



The Friends of Osterley Park



A Supporters Group for the National Trust

NEWSLETTER

Issue 11

Summer 1993

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Ian Conacher

The last few weeks have seen much activity among the "Friends".

On April 7th, the "Stair Climber", purchased for the Trust from the proceeds of the "Friends" Appeal, was formally handed over to Barry Williams, the Administrator at Osterley House. This took place on the occasion of the Press Launch of the 1993 edition of the Trust's publication "Information for Visitors with Disabilities". The machine was demonstrated to the Press and is now in service at the House. To-date, about 20 visitors have been assisted to gain access to the House, who would otherwise have been unable to enjoy a visit to the property.

On May 15th, we had a "sell-out" audience in the Long Gallery for the concert by Cantanti Camarati. Their programme provided a varied range of vocal and instrumental music which was greatly appreciated by the audience. The acoustic qualities of the Gallery are such that no amplification was needed for all to enjoy the soloists. The performance was conducted by Geoffrey Bowyer, who also provided the harpsichord accompaniment. Here again, the "Stair Climber" proved its worth, enabling two wheelchair-bound members of the audience to enjoy the concert.

On May 24th, we had the first in a series of visits organised jointly for the "Friends" and for volunteers at the House by Jim Tickle. This included a photo opportunity at Heddington where we saw the ancestral home of the Child family, followed by a visit to Lacock village and Abbey. Jim's organisation was faultless - and included the selection of a day of glorious sunshine for the trip! A full report appears elsewhere in this Newsletter, together with details of further visits planned for later in the summer.

Also in this Newsletter are brief details of how the "Friends" have been able to provide financial help to the Trust during the past 15 months. For a small group, I feel we have done remarkably well, but our continuing success is dependent on at least sustaining, but preferably increasing our membership number. I am concerned to find out that only about 70% of last year's members have renewed their subscriptions. If you have not already renewed, please make use of the renewal form included with this Newsletter.

Finally, I have with some sorrow to report that Olivier Vorms, who has given generously of his time and energy in the "typesetting" of our Newsletter since February of last year, will be returning to France at the end of this summer. His word processor skills and his enthusiasm for this task will be greatly missed.

At the same time, I have also to report that Christina Scherer, who as Editor has been instrumental in gathering material for the Newsletter, feels that this job would be better undertaken by someone who could combine it with the actual production of the typescripts. We are now therefore in desperate need of volunteers from among the "Friends" who would be able to take on the task of producing the master copy for this Newsletter once a quarter.

Additionally, we need a "Minute Secretary" for the Committee - as this job has been shared between myself and Olivier for the past 18 months.

Please telephone me on (081) 560 8523 if you are able to help in any way with these tasks.

On Monday 24th May, a party of "Friends" and volunteers set off on their first day trip expertly organised by Jim Tickle. Heddington - Francis Child's birthplace in Wiltshire was our first goal. We visited St Andrew's Church where Francis and many of his forebears and successors are recorded. Splatts, the Child family home, is a modest two-storey brick house with pine cone finials similar to those at Osterley. Above the front door is an elegant shell motif. A Buddhist meditation group are the present residents. We were invited to view the new temple adjacent to the house; however, the keys could not be found and our coach was waiting. We did wonder how Francis and his eleven brothers could be accommodated in this modest house!

We boarded the coach and set out for Lacock, passing through the delightful village of Sandy Lane. Lacock Village is a National Trust property, given with the Abbey by Mathilda Talbot in 1944, but members of the Talbot family are still in residence at Lacock Abbey. Lunch was in The Red Lion or The George, dating back to 1361. Lacock Abbey was a nunnery in the 13th century. The Chapter House, warming room, cloisters and Abbess's stair (complete with a squint through which she could observe the young nuns in the cloister) can still be seen. After the dissolution, William Sharington purchased the house, preserving many of the abbey buildings and adding an octagonal tower as a strong room and belvedere. In 1754, the Gothic revival Hall was added, designed by Sanderson Miller - the producer of "ready-made ruins". A delightful house with many portraits of family members through the ages.

