



# The Friends of Osterley Park



*A Supporters Group for the National Trust*

## NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 17

SPRING 1995

### *Celebrate with Osterley Park!*

Ian Conacher

Members of the Trust will already know that Osterley Park features in a big way in the Trust's Centenary Celebrations this year. The Thames and Chilterns Regional Newsletter carries a banner headline over a story describing the events planned for the year - details of which are given on another page.

A visit to the park now shows not only the signs of an early spring - with snowdrops and daffodils in bloom in the drive, camellias in flower around the House, and the willow by the lake showing the first green buds - but also the activity in preparation for the season's events.

Builders have taken over the North side of the House, from which they gain access to the ground floor area which is being refurbished for the Summer Exhibitions. Planting is well advanced in the "Pleasure Grounds" in front of the Adam garden house, and all around there is evidence of work in progress.

This winter's heavy rains have filled the lake to overflowing, and hopefully there will be no problems with water shortage during the coming summer. The rain has also assisted in promoting the growth of grass, and there is now little evidence of the line of the old drive, which was taken out last winter.

The other result of the wet weather is, of course, mud! When my grandson insisted on revisiting the stump of the tree by the lower lake which was struck by lightning last year, we found ourselves in a veritable swamp, fed by the springs which erupt in this area. The youngsters also found great delight in tramping through the many puddles in their wellies! Hopefully, these will all dry up in the next few weeks. This will allow land drainage works to be put in hand to solve both these problems. The path from the car park to the causeway is to be widened and resurfaced.

For the Trust and their staff at Osterley, a winter of intense activity seems likely to be followed by an even more hectic summer. Additional help from volunteers will be

needed, and we include with this Newsletter an appeal from Barry for new recruits to assist with the stewarding of the ground floor exhibitions.

For the "Friends" too, the season will bring its challenges. The first of these is our "Centenary Lecture" by Ron Rowland, Member of the Council of the Trust, on *The Spirit of the Founders*. This will be in St Mary's Parish Hall, Osterley, on March 22nd at 8 p.m. Admission at the door is £2.50, and we hope for a capacity audience.

Our other major challenges come in July. On the 16th we, with other support groups present a VILLAGE FAIR in the Pleasure Grounds, and on the 22nd and 23rd we, with the Ealing N.T.A., present our second season of Open-air Theatre - more details of these follow in this newsletter.

Add to these the programme of visits, organised by Jim Tickle, which have become an annual activity, and the Plant Stall, again organised by Jim, which will be set up during Spring weekends in the Stable-yard, and we can look forward to a busy time.

We hope that all these pleasurable pursuits will attract new members to the "Friends". We have, I feel, a lot to offer - not least the social contact with like-minded people which is so evidently enjoyed by those who take part in our activities. It would be most encouraging if each of our members could persuade one other person to join us!

### *Village Fair - 16th July, 1995.*

This event is being organised jointly by Ealing and Harrow National Trust Associations and the West Middlesex Centre, together with "Friends". It will take place in the Pleasure Grounds, and we are planning a variety of stalls with activities for all ages, plus entertainments and refreshments.

Admission will be free - although there will be a charge for car-parking. Put this date in your diaries NOW!

### *Open-Air Theatre, 22nd & 23rd July.*

We have been fortunate in securing a return visit from the Albion Shakespeare Company, who played last September at Osterley.

On Saturday, 22nd July, they will present *Much Ado About Nothing* - the comedy featuring the bickering of Beatrice and Benedict. On Sunday 23rd, they will perform the action-packed historical drama *Richard III*.

Those who saw last year's performance will know that this lively young company breathe life into what are sometimes regarded as dreary schoolbook texts. I particularly recall the vigour both of *Romeo and Juliet* - opening with the rumbustious thumb-biting scene - and of *Macbeth*. Both plays featured exciting and well-choreographed sword-play, and I am sure that this year's productions will also be full of action.

Performances will take place in the Stableyard, where raked seating will be provided. The car park will open at 5 pm, giving time to picnic on the lawn before the show.

Tickets are now on sale, price £10 (Children under 16 - £5) and can be obtained by writing to *SHAKESPEARE AT OSTERLEY*, PO Box 182, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 5RQ. Alternatively, tickets can be obtained from the Information Point in the Stableyard on days when the House is open, after April 1st.

This presentation is being managed by the "Friends", with Ealing N.T.A.

