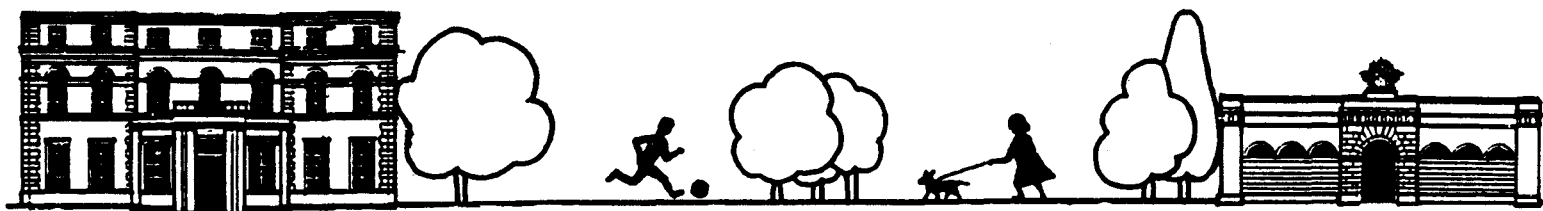


FRIENDS of GUNNERSBURY PARK & MUSEUM

No. 32
April 1990

NEWSLETTER



THE FUTURE OF THE STABLES

Hounslow has prepared a new Planning Brief for the Stables: convert the derelict East Lodge into a Children's Day Centre; convert the East Stable Block into a Riding School with the riding area behind the Gothic Walls; convert the North Stable Block (sometimes called the Carriage Block) into an extension for the Museum.

These are exactly the sort of proposals the Friends have been calling for since 1981. The question is: how to afford it?

The costs were made public on 22nd March 1991 (at the meeting of the Gunnersbury Park Joint Committee). Hounslow are prepared to put in £500,000 from planning agreements on re-developments beside the Park on the Great West Road ("...if the developments happen" - the words of John Allen, the Area Manager for the Planning Department). English Heritage are prepared to grant £250,000. Hounslow are asking Ealing to put up £466,000. Ealing are refusing, on the grounds that the Joint Committee had a perfectly good scheme (financed by office building) which would not have cost the citizens of either borough anything.

Hounslow scuppered the previous scheme - they used their powers as planning authority to prevent it and then brought in the Conservation Area proposals to prevent it returning.

The previous scheme was practical but imperfect. This new scheme is perfect but impractical. Both councils have manoeuvred to avoid blame. Both can now sit back and with a clear conscience let the buildings decay to destruction.

The joint management agreement of the Park has broken down. Having to go to arbitration was a symptom of that. Hounslow's refusal to accept the result of that arbitration was another symptom of it. The current stalemate is proof. The only agency with the authority to intervene is English Heritage, and they will do anything rather than take action.

Perhaps we have now to consider the implications of the collapse of the management agreement. Hounslow have behaved in the last two years as if the Park is theirs. It would not be surprising if Ealing did not just walk away.

ANNE FRANK IN THE WORLD

Gunnersbury's current exhibition is "Anne Frank In The World". This has been brought to Gunnersbury by the efforts of Basil Mann, a local resident who has raised the money and done the organising. He is particularly pleased that so many school teachers have booked to bring

their classes.

The exhibition has been augmented by material lent by a local resident, Julius Fletcher, who escaped to England in 1939; his passport (stamped with a J) and the yellow star he was forced to wear are two of the items on show. There is also a display in the entrance hall on some of the refugee communities in the boroughs of Ealing and Hounslow - including a most striking example of Somalian national dress.

This exhibition has cost many thousands to put on and its theme - the effect of racism and prejudice - is so important that the Friends have agreed to donate £500 to support it. We are hoping to raise most of this money by staging a musical evening on 2nd May.

It should be a great evening! We will be opening the Museum from 7 - 8 o'clock to view the exhibition; there will be light refreshments in the entrance hall. Then at 8 o'clock we shall make our way over to the Lecture Room of the Small Mansion for the concert.

The Onyx Wind Quintet have agreed to play for us - they are putting together a programme of music from Bach to the present day. They are Jane Emanuel, Sarah Jane de Bats, Mary Hoyle, Jacqueline O'Dell and Sarah Rozario - all from the Royal Academy of Music. As the concert will be just before the exhibition closes on May 6th, we will be able to make a short report on its progress. We aim to finish by 10.00.

We will be re-decorating the Small Mansion Lecture Room on the weekend of 13th/14th April so the surroundings will look good. This will be an excellent way of supporting the Museum and the exhibition - please do your best to come along, and please pass the other slip to a friend.

