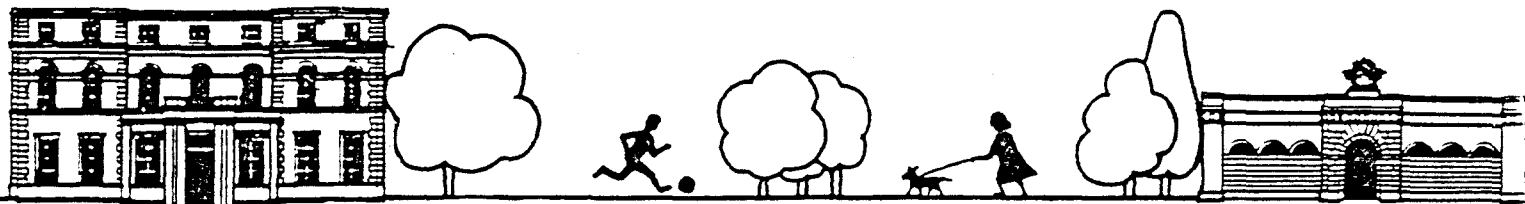


# FRIENDS of GUNNERSBURY PARK & MUSEUM

No.27  
August 1989

# NEWSLETTER



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, SEPT 10TH

The Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Gunnersbury Park and Museum will be held on Sunday 10th September at 3.30 in the Temple in the Park. This year, to make the event more interesting, we are organising a Park Walk, starting at 2.00 outside the Temple and lasting approximately an hour, during which we will visit The Stables, the newly-restored Orangery, Princess Amelia's Bath-House, the excavations of the Japanese Gardens and various examples of new planting and horticultural improvements. Please come along - we shall try to make the AGM as short and as interesting as possible. The main debate will be about the future of the Stables.

**Nominations:** We would welcome any nominations to serve on the 12-seat Executive Committee (which meets monthly). Proposals should be given to the Chairman or Secretary by the start of the meeting. Similarly topics for debate and decision should be notified by then. The draft Accounts which are printed in this Newsletter will have been audited by September 10th.

## THE STABLES

The conflict over the future of the Stables goes on. The only serious proposal for their future is the one made by Swakeleys House Ltd. They have proposed to demolish the outbuildings by the East Block and build a new building on the land thus cleared. This building will be in the style and height (2-storeys) of the East Block, and will be linked to it. The whole thing will be used as office or studio space. With some of the profit they will restore the North Block and fit it out as a museum for Gunnersbury Park Museum to extend into. They will restore the Japanese Garden. They will construct a 32-space car park on the derelict land north of both blocks, concealed from the park by bushes and trees, opening out onto the North Circular Road and available to the public at weekends. They will also hand over a fund (£400,000 was the last figure mentioned) to the Gunnersbury Park Joint Committee to pay for the staff needed in the Museum Extension.

This scheme has been accepted by the Gunnersbury Park Joint Committee and by Ealing Council, but is opposed by the Labour Councillors on Hounslow Council on the grounds that it is wrong to allow private office development in a public park. They have no serious alternative proposals.

We in the Friends of Gunnersbury Park have since 1981 opposed the construction of offices in the Park. This scheme, however, brings more advantages than any previous scheme (the Museum Extension, the funding of the staff, the restoration of the Japanese Garden and no loss of parkland for the new building). Also we have watched these Councillors since 1981 and it is crystal clear that they have absolutely no intention of finding the huge sums necessary to restore the buildings. The Stables are now in a perilous state - their future is measured in months, not years. It looks as though it is the Swakeleys scheme or nothing.

# OPEN-AIR BAZAAR

On Sunday 27th August we will be holding our Annual Open-Air Bazaar in the Park, alongside the Children's Playground beside the Coronation Cafe (the Footballers' Cafe), from 11.00 onwards. If you are free come along and support us and other local charities (for example, the NSPCC, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Cancer Research, the Cats Protection League etc.).

Don't forget that we hold a Books and Bric-a-Brac sale in the Pavilion Cafe on the first Sunday in every month, so don't throw anything away - phone Marianne Booth on 992 9891.

# SCULPTURE IN THE PARK

In the last Newsletter we announced the Sculpture Exhibition in the Park, for which we had sponsored a sculpture on "Litter". This turned out to be a lovely blue pig, rootling about in litter and with a body which was full of the stuff. It was a clever, punning piece.

It was kicked to bits within 48 hours of being put in the Park. The artist, Caitlin Jones, then placed a wreath of flowers beside it with a small notice reading "Due to mindless vandalism, Pig is dead". So we now had a sculpture on "Vandalism" as well as litter!

Most of the other outdoor pieces in the exhibition have been regularly vandalised. Good sculpture enhances the delight of a visit to the Park. We must struggle on.

# THE MUSEUM

Dry Rot in the Museum has forced it to close for the foreseeable future and the programme of exhibitions has been cancelled. It could cost £50,000 to put right. It has been caused by bad-quality, cheese-paring maintenance. The only good thing is that the Victorian Kitchens are open every day - the Museum has moved in there so that something is available to the public.

# AND.....

Have you noticed that there has been a big improvement in the amount of litter in the Park? I would especially like to thank some of the regular dog-walkers who pick up litter when they see it. Did you know you can buy litter-pickers for £10.50 from Independents, Unit 17, The Hawthorn Centre, Elmgrove Road, Harrow, HA1 2RS, (861 1722)? (Joan Catterall, 560 4262).

Friends who remember the last Museum Curator but one, Ann Balfour Paul (now Ann Collett White) will be delighted to learn that she has recently given birth to a son, Francis, a brother for Elizabeth.

It appears that some new improvements have been promised to the Children's Playground - landscaping to reduce the amount of tarmac and a new tower and slide. An example of how good a new LB Hounslow playground looks can be seen on Chiswick Common - something similar is long overdue at Gunnersbury.

Don't forget to send your £3 subscription renewal to Joan Catterall, 39, Lionel Road, Brentford. This Newsletter has been edited by James Wisdom, 994 4231.