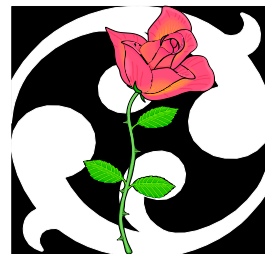


FRIENDS OF VAUXHALL PARK



NEWSLETTER 16

January 2007

Have your say on the Park

The next meeting of the Friends will be the **Annual General Meeting on Saturday 27 January at 10.30am**. Read on for Park news and come along to the Ashmole Tenants' Hall in Meadow Road on Saturday to hear more and tell us what you would like to see in the Park. Lambeth Council officers and councillors usually attend.

Time to renew please !

Our membership year runs from November, so if you have not yet renewed for 2007, please do so now, using the attached membership form – see also our website www.vauxhallpark.org.uk Membership matters - the more members we have, the more clout the Friends of Vauxhall Park has with the Council to get things done in the Park.

Stop press

The trees in the Park have escaped relatively lightly from the recent storm-force winds. Only one tree was blown down, a rather handsome rowan, but subsequent inspection revealed that the base was weakened by disease. More dramatically, and seriously, almost the entire roof of the One O'Clock Club building was torn off. The roof had only recently been renewed, so questions will no doubt be asked. At the moment we do not have any information as to when repairs will be carried out.

New café

We understand that at long last building work is due to start shortly to convert the old toilet block at the corner of Fentiman Road and South Lambeth Road into a café. The work is scheduled to be completed by early June, so the café should be up and running in time for our Summer Fair. It will be run by Henri Laghi, who many of you will remember as the former owner of the delicatessen Henri's in Claylands Road.

The new café will face the Park (not the road), will retain the existing brick construction but rendered and painted, with a clock tower, a verandah, inside and outside seating, and most importantly toilets open to all. It will be licensed to serve beer and wine and have a secure play area for children only accessible through the café. The opening hours will be from 11am to half an hour before closing time in summer, with winter hours to be agreed.

Better and better

You will have seen the smart new signs at all the entrances to the Park, for the first time with a map showing all the features and facilities available. The fencing around the tennis courts has also recently been replaced.

Three new benches in memory of Alexander Macintosh (founder of the Friends in 1999 and our first Chairman), Jimmy Hunter and John Elliott (the last most generously donated by Cathy Chipchase) were installed just before Christmas. We are half way through a programme of replacing the benches in the park, so please contact Ivan McCracken (mccracken@beeb.net or 020 7735 9454) or myself (tclay@fsmail.net or 020 7582 9074) if you would like to sponsor or make a donation towards a memorial bench, or indeed any other improvement to the Park.

We are grateful to our Area Parks Officer, Jonathan Meares, who was able to find funding to re-surface most of the main pathways. The work seems to have been carried out to a high standard and the newly laid asphalt has considerably enhanced the general appearance of the park. Jonathan and his colleague Alastair Johnstone (who held our hands while we worked on the Management Plan) are always looking for ways to improve the park's infrastructure and facilities - no shortage of ideas, only of money!

Summer Fair

Last year's Summer Fair held on Sunday 26 June was a huge success, attended by several hundred local people. Entry was free and attractions including a giant slide, jazz band, fortune teller, cricket nets, tennis coaching and stalls proved popular with families and residents of all ages.

Many thanks for a wonderful day to the Fair organiser, Seth Taylor, our volunteer stewards, police and community support officers, stallholders and our sponsors including more than 25 local businesses and organisations. Another reason to celebrate was that, for the first time ever, the Fair broke even, with the costs covered by sponsorship, contributions and donations on the day.

Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday 31 March

A date for your diaries – the annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held on at 11am on 31 March this year, with registration from 10.30am. Look out for more details posted on Park noticeboards nearer the time. As always volunteers are needed on the day to hide the eggs and keep an eye on the children. Please let Polly Freeman (polly@barnabasvillas.fsnet.co.uk or 020 7720 7568) or Louise Norwood (louise.norwood@virgin.net or 020 7735 4816) know if you can help.