### *Free Entry Days*

On Saturday, 8th April, the House will be open free of charge to all visitors, who will be able to find out about events planned for Osterley during Centenary year. Free admission will also be given to visitors on Wednesday, 13th September.

### *Visual Arts Events During 1995*

Centenary year sees the opening of the Exhibition Galleries in the ground floor of the House. The season opens on 3rd May, with a display of contemporary art, presented by four London galleries, and featuring the work of four young artists who have been commissioned to interpret various aspects of the National Trust's work. This will be open at the same times as the House, and runs until the end of June.

*Images of the National Trust* - an exhibition of archive photographs from the Trust's photographic library and of work by celebrity photographers opens on Wednesday, 26th July, and will then be open on the same days as the House through to the end of September.

There will also be an exhibition in September of the entries of finalists in the Trust's Centenary Photographic competition - dates and times to be announced later.

Throughout the year, a *Sculpture Trail* through the Pleasure Grounds will be presented by the Royal Society of British Sculpture.

### *Music at Osterley*

Sunday, 25th June is *National Music Day*. Music will be played in the Stableyard between 2 and 4 pm - admission free - and between the same hours in the House for the enjoyment of visitors.

Saturday, 5th August sees the return of the Glenn Miller Orchestra for the Annual Summer Band Concert. The car park for the event will open at 5 pm, and picnics may be taken on the lawn before the Concert at 7.30. The evening concludes with fireworks.

Tickets in advance may be obtained from the Information Point in the Stableyard after 1st April. Telephone bookings using credit cards may be made by calling the Regional Box Office at Hughenden on 01494-522234. This is usually a sell-out event - early booking is advised!

## *Outdoor Events in 1995*

Sunday, 30th April will, we hope, dawn bright and clear for the annual *Breakfast with the Birds* - a 2 hour walk around the Park with members of the R.S.P.B., followed by a light breakfast. Tickets - Adults £5, Children £3 - are limited and early advanced booking is essential.

Monday, 29th May is *Blue Peter Mystery Object Day*, with an orienteering course and activities for children in the park. Admission free!

Sunday, 4th June, is the Regional CHILDRENS DAY, and a fun day in the Park is being organised by Kensington and Chelsea N.T.A., with sideshows and games for the children, from 11 am to 4 pm. The "Friends" are sponsoring a plant stall. Admission is free to children, charge for adults.

Sunday 9th June, is *NATIONAL GARDENS SCHEME OPEN DAY*, when the work in restoring the Pleasure Grounds will be on display. Admission free. Guided walks around the Estate will be featured - cost - Adults £1, Children free.

On Thursdays, 3rd, 10th and 17th August, between 11 and 4 pm. the *Warden's Nature Days* will feature activities for 8 - 11 year old children in the Park. Tickets are £5. Bring a picnic lunch!

## *Guest events at Osterley*

On Sunday, 30th April, Osterley again plays host to the Humber Post-Vintage Car Club Rally, with a display of Humber vehicles in the Park. Admission free.

On Saturday, 8th July, the ARCHERS ADDICTS have organised an *Ambridge Garden Party*, for their members, which will be attended by many of the characters from this popular radio serial. This is a ticket only event, with no admission at the gate. Anyone wanting further details should contact ARCHERS ADDICTS, The Village Voice Company Ltd. P.O. Box 1951, Moseley, Birmingham, B13 9DD.

## *Education at Osterley*

In November, the "Friends" Committee met in the newly decorated Education Room in the Stable Block. This room has been transformed from a gardeners mess-room into a centre for school visits, using money raised by the raffle at last year's Band Concert. It is hoped ultimately to further extend this so that up to 60 visiting students can be accommodated.

As part of its Centenary year activities, the Trust is planning to double the number of children who visit its properties each year. As part of this effort, a guardianship scheme, which is a partnership between a National Trust property and a local school, has been established between Osterley Park and Heston Primary School. Children will have the opportunity to experience practical conservation work, monitoring, observation and recording, all linked to the National Curriculum.

## *Recent Donations to the Trust*

The Trust has recently been able to purchase five 18th Century prints of exotic birds such as were displayed in the Aviary at Osterley in the time of Robert and Sarah Child. These will be hung in the House during the coming season.

This purchase was made possible by the use of part of the profits from last year's Open-air theatre managed by the "Friends" and Ealing N.T.A. Do come and admire these pictures reminiscent of those commissioned by the Child family.

