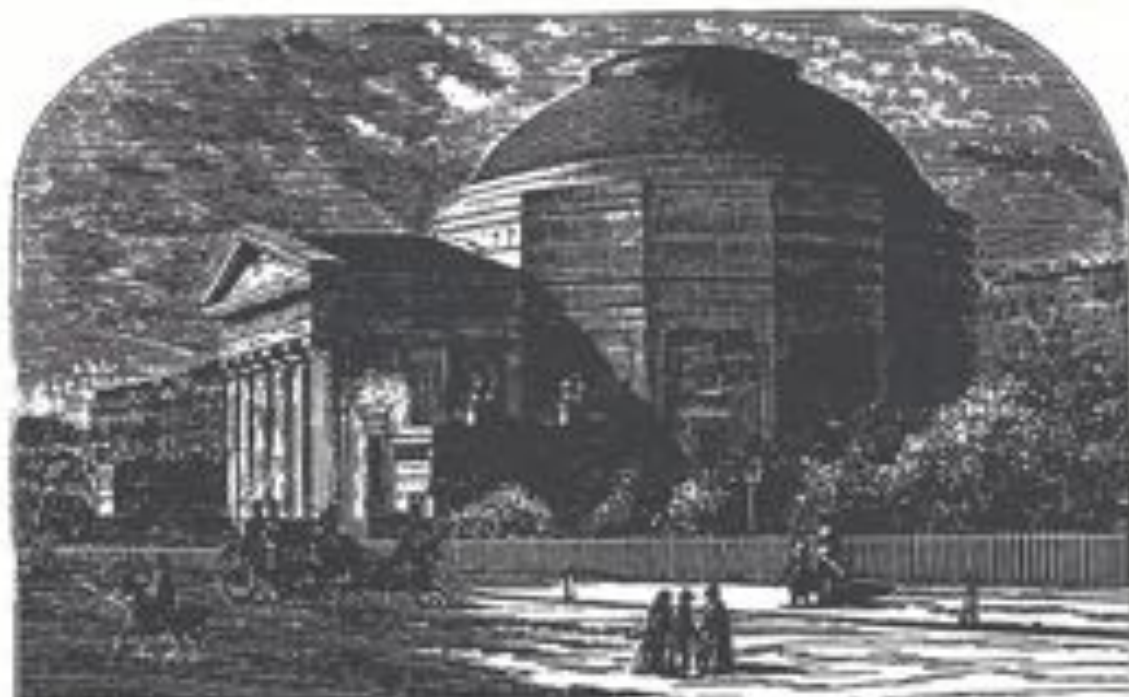

NEWSLETTER
OCTOBER 1994



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THE FRIENDS OF REGENT'S PARK

Hon. Secretary: Valerie St. Johnston,
30 Fitzroy Road, London NW1 8TY
Tel: 071 722 5932



Exterior of the Colosseum, constructed in 1827. See a walk in the park pages 4 & 5.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

At the AGM we agreed that I should have a meeting with Mr. Iain Sproul MP who is the Minister at the Department of National Heritage with responsibility for the Royal Parks and particularly Regent's Park. The main purpose of the meeting would be to discuss with the Minister how we can have an effective mechanism to enable our membership to be consulted over significant matters relating to Regent's Park and to co-ordinate the activities of the various bodies who have responsibilities within the Park.

Along with Michael Goldhill, our Treasurer, I am meeting the Minister soon and will report back to members after that. Michael and I also want to discuss with the Minister the possibility of our raising money to improve signs in the Park particularly to give some description of Regent's Park's history.

Staying with this theme of consultation, I am pleased to report that Mr. Sproul has now agreed to meet representatives of the Royal Parks Forum, that is all the Royal Parks in London, on an annual basis to review the activities of the nine Royal Parks and the views of the various Friends' Groups.

This newsletter is the first one to go out under the editorship of Lionel Simmonds and I would like to thank him for volunteering to take on this time consuming job.

Richard de Ste Croix

WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE PARK?

We are grateful to Mr David Caselton, the park manager for keeping us informed on a number of matters. Parks Management are in the process of producing a booklet on the trees in the Park, and also a guide leaflet for new visitors to the Park. We will keep members informed on this and let them know how to obtain copies.

The Avenue Gardens (the old Nesfield design) will be finished by spring 1995. We reprint on page 7 a letter by a member which appeared in 'The Times'. Do you have views on this new work in the park?. Is it an improvement on what was there before? What would you have preferred?

Please write to the Editor, c/o the Hon. Secretary

The new Bird Rearing House should be finished by the end of this year. This will enable several decrepit buildings in the area which have been used for this purpose to be demolished. We hope to arrange a private viewing of the building for the Friends early next year. Regent's Park is reputed to have the finest public collection of water fowl in the country and this facility should help maintain it as such.