William Henry Fox-Talbot developed the science of photography. One of the first photographs, taken in 1835, was of the lattice window at Lacock Abbey. The adjacent Fox-Talbot museum contains examples and explanations of early cameras and photographs, including Fox-Talbot and some of the servants at Lacock. In the fine 16th century country house brewery, the vats and barrels are still on display - unfortunately the National Trust does not run breweries! However, should you require a drink, The George in Lacock Village, which is owned by the Trust, is recommended.

After tea - freshly baked scones, home-made jam and cream - we returned to the coach for the short ride to Avebury. A walk beside fields of May flowers took us to the Stones. We were greeted by a splendid white peacock displaying his fine feathers. Lambs gambolled amongst the Avebury Stones as we climbed the ridge for better views of the lovely English countryside. Returning to the coach we wended our way back to London. We all enjoyed a splendid day out.

Following the success of this trip, we look forward to further outings later in the Summer.

IN PURSUIT OF ROBERT ADAM

Jim Tickle

Following the visit to Wiltshire mentioned in Issue 10 of the Newsletter, three more coach outings for Friends and volunteers at the House have been arranged with European Heritage Tours. No prizes are awarded for realising that the choice of our destinations is influenced by the work of Robert Adam. The programme is as follows:-

Tuesday 6th July

KENWOOD & FENTON HOUSE, Hampstead
Depart 12.00 - Return 6.30pm - Cost £5.00

Kenwood, not NT but admission free, is noted for its superb Adam features; indeed, he was working simultaneously on the libraries of both Kenwood and Osterley, so the comparison should prove interesting. Fenton House (NT), on the border of Hampstead Heath, is a late 17th century house with a delightful walled garden and an outstanding collection of porcelain and early keyboard instruments.

Tuesday 3rd August

HATCHLANDS & CLANDON PARK, Surrey
Depart 12.00 - Return 6.30pm - Cost £4.50

Hatchlands Park, almost contemporary with Osterley, was built in the mid-18th century for Admiral Boscowan and boasts fine interiors by Robert Adam. The garden, by Repton and Gertrude Jekyll, has recently been restored and Hatchlands, like Fenton, houses a most remarkable collection of keyboard instruments in excellent playing condition.

Clandon Park was built by the Venetian architect Giacomo Leoni in the early 1730s for Lord Onslow and presents a more sombre exterior than its neighbour, Hatchlands. There are frequent reminders of Arthur Onslow, Speaker of the House of Commons for thirty-three years, the impressive Gubbay Bequest of porcelain and furniture and, in the basement, an interesting kitchen and the Museum of the Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment.

Wednesday 8th September KEDLESTON HALL, Derbyshire
Depart 9.00am - Return 7.00pm - Cost £8.00

This will be our most ambitious outing in pursuit of Adam, but Kedleston Hall is well worth the journey. Built between 1759 and 1765 (contemporary with Osterley) for Lord Curzon, the 1st Baron Scarsdale, Kedleston claims to have the most complete and least altered sequence of Robert Adam interiors in England. The rooms still contain their original family portraits, old masters and furniture - much of it by John Linnell. Other craftsmen here whom Adam also employed at Osterley, include Antonio Zucchi, Joseph Wilton and Matthew Boulton. The Indian Room houses objects collected by Lord Curzon when he was Viceroy of India from 1889 to 1905. A bridge and fishing pavilion by Adam still survive in the park.

A Booking Form 'In Pursuit of Adam' is included with this Newsletter.

FRIENDS AUTUMN EVENT

This has been provisionally fixed for Monday September 20th, at the House. As we go to press, the format has yet to be agreed, but our objective will be to enable members to meet the Committee, review our activities and make suggestions for the future.

Full details will be given in our next Newsletter; meanwhile, mark the day in your diaries!

