



The Friends of Osterley Park



A Supporters Group for the National Trust

Issue 20

NEWSLETTER

Spring 1996

National Trust acquires additional land at Osterley

Ian Conacher

The major story for this edition of the *Newsletter* is the purchase by the Trust of an additional 153 acres of agricultural land bordering on the existing Park. This includes the fields on either side of the main drive, and those adjacent to the avenue leading to the Osterley Lane lodges.

The purchase was made possible by a generous grant of £825,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

In announcing this acquisition, Barry Williams, Property Manager at Osterley, says that this buffer zone of green land around the core of the Park is now protected forever from the intense pressure for development which faces one of the few remaining areas of open countryside in London. It will enable the Trust in the long term to restore the parkland character of the historic landscape while retaining its agricultural use.

In time, the Trust will be providing greater public access to this newly acquired land, and using it to develop the educational potential of Osterley so that local children - and adults - can learn about this piece of countryside on their doorstep.

A plan of the Park, showing the extent of the acquisition, is printed on page 8.

Local residents will be particularly heartened by this news. Over a period of years, there were successive attempts to obtain planning approval for residential and commercial development in the Osterley area, which were stoutly resisted by local groups. Following the most recent of these, Hounslow Council moved, in their *Unitary Development Plan*, to have the whole area scheduled as 'Metropolitan Open Land'. This was accepted by the Department of the Environment; it may well be that this classification created an atmosphere in which the Trust were able to negotiate the purchase of this land.

Spring Reception for Members - see page 3.

Visits Programme 1996 - see page 5.

Merit Rewarded.

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Ron is a well-known member of the Osterley volunteer team, spending time in recruiting, mobility stewarding, receptionist and general Good scout. The announcement also referred to Ron as the holder of the M.B.E. - an honour of which we were until now unaware.

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Members interested in this are asked to contact Jim Tickle by phone, on 0181 894 4174, to confirm that seats are still available.

Spring Reception for The Friends.

Following the success of the Reception which preceded the A.G.M. last Autumn, the Committee had hoped to fix the date for a similar function in the Servants' Hall in the Spring. This would give members an opportunity to view the Long Gallery, following its refurbishment during the winter months, and to inspect the pictures now selected for hanging in this area.

The West Range will, in the spring, also be the venue for an Exhibition of the Enterprise Neptune paintings of Charles Neal. Barry has been pressing on our behalf, for the date of the Trusts V.I.P. launch party to be settled, but so far without success. Consequently we have been unable to agree a date for our own function.

We have delayed the publication of this Newsletter for as long as we dare; hopefully we will be able to put a "Stop Press" announcement into the envelope with this mailing. If not, then we will send out a further mailshot with details of this exclusive event.

Winter Lectures.

A good number of members turned out on 14th February to hear Andrea Cameron talk on *The Highwaymen of Hounslow Heath*. An enthusiastic group enjoyed Melanie Venes talk on Spinning and the changes brought to this ancient craft by Eighteenth Century inventions on the 28th.

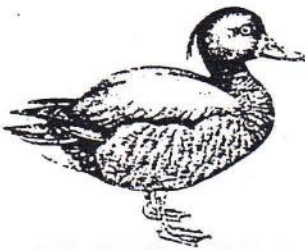
On Wednesday, 13th March, Simon Rumsey will be talking about *Practical Conservation at Osterley*, and on the 27th Jane Clark will speak, with recorded musical illustrations, on *The Musical Life of Robert Adam*.

Tickets for all these will be available on the day, at 8 pm. at St. Mary's Parish Hall, Osterley Road.

Plant Stalls

Jim Tickle is again planning to sell bedding plants in the Stable-yard on Sundays, from 26th May onwards. He would be most grateful for donations of plants. Ideally, these should have been potted on into 3½ inch pots, ready for planting out. Physical help on the stall would also be appreciated - as would donations of suitable plastic pots!

A plant stall is also planned for National Gardens Day, 19th May. This will be run by the Estate Staff and Volunteer Gardeners, and supported by the *Friends* who will erect the gazebo and provide practical help. Proceeds from the day will go to the National Gardens Fund - a major benefactor of the Trust. Here again, donations of suitable plants by members will be welcome; please contact Lesley Orton on 0181 574-1757 with offers.



tufted duck



goldcrest



mallard

Meeting Osterley Staff I - Nathalie Muller.

Hello, my name is Nathalie Muller and I am Assistant Warden at Osterley Park. I have been working in the park since April 1995 and I have to say that 1995 was a very good year to work at Osterley and with the National Trust.

Some of you may already know a little about me. I am French and was brought up in a small village located in the east of France.

I studied Tourism Development to degree level in the City of Strasbourg. I came to England as an au-pair in October 1989. My objective was to learn English.

A year later, I started to work as a receptionist and then as a shift leader in a 4-star hotel in Mayfair. During that period I found out about the National Trust and the work it was doing at different properties all over the country. I also started to show an interest in countryside conservation. In May, 1994, I enrolled at Osterley as one of the many volunteers and helped as a Warden. This was going to be the key to a new career.