If you are assailed by electronic noise, the Parks Superintendents Office should be informed on weekdays (0171 486 7905) and at weekends the Parks Police (0171- 935 1259). Do it at the time - they cannot help us if we only complain later!

The new sign- and map-boards, of which members who went on the tour of the park with Mr.Caselton saw a prototype, should be ready by the end of the year and replace the existing "down-at-beel" ones.

At the time of the privatisation of the gardening we were concerned for the future of the apprentice scheme. It is good news therefore that some buildings at the rear of the Parks Office are to be refurbished to become the apprentice training centre for the Royal Parks. Apprentices will receive a three-year course.

Longer-term plans are being produced for re-landscaping Hanover Island. This is the island which we see when we leave the children's boating pond and cross the bridge over the lake.

Have you noticed the petrified tree stumps by the

lake in the Queen Mary Gardens? They were placed there by the Royal Botanical Society when the Society was located in the park, and they originate from the Isle of Portland. They will shortly have an informative plaque nearby, and will be enclosed to prevent damage from visitors walking on them.

GARDENING AND GROUNDWORKS CONTRACT UP FOR RENEWAL

The present contract was awarded to AAH Environmental Services, also known as Tylers, three years ago and it expires at the end of February 1995. David Caselton has told Richard de Ste Croix that tenders are out at present and will be evaluated from mid-October onwards with the new contract being awarded before Christmas so it can take effect from 1 March 1995.

The arrangement is that Mr. Caselton and his colleagues draw up a detailed schedule of items of work and these items are priced in the contract. The actual work is then "instructed" by the Royal Parks Agency to the contractor usually in advance on a monthly basis but sometimes on a weekly basis. The list of tasks to be done is apparently rather more detailed this year than it was three years ago, and while the Royal Parks are looking for value for money they are not seeking to cut back the scope of the contract.

David Caselton has agreed that it would be helpful for him to have feedback from our membership about those aspects of the present contract with Tylers that have been successful and those where we feel improvements could be made. If any member has specific comments would they please write to Richard de Ste Croix at 9 Wellington Place, London, NW8 as he is going to assemble all of these and discuss them with David Caselton before the new contract is awarded. Please do not be reluctant to get down to detail if need be about individual much-loved trees, shrubs or flower borders as we believe it is the sum total of all these details that will go to make up a really beautiful park.

On the vexed question of motor vehicles in the Park, the Friends have consistently complained to Mr. Caselton about this. He tells us that the issuing of permits for vehicles is now administered by his office and not by the Parks Police, and if members

have a complaint about particular vehicles being driven in the Park, David Caselton asks that they note the registration number and notify his office, the telephone number being 071-486 7905 - apparently those drivers abusing the permit system risk having their permit confiscated.

AUTHORITIES AROUND THE PARK

3. The Crown Estate Paving Commission (cont.)

We were pleased that the chairman of the C.E.P.C. accepted our invitation to meet us in order to rectify any misconceptions or errors arising from questions posed in our June issue. He was accompanied by Mrs. Elizabeth Watson, another commissioner. Mr. Lionel Simmonds, our newsletter editor' also attended the meeting.

1. Patrolling

We had to agree to differ as to whether the patrolling and lighting information which we had was correct at the time of writing. We do accept that since June a new check-point has been installed on the terrace to which we referred and the patrol has been checking thereon regularly. They report on any defective lighting, and this they appear to be doing now.

We were informed by Mr. Mackeson-Sandbach that since patrolling was instituted some three or four years ago the CEPC had evidence of a reduction of crime in the area and in one case the patrol was instrumental in the recovery of the proceeds of a burglary.

2. Refuse Collection

It was explained to us that we had the advantage that the refuse collectors do collect from residences, with the result that no refuse or garbage is allowed on the pavement. We have all seen outside the park polythene bags and cartons blocking the kerb and spilling their contents on to the pavement and accept that the avoidance of this is of value.

Since the CEPC is going to continue in existence, and is giving residents in the park some

advantage, perhaps it is through our local councillors that we should be urging some remission of council tax to allow for the services they do not have to supply.

3. Coaches in the Park

We complained that the notices at the entrance to the park banning coaches from the park were not the standard international signs and were too small for a driver to see readily. The letters "PSV" mean nothing to a foreign coach driver; the standard international sign does. We pointed out the difference between the sign directing coaches to the parking place at Gloucester Gate and the sign banning entrance.

We were pleased to hear that the CEPC feels as strongly as we do about the intrusion of these buses and the damage they do to bollards etc. We urge all members to note the number and details of the owner of any coach which they see on the Inner or Outer Circle together with the date and time and report it to the Parks Police (telephone number 071-935 1259).