OTHER EVENTS AT OSTERLEY

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|----------------|--|
| June 19th | Ealing National Trust Association Gala Concert, with the Paganini Ensemble.
Tickets £25.00 including wine and buffer supper from Ken Goff
41, Gloucester Road, Ealing, London W5 4JA |
| June 27th | 12.00pm: Inauguration of "Bicycle Hitching Rails" in the Park. Bring your bike!
During the afternoon, the Villiers Wind Consort will play for the entertainment of visitors to the House. |
| July 25th | 7.30pm: Illustrated talk and estate walk by the Herts and Middlesex Bat Group. |
| July 31st | 9.30am - 5pm: Qualifying Heads for the British Petanque Associations
Championships. |
| August 7th | 7.30pm: Open Air Concert by the Glenn Miller Orchestra, followed by fireworks.
Bring a picnic. 1940's dress optional! Tickets £12.00 from
The National Trust Box Office, P.O. Box 180, High Wycombe, Berks HP14 4XT. |
| August 22nd | 10am: Estate Walk led by Barry Williams to highlight work of the National Trust
at Osterley. |
| September 12th | 10am: Bird Walk led by the R.S.P.B. |
| September 19th | 11am: Sponsored Walk "Parents and Special Tots". |
| September 20th | 8pm: "Friends" Autumn Event. |
| October 2nd | 11am - 4pm: Regional Open Day at Osterley. Demonstrations, exhibitions and
Entertainment. Admission free. Programme £1.00 |
| November 4th | 10am - 12pm & 2pm - 6pm: "Putting the House to bed". |

VOLUNTEERS WANTED for The Glenn Miller Concert as Car Park & Tickets Stewards
with FREE ADMISSION to the Concert! Telephone Lynne on (081) 560 3918

SMOKE WITHOUT FIRE !

The launch of the booklet for "Visitors with Disabilities" at Osterley last month was followed by a tour of the House for the Press and other guests. For some, this was cut short by the sounding of the Fire Alarm. The cause was later discovered to be bread singeing in a toaster in a residential part of the property. Those of us who have over-sensitive smoke detectors in our own houses will have had similar experiences!

One "side effect" was the opportunity given for a test of the evacuation procedures. As well as the "Stairclimber", the "Evac-U-Chair" - also purchased by the Friends - was put to use in assisting the "mobility impaired" down the steps.

Incidentally, residents in the London Borough of Hounslow will have seen a picture of the "Stairclimber" in action in the Borough's "Your Hounslow" magazine.

EXPENSIVE PRUNING

The recent Volkswagen commercial - filmed at Osterley - attracted some newspaper comment from those who found nothing to smile at in the idea of a car carrying the sign "Just Divorced".

In our last issue, we reported that to give the illusion of Spring, trees around the House had been decked with artificial leaves. It seems however that all the footage showing those leaves was "pruned" and left on the cutting-room floor!

DEVELOPMENTS "BELOW STAIRS"

During the winter period, some changes have taken place in the basement area of the House. The kitchen is displaying crockery and utensils which might have been in use there in the 1920's - the period when the large enamel range was installed.

Similarly, the Steward's Room has been furnished as the Estate Office might have appeared at a similar period, complete with an early typewriter.

Any member who has "bygones" handed down from the 1920's or earlier which would be suitable to add to these displays should contact Barry Williams at the House.

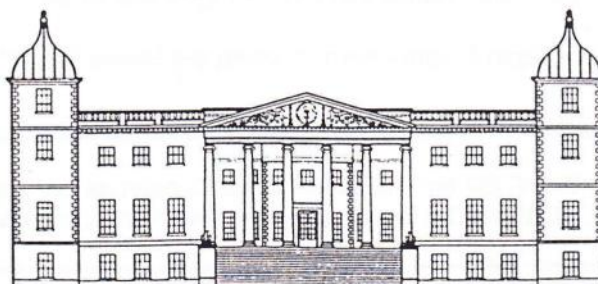
Incidentally, the guided tours of the basement now follows the route taken by food from the kitchen to the Eating Room and the visitor emerges - somewhat disorientated - in the North Corridor!

TOOLS FOR THE JOB

A quantity of tools for the volunteer gardeners at Osterley have just been purchased by the "Friends". These are for the exclusive use of Lesley Orton and her team who cultivate the flower beds, producing blooms for the floral arrangements in the House.

RECRUITING FOR THE "FRIENDS"

We hope to "set up our stall" at Summer Fairs at Isleworth and Syon School on June 12th and Norwood Green on July 10th. Any member wishing to assist would be welcome. Please ring Ian Conacher on (081) 560 8523.



"FRIENDS" FINANCES ARE HEALTHY

The "Friends" accounts up to 31st March 1993 have now been audited. These covered a period of fifteen months since 1st January 1992. Henceforth, our annual accounting period will commence on 1st April, and will coincide with Membership renewal. The summary below is an extract from the Audited Accounts. For simplicity, figures are expressed to the nearest pound.

