evenings, but perhaps the ducks and geese have other views!

SMALL MANSION: Despite having his scheme approved on 26th July 1986, Paul Butler has only now been allowed to start on his plans to develop the Small Mansion as an Art Gallery with Studios and Workshops. How can it be that he has had to wait so long?

THE STABLES: Terry Dove and Julia Heath have now been allowed to occupy the buildings and start work. The weather this winter did £2,000-worth of damage; their tender was accepted in October. How can it be that they have had to wait so long?

THE RADIO STATION: The officers from Hounslow's Civic Centre presented January's Joint Committee Meeting with a plan to put a radio station in the Small Mansion. Their plans allowed it to start almost the very next day! How can it be.....

And...

Just enough space to welcome Gareth Griffiths, the new Assistant Curator, fresh from the Museum of London.....to thank you all (and especially the readers of the Middlesex Chronicle) for donating frog spawn for the Potomac - Joan Catterall and Anne Stead have collected buckets of the stuff!....We always need people to distribute the Newsletter; ring Joan Catterall on 560 4262.....We also need good books and bric-a-brac for our new, regular table outside the Pavilion Cafe on the first Sunday in every month.....A tree fell through the Cafe roof just before the season opened on Good Friday; thanks to all the people from Hounslow Council who got it cleared away and repaired in time.....Slightly less thanks to the tiresome character who keeps breaking into both Cafes at night when the Park is supposed to be empty.....and here it is, our word of praise to Councillor Hammett - you are quite right, there is the feeling that, with all these new projects, the Park has turned a corner.....the newly-elected Joint Committee meets for the first time on 4th July.....