4. Finance

We urged that the CEPC send out at least a single sheet of paper with their rate demands informing their rate payers how their money was being spent. We were informed that the CEPC were not in the Public Relations business but any rate payer could make an appointment to look at the accounts at the CEPC office. We urged them to reconsider this point, and they have subsequently informed us by letter that they are doing so.

In the meantime if you are a CEPC rate payer and want to find out where your money goes do telephone them on 071-935 8049 to make an appointment to examine the accounts.

We shall be delighted to keep our 500 members informed of any activities which the C.E.P.C. wish to have disseminated.

Perhaps if the CEPC and other authorities like them were more conscious of reporting to the public there would be less mingiving.

WHY NOT DO A WALK IN THE



Thomas Morner, in his little cabin slung from the dome of St. Pauls, sketching for the "Panorama of London."

A good starting point is Great Portland Street Station. Standing by the old drinking fountain, now used as a litter bin seldom emptied, one can compare the traffic's noisy boom with a tranquil scene, with horse-drawn carriages ambling along. There were drinking troughs and fountains at many points until comparatively recent times. Keep an eye open to spot more on our walk.

We cross the Euston Road and pause to look at Holy Trinity Church, now S.P.C.K. When this church was first mooted the site chosen was in Park Crescent, but it was pointed out that the view northwards from Foley House, where the Langham Hotel now stands would contravene the agreement that nothing would be built to obscure that view. An ingenious compromise was reached. A plot of land was purchased and the boundary between St. Pancras and St. Marylebone re-drawn in order to enable the church to be built in St. Marylebone.

Take the outside pulpit, one of only a few in London, which was added to the church as a memorial to the Rev. Samuel Cadman who used to draw large congregations to his sermons.

Crossing Albany Street and leaving its history for another walk we pass Peto Place and glancing right see the rear of the Diorama.

Looking southwards across Marylebone Road we see the bust of J. F. Kennedy flanked by a magnolia tree. The site was chosen because the eminent

American historian, Henry Brook Adams, son of Ambassador Charles Adams, lived nearby in Park Crescent.

A few yards on we turn right into Park Square East where the houses are being refurbished (1994). As we walk northwards notice the lamp standards with the letters GIV, WIV, GV and EIR and see if you can find any VR or EVII. These lamp standards, incidentally are one chain apart, that is 22 yards, the length of a cricket pitch.

The gardens in Park Square are linked to Park Crescent by a tunnel once known as Nursemaids Walk where nannies would meet their soldier boyfriends.

Continuing along Park Square East we pass the Diorama, opened in 1823, the interior designed by Pugin Senior.

Exhibited here were dioramic views, among them three of the interior of Canterbury Cathedral, the valley of Sarren and the cloister of St. Wandrille, Normandy.

The circular auditorium was on a turntable designed by Morgan and Topham and was so well made that it could be turned smoothly by one man.

The Diorama was very popular, but when the novelty wore off it was closed in 1848. In 1852 Sir S.M. Peto acquired the lease and converted the house into a Baptist chapel which existed until 1921. After that it became, until quite recently, the Arthur Stanley Clinic for the treatment of Rheumatism, with a healing pool in the basement. It then became an Arts centre and is now being refurbished.

Continuing northwards we come to St. Andrews place, a cul-de-sac with some fine houses. Next we arrive at the Royal College of Physicians, designed by Sir Denys Lasdun (1964) which replaced Someries House the Adult Orphanage established in 1820.

The college has a fine Pannelled Room and Staircase, dating from before the Great Fire of

PARK – ON THE EASTERN SIDE?

1666, which the college brought from its former home.

Next to the college is Cambridge Gate and Terrace, to the east of which, on Albany Street, is Colosseum Terrace. Here stood the Colosseum (1827) a 16-sided building 130 foot in diameter with a huge portico and cupola. It was used to show a vast panorama of London painted by E.T. Parris from drawings by Thomas Horner.

Horner made about 2,000 sketches from a little cabin hoisted to the dome of St. Paul's when the ball and cross was being replaced. The old ball and cross was part of the exhibition in the Colosseum.

We cross the road here and find, in the hedgerow, one of the old parish boundary stones between St. Marylebone (now Westminster) and St Pancras (now Camden). Stand with your back to the stone and facing South-East to Telecom Tower you are looking straight down Cleveland Street (the old Green Lanes) the boundary line. We can re-check this when we find more boundary stones.

Northward again to Chester Gate where we can spy upon the façade, a bust of John Nash.

For a few months in 1847 Charles Dickens had a house in Chester Place, where his son Sydney Smith Dickens was born. Sydney became a lieutenant in the Navy, dying at sea soon after his father.

You may find in the hedgerows of Chester Road two more boundary stones.

We come now to Chester Terrace, built by James Burton initially to designs by Nash.