THE FUTURE OF THE MANSIONS

Opportunities and problems. The West London Training Consortium has now closed and the rooms it used (offices, classrooms and the Small Mansion Lecture Room) are now available for alternative uses. Any ideas for the Small Mansion? Two suggestions have emerged so far - expanding the Arts Centre, or installing a small kitchen and refurbishing to make a set of hireable rooms - for conferences, training, banquets and buffets.

In the Large Mansion the Museum now has the opportunity to re-organise its space, to have a good teaching room for school parties, internal toilets, better storage space, access to the Victorian Kitchens through internal corridors, a new temporary exhibition gallery and the restoration of the Butler's Pantry to go with the Victorian Kitchens. This is a major programme of improvements. When it happens, Gunnersbury will be on its way to becoming one of London's major local museums.

The problems? Only that the exterior paintwork of the Large Mansion is now coming off the walls, water is being trapped inside it and threatening outbreaks of every sort of rot you could imagine. The cost of scaffolding, stripping back and re-painting will be £140,000. The total budget available for all maintenance next year? £96,460. There is a full structural survey planned, but it will only show even more horrors. The Archaeology Gallery has already been closed for over a year because of structural failings.

MUSIC IN THE ORANGERY

Last year we sponsored two Sunday afternoon musical events in the Orangery; they were very successful and we were asked to put together a programme for this year. More details will come later but put these in

your diaries now! Doors open 2.30; start at 3.00; tickets £4.

*Sunday 26th May - Vicky and Hugh Campbell (Duets for Flute and Classical Guitar) and John Clarke (Spanish and Baroque Guitar Solos);

*Sunday 9th June - Light Operetta and Music from Old Vienna - Reprise (Maurine London - Soprano, Nico Mott - Tenor, Dorothy Hobart - Piano, and Clarinet and Flute);

*Sunday 21st July - The 12 Europa Singers - a mixed programme from madrigals to Vaughan Williams.

NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM

The Museum has been granted £20,000 by the Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund, jointly financed by the Wolfson Foundation and the Office of Arts and Libraries, towards converting the Rothschild's Library room into a costume gallery - it is the room on your right as you enter the building.

There are new staff at the Museum. Tony Fennell has been appointed as the new Caretaker; Anita Herle is the Assistant Curator; Jayne Tyler is the (temporary) Exhibitions Officer. The post of Curator is still vacant, but Sue McAlpine - the Interpretative Officer - is Acting Curator.

There are two exhibitions currently being planned. The first, possibly starting in May, will be on Printing and Lithography, using pictures from the Museum's collection with workshops on different printing techniques. Later in the summer there may well be an exhibition on The Victorian Child.

TRAGEDY IN THE PARK

On Sunday February 17th there was a dreadful tragedy in the Park when two local children - Julie and Stephen Moles - died after falling through the ice of the Potomac Lake. There must have been acts of great bravery during the incident as other children were rescued from the water but the pain of this loss has been felt by everyone working in or associated with the Park. The Friends sent flowers and a letter expressing our deepest sympathies to the parents.

Hounslow Council immediately set up an enquiry into the practices and procedures of the Leisure Services Department at the time of the accident. This enquiry will report after the inquest has been held - perhaps some time in the summer.

AND . . .

The Friends have sponsored an exhibition - with Gunnersbury's Small Mansion Arts Centre - of the work of students from the Foundation Art course at Hounslow Borough College which will be on display at Hounslow's Centrespace Library in the Treaty Centre from 8th to 26th April.

Don't forget that on the first Sunday in every month the Friends run a bric-a-brac and book sale in the Pavilion Cafe and that Joan Catterall (560 4262) or Marianne Booth (992 9891) are always interested in being offered things to sell!

English Heritage have published a "Buildings At Risk" Register - we score well with the Stables, the East Lodge and the Gothic Ruins.

THE FRIENDS OF GUNNERSBURY PARK AND
MUSEUM

present a

MUSICAL EVENING

in support of the exhibition

ANNE FRANK IN THE WORLD

on 2nd May 1991

THE ONYX WIND QUINTET

WITH MUSIC FROM BACH TO HINDEMITH

Tickets: £7

To include special evening viewing of the exhibition, with light refreshments,
at Gunnersbury Park Museum, 7 - 8 p.m.

Music, in the Small Mansion, Gunnersbury Park, 8.15 - 10 p.m.

Tickets available from: The Chairman, Friends of Gunnersbury Park and Museum,
25, Hartington Road, W4 3TL.