Calling all twitchers

We are looking ways to promote bio-diversity within the Park, especially with local children. One suggestion was 'bird spotting' so if you could help, please contact Louise Norwood (details above). Louise would also welcome other ideas for a project.

Jimmy Hunter and Sheila Clark

Jimmy Hunter, a committed member of the Committee of the Friends whose energy at the age of 86 put the rest of us to shame, very sadly died in September. He used his considerable eloquence and powers of persuasion to dramatic effect and was hugely successful in raising sponsorship money for the Summer Fair. He also enrolled many of his friends, particularly from the Lambeth Pensioners Action Group, to volunteer their services as stewards.

We were delighted to receive donations from Jimmy's friends and family for a bench and a cherry tree in the Park in his memory. We shall all miss him greatly.

We were also extremely sad to say farewell to Sheila Clark, whose untimely death has robbed us of a good friend and one of our most loyal supporters. Apart from providing us with refreshments and a venue for our meetings, Sheila was a fund of sound advice and a

touchstone of public opinion on her side of the park, apart from being the wife, soulmate and cheerleader of Nobby Clark - and no-one has done more for Vauxhall Park than Nobby.

Ivan McCracken departs for Lincolnshire

We are very sad to be saying goodbye to Ivan McCracken, who has announced that he will be resigning in summer 2007 as Chairman of the Friends. He has been our hard working and very successful Chairman since 2003, relentless in holding Lambeth Council to account and seeking improvements to the Park, while keeping council officers, councillors, our MP and others on side with good humour, tact and patience (the café has taken four years to bring to fruition!).

In particular he has led the development of the new 10-year Management Plan which will ensure that future projects and improvements conform to the plan and are not carried out in a haphazard manner. The Plan was the result of a year-long consultation exercise with park users and stakeholders and hopefully will enable us to qualify for Green Flag status and win external funding. His persistence has also played a huge part in achieving the dream of a much needed new café (and toilets!). We shall also miss Meridy's green fingers - the plant stall run by her and Susan Smith at the Summer Fair sold out and was one of our biggest money-spinners.

Ivan and Meridy are moving to Stamford later this year to be nearer their children and grandchildren. We wish them the very best.

Simpler, cheaper and greener

This is our first newsletter to be sent out by email to members for whom we have an email address. If you have an email address but have not received this newsletter electronically, please let me know at tclay@fsmail.net.

Do you care about Vauxhall Park ? Can you help ?

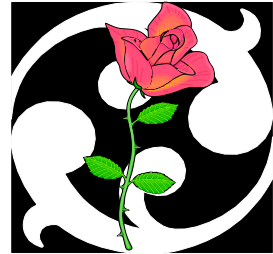
Could you give a few hours now and then to help improve the Park? There is plenty to do and we are urgently looking for people to join the Committee of the Friends - no qualifications needed except an interest in the Park.

You could help organise the Summer Fair (held every year on the last Sunday in June) or join committee members on park walkabouts with Council officers to identify work to be done, or help with the newsletter, website or open meetings. We particularly need people who could be available from time to time to meet Lambeth Council officers during working hours, to make sure the Park is managed and maintained as local people want.

No regular commitment is needed - any time you can spare would be very helpful. Please get in touch with Ivan McCracken (mccracken@beeb.net or 020 7735 9454) or myself (tclay@fsmail.net or 020 7582 9074).

Teresa Clay
Secretary

FRIENDS OF VAUXHALL PARK



MEMBERSHIP AND DONATION FORM

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

Postcode.....

Telephone.....

Email.....

Date.....

Is this a renewal subscription ?.....

Annual subscription – please indicate amount

Individual 3.00.....

Unwaged 2.00.....

Family 5.00.....

Group 5.00.....

Donation

Total.....

Please make cheques payable to Friends of Vauxhall Park and send to:

Michael Cook

Membership Secretary

106 Fentiman Road

London SW8 1QA

020 7735 8637