Burton introduced variations which offended Nash when eventually he noticed them. Nash thought the the statues not to his taste, and also took exception to the two detached houses at the ends. Nash cleverly linked the offending houses to the terrace by elegant arches, as we see.

The architect, Prof. Charles Robert Cockerrell R.A., lived in Chester Terrace for ten years before

his death in 1863.

Next we come to a group of houses in Cumberland Place, then the splendid Cumberland Terrace which is my favourite.

Standing in the Park, approximately where the guinette was to have been, on a summer evening, the effect is glorious with the churches of St. Katherine's to the north and Christ Church peeping over Chester Place.

After Cumberland Terrace we find St. Katherine's Hospital, designed by Ambrose Poynter. Nash disliked him as a person and was opposed to the design. The resulting buildings are much different from the general designs around the park, being pseudo-Gothic of brick and stone rather than the stucco preferred by Nash. It does, however please me and is well worth a visit. There is a replica of the runic Jelling stone in the garden, rather spoiled I think by being painted.

Opposite in the park is the site of the Master's House of St Katherine's Hospital, which was destroyed by a flying bomb in 1944. The mounds hereabouts are the grass covered debris.

Finally on this walk we reach Gloucester Gate, a small group of houses, and so, turning left we stroll over the grass to Broad Walk near Wolf Paddock, then left again to the tea shop for a welcome cuppa.

TOM SANDERS



St. Katherine's Hospital

**SINFONIA CONCERT
TO BE HELD JOINTLY WITH
THE FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC**

Conductor: Lynn Harrell (Principal R.A.M.)
Baritone James Lawrence

IN THE DUKES HALL, MARYLEBONE ROAD NW1

*AT 7.30 pm
1 DECEMBER 1994*

PROGRAMME

OVERTURE OBERON: WEBER
LIEDER EINES FAHRÉNDEN GESELLEN: MAHLER
SYMPHONY NO.2 IN D MAJ. OP. 36: BEETHOVEN

Tickets £20 each to include full buffet supper, coffee, soft drinks and one glass of wine. (Additional wine will be available at £6.00 per bottle).

The number of tickets is severely limited. Tickets will be issued strictly in order of receipt of applications received.

Last year several people had to be refused tickets to our concert because they left it too late to apply.

Please apply to our Treasurer with the slip below,
**PROMPTLY WITH A STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE FOR
THE DESPATCH OF THE TICKETS.**

It points out: "In trying to accommodate so many different forms of recreation, no one group can expect to have what they would ideally want. We shall continue to provide facilities for cycling on designated cycle lanes, but they will not necessarily take direct routes and will in most cases be confined to the margins of the Parks."

It has been suggested that on Primrose Hill, as in Greenwich Park, there should be no cycle track, because "the slopes are such that cycling would be potentially hazardous." For Regent's Park, it is proposed that a one-way cycle lane round the Outer Circle should be introduced. This would be south-bound to the east of the Park and north-bound to the west. Such a route takes only slightly longer than any route through the Park, such as down the Broad Walk, and would not inconvenience pedestrian Park users.

Any members who want to express their views on these proposals should telephone or write to the Secretary.

PARKING FOR THE DISABLED

Following a complaint by Mr Astor Winter of Hampstead at the lack of parking facilities for the disabled on the Outer Circle, the Royal Parks Authority has given assurance that efforts will be made to rectify the situation he has received a letter from Viviane Robertson.

"We have provided parking for disabled on the Inner Circle as this allows for easier access to the main area of the Park. We are, however, now looking at the provision of parking spaces for the disabled on the Outer Circle, with a view to making the Park generally more accessible for the disabled".

We will be monitoring the situation closely and will report progress."

NEW OUTER CIRCLE

Last year an ex-friend did not renew his membership as he said he did not wish "to be a friend of what had become one of the largest commuter car-parks in London". We wonder if he will now join us again.

The new meter parking scheme has now been in operation for some weeks, and we would ask our members who use the Park either on a regular or on a casual basis whether it has improved their access to, and enjoyment of, the Park.

Please write or telephone the Secretary.

VICTORIAN FOLLY?

Our members will be interested in this letter to "The Times" penned by Professor Emeritus Leslie Collier, who has just joined us.

Sir, Criticism of English Heritage's activities at Kenwood can be echoed in relation to the havoc now being wreaked in Regent's Park. Here, the Royal Parks is restoring the Broad Walk to what it is supposed to have looked like in Victorian times.

The simple but well planted flower beds flanking the walk have been replaced by a clutter of fussy little paths and fences, surrounding beds of various shapes and sizes crammed with amazing assortments of plants in convoluted patterns. The eight fountains and 24 large stone urns of mediocre design now being installed

TEL No.

Capital letters please

Name