On a more mundane note, the "Friends" have recently purchased a large garden shed for the use of our volunteer flower-growers. This will enable space in the stableyard buildings to be refurbished to house our fleet of battery electric cars.

## *Battery Electric Cars for the Less-Mobile*

The fleet of cars available for use at Osterley will - we hope, temporarily - be reduced at the start of the season, as the Trust has, as a matter of necessity, been obliged to withdraw certain types of vehicles for technical reasons.

Among those affected is the two-seater tricycle, which was very popular with those with walking difficulties who wished to tour the grounds, but lacked the confidence to use a self-drive car.

The "Friends" Committee are investigating the availability and costs of suitable two-seater vehicles, as the provision of help for the mobility challenged has always been one of our priorities in fund-raising. We hope to bring you more news in our next issue.

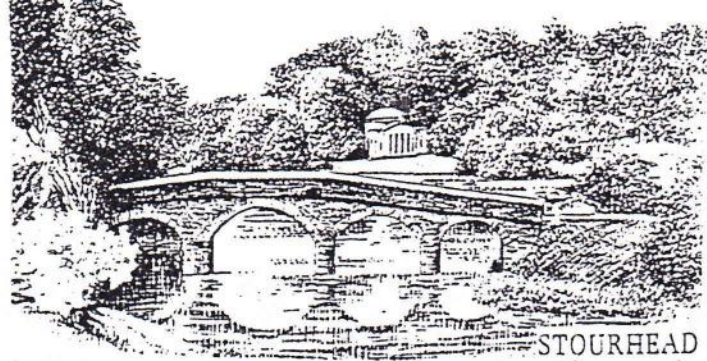
## *'A Chance to get Hitched on a New Pitch'*

The above example of sub-editor's journalese appeared last month over an article in the *Brentford and Chiswick Times* which reported on the Government's decision to allow marriages to be solemnised in stately homes and hotels, as well as in registry offices.

The article states that, while the management at Syon House have decided against applying for a licence, both English Heritage - which is in control of Chiswick House - and the National Trust, as owners of Osterley Park House, are considering the matter.

Truth is indeed stranger than fiction - we have already seen Osterley House featuring in divorce celebrations in Volkswagen's controversial television commercial last year!

A further thought - we hope for the sake of litter-picking volunteers that there will be a total ban on confetti if the plan goes forward! A suggestion - Rose petals are a pleasing bio-degradable yet very romantic alternative.



## *Out and About in Centenary Year*

Jim Tickle

Happily, we can now confirm the programme of monthly excursions which was provisionally set out in our last Newsletter. Inevitably, I regret, costs increase somewhat as we travel farther afield and pay the dear Chancellor a little more tax on our petrol! However, I feel that most of you will agree that the terms we have again reached with European Heritage Tours are very highly competitive. The details are as follows:

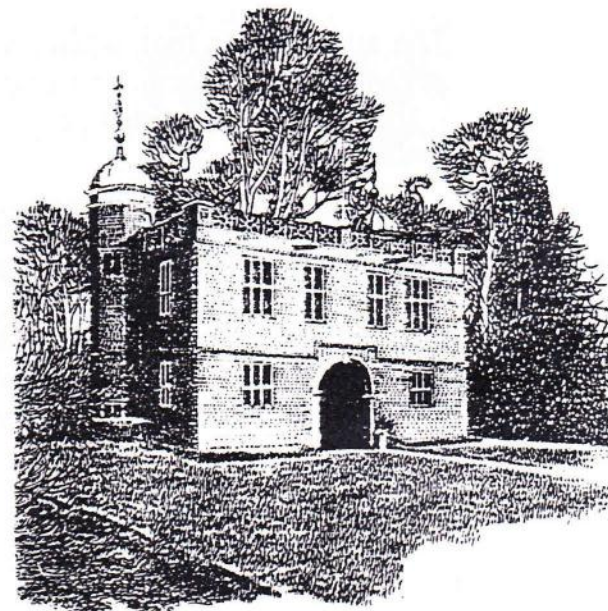
Date:	Destination:	Cost:
Wednesday, 12th April	Blickling Hall & Fellbrigg	£9.10
Thursday, 11 May	Packwood House & Baddesley Clinton	£8.60
Monday, 5 June	Kingston Lacy & Corfe Castle	£8.60
Wednesday, 5 July	Scotney Castle Gdns & Bateman's	£7.30
Tuesday, 8 August	Stourhead House & Gardens	£7.90
Monday, 11 Sept	Charlecote Park & Coughton Court	£8.40
Monday, 9 October	Snowhill Manor & Hailes Abbey	£7.90

N.B. The coach will leave Osterley House car park at 9 a.m. except for the visits in April (depart 8.30 a.m. and July (depart 9.30 a.m. The cost includes gratuities, but not admission charges, so members should be prepared to show their National Trust Membership or Volunteer Card on arrival at the properties.