INCOME

Membership Subscriptions & sundries donations		£1,525
Bank Deposit A/C interest (5 quarters)		£ 93
Events:-		
Winter Lectures 1992	£254	
Winter Lectures 1993	£291	
Season Opening Party 1992	£164	
Covent Garden Minuet Dances 1992	£310	
Carols at Sunset - Christmas 1992	£ 44	
Coach Outing to Sutton House 1992	- £ 34 (loss)	
Total income from Events:		£1,029
Total Income		£2,645

EXPENDITURE

Friends Newsletter (5 issues) - printing	£316	Note (1)
- postage	£235	Note (2)
General printing, publicity leaflets, membership forms etc.	£405	Note (3)
Purchase of sundries	£ 26	
Total Expenditure		£ 982

EXCESS (INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE) **£1,663**

DONATIONS TO NATIONAL TRUST

Evac-U-Chair	£429
Slide Projector & Accessories	£508
Transfer to Stair Climber Appeal	£639
Total Donations	£ 1,576

Notes on the Accounts:-

- (1) The Newsletter printing costs have been substantially reduced for recent issues, thanks to the generous assistance given by Isleworth and Syon School.
- (2) The Newsletter postage is a continuing expense. This could be reduced if volunteers could come forward as Road Wardens to distribute in areas adjacent to the Park.
- (3) Printing costs include a supply of Membership leaflets which should last through the 1993 season.

STAIR CLIMBER APPEAL

Early in 1992, the "Friends" launched the Appeal with an initial donation of £500 from our General Account. With generous donations received during the year, we reached our target of just over £4,100. The Stair Climber has now been purchased and was handed over on 7th April.

BATRICAR SERVICE FOR THE DISABLED

Donations received from grateful users	£ 145
Less operation & maintenance costs	£ 126
Surplus carried over the 1993 season	£ 19

A potter in the Park



WITH WYKE GREEN

Osterley Park looks its prettiest in the Spring.

Entering the Park through the "Fishermans Gate" off Osterley Lane, and following the shady path alongside the middle lake, the streaks of morning sun enhance the varying green foliage - and the blossom of the mayflower on the hawthorn trees. The majestic chestnuts display their candle-like flower - here and there the ornamental cherry contributes a profusion of deep red. Around the edges of the Pleasure Gardens - where new shrubberies are being cut and planted - the early rhododendrons have burst into flower, and so have the azaleas.

For me, the carpet of bluebells in the 'west woods' offer the most beautiful picture. Fortunately perhaps, not too many visitors to the Park venture thus far. On the recent Holiday Monday, the lawns around the House were alive with children playing ball games and family picnics. Maybe the newly erected fencing around the perimeter of the "Great Meadow" has presented itself as an artificial barrier to venture further into the grounds.

Of the 140 acres of parkland surrounding the House, probably less than a half are ever visited.

By early June, there will be a dozen permanent 'visitors' taking up residence in the twenty-eight acre Great Meadow. The much publicised cattle will re-appear within the Park itself, and graze there until the early autumn. The cattle, I am assured, will be 'visitor friendly'. They will come from a farm at Petersham, near Richmond, not from the existing herd belonging to the neighbouring land still owned by the Jersey Estates.

To retain the cattle, 1800 metres (about a mile and a quarter) of fencing has been erected around the perimeter of the meadow, and a further 800 metres enclose the four small copses, to ensure the creatures avoid adding bramble to their diet.

The small team of workmen erecting the fence have established their own mini caravan and work site, almost out of public view, near the west woods. The contractors, one of the few in the country specialising in this particular type of five-bar metal fence, are from Matlock in Derbyshire. So too are a couple of painters - who must have one of the most boring jobs - brush painting, not spraying, a mile and a half of fence - undercoat and then black top-coat.

The fence line follows faithfully that defined on a mid-eighteen hundred map, but in so doing, twice cuts across one of the established pathways that offered a pleasant stroll with a fine view on the House from the west. Five 'kissing gates' will be set into the fence, that enable access to the meadow - provided the cattle don't object!