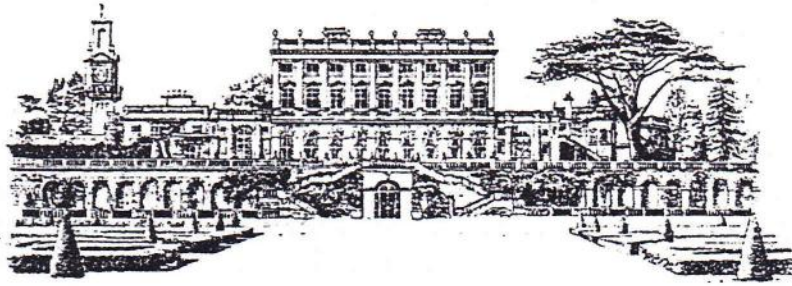
A Booking form is enclosed with this Newsletter and, to avoid disappointment, early booking is advised.



PACKWOOD HOUSE



CHARLECOTE PARK



CLIVEDEN

### *Half Day Tours by Car with Jim and Angela*

In addition to our major excursions programme, we would like to offer a service exclusively to "Friends" and Volunteers who are without personal means of transport. Throughout the summer, Angela Lynskey and I propose making afternoon visits to several 'not too distant' NT properties (leaving Osterley at midday) and we will each have three spare seats in our car. If other owner/drivers with spare capacity would also like to volunteer their services, we could accommodate even more of our members\*\*.

Our first three planned outings are to BASILDON PARK (Thursday, 25th May) POLESDEN LACEY (Friday 14th July) and CLIVEDEN (Thursday 20th July). Should the venture prove successful, we are considering later visits to THE VYNE (Tuesday 1st August), WADDESDON MANOR (Wednesday 23rd August) and GREYS COURT (Wednesday 20th September). Details, though of these last three trips in the Summer Newsletter.

Members without transport who would like to take advantage of a 'free' seat on one of the May and July half-day outings are invited to phone me on 894 4174.

**No enquiries, please, to the staff at Osterley Park House!** Places will be allocated on a strictly 'first come - first served' basis.

**\*\*N.B.** To meet legal and insurance conditions, however, drivers cannot expect any payment (which would constitute 'plying for hire') and they should ensure that their motor insurance covers passengers, - who in this instance are not covered by the National Trust or Friends of Osterley Park.



THE VYNE

## *Appeals*

Can we again repeat the appeals made in the last newsletter.

First, Jim Tickle looks forward to hearing from all those members who are growing on seedlings for sale at the "Friends" plant stall during the Spring. Apart from Annuals - Houseplants and Shrubs would also be appreciated. Contact Jim on 0181 894 4174.

Audrey Conacher is hoping to receive gifts of Bric-a-brac for her stall at the Village Fair in July - costume jewellery, small vases, fine china, etc. Contact Audrey on 0181 560 8523.

### *A Change of Title - Not a Change of Job.*

We learn from Barry Williams that, as part of a change being introduced throughout the Trust, his function at Osterley is now described as Property Manager.

## *Stop Press*

Barry Pryle, our faithful courier from European Heritage Tours, tells me that there are still places available on his excellent personalised Cornish Gardens Tour based at the Rosemundy House Hotel, St. Agnes from 18th to 25th of April. National Trust attractions include visits to Trelissick, Lanhydrock, Glendurgan, St. Michael's Mount, Cotehele and Castle Drogo, not to mention the other delights of Mevagissey, Tresco and the Isles of Scilly. Why not join us? The cost is £275 for a week of sheer enjoyment! You can ring Barry on directly by phoning 0181 977 5134.



## *Annual Subscriptions*

Members are reminded that Annual Subscriptions are due on April 1st. A renewal form is enclosed with this newsletter.