One of my roles at Osterley is to keep the public informed about what is around the Park - particularly the wildlife.

Osterley Park has a rich population of birds and we have started the New Year by organising two walks led by experts from the RSPB. Below is a list of the birds seen on these walks which took place on the 1st and 14th of January.

- | | | | |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| magpie | black-headed gull | common gull | song thrush |
| meadow pipit | stock dove | wood pigeon | red-crested pochard |
| pie'd wagtail | carrion crow | robin | mute swan |
| blue tit | great tit | little owl | long-tailed tit |
| mistle thrush | starling | shoveler | dunnock |
| cormorant | pochard | heron | goosander |
| mallard | mandarin | herring gull | Canada goose |
| moorhen | coot | kestrel | great-crested grebe |
| tufted duck | lapwing | rook | green woodpecker |
| tree creeper | jackdaw | redwing | blackbird |
| goldcrest | house sparrow | feral pigeon | |

I hope that I will be able to give you some more information about what is to be seen at Osterley in future months.



rook



dunnock



heron

Bookings have now opened for this year's programme of excursions and, as you will see from the details below, we are now able to confirm most of the proposals that were suggested in the Winter Newsletter. For the most part, our policy will be to head for a town or site where you will be at leisure to follow your particular interests and have lunch, returning to the coach for the afternoon visit to a Trust property.

The dates remain as previously announced, but opening arrangements prevented the inclusion of a visit to Knole and Bodiam and my approaches to Uppark were met with a cry of "Full House!" and an application form to visit in 1997!

Fortunately, the vacant date in June has now been more than amply filled, following a warm welcome from the Administrator of Mompesson House, who enthused about Salisbury on Market Day (Tuesday) and pointed out that Mottisfont Abbey Garden would make an excellent stop on our way home.

Our first excursion, in April, takes us to the beautiful City of Cambridge and on to Anglesey Abbey, a sumptuous treasure house with fine ornamental gardens, noted in Spring for their display of hyacinths, daffodils and tulips. The Lode Mill, with much of its original machinery, still grinds wheat to produce flour that is on sale to visitors.*

In May, after calling at the City of Coventry where you may visit the famous cathedral, Wightwick Manor offers untold delights to anyone who appreciates the art of William Morris. Many of the wallpapers and fabrics are Morris originals. The Victorian/Edwardian garden is also well worth a visit.

Your Booking Form for the coming Season is enclosed with this Newsletter. The complete programme is as follows:

DATE:	DESTINATION:	COST:
Wednesday, 17 April	Cambridge & Anglesey Abbey	£8.00
Thursday, 16 May	Coventry & Wightwick Manor	£9.20
Tuesday, 4 June	Salisbury, Mompesson & Mottisfont	£7.80
Wednesday, 10 July	Faringdon & Buscot Park	£7.60
Monday, 5 August	Ely & Oxburgh Hall	£9.30
Monday, 2 September	Stratford-on-Avon & Hanbury Hall	£9.00
Tuesday, 1 October	Bath & Dyrham Park	£8.40

N.B. For all this Season's excursions, the coach will leave Osterley House car park promptly at 9 a.m. The cost includes gratuities, but not admission charges. Members should therefore be prepared to show their NT Membership or Volunteer Card on arrival at the property.

* Few seats still remaining - ring 0181 894 4174 to check availability!
See note on page 7.

Helpers wanted to assist disabled visitors to Osterley Park House.

In 1993, the *Friends* spearheaded a campaign to raise funds for a stairclimber machine, capable of lifting a visitor in a wheelchair up the flight of steps in front of the portico, to gain access to the principal floor of Osterley Park House.

Over the past three seasons, this facility has been greatly appreciated by many visitors, who would have been unable otherwise to enjoy the splendours of the Adam interior.

Health and safety considerations make it essential that two helpers are available to assist with the operation of the machine - one to drive and the second to make sure that the visitor is comfortable during the lifting operation.

This causes problems. There is a small nucleus of National Trust staff at the Property, with many responsibilities, who are not always available to provide help with the operation of the stairclimber. Similarly, volunteers already on duty at the site cannot leave their posts to provide this assistance.

To ease the situation, visitors needing to use the stairclimber have been asked to book in advance - but it has not always been possible to match staff availability with visitors' preferences.

The solution would seem to be to recruit and train additional volunteers who would be able, when required, to come to the House specifically to assist in this operation. If such a pool of volunteers was available, they could be asked to form a rota, ready to respond to a telephone request for their attendance.

With the new season beginning when the House re-opens at the end of March, the need for recruitment is now urgent. Anyone who has the time, the physical ability, and the motivation to help in this way is invited to contact Barry Williams, the Property Manager at the House, by telephoning 0181-560-3918.

New Covers for the Pagodas in the Long Gallery.

The two mother-of-pearl model pagodas, and the pair of ivory junks, have been in the Long Gallery at Osterley since the 18th century, and are reputed to be souvenirs of the Child family's trading connections with the East. The pagodas are protected by clear plastic covers, which are now looking rather shabby. The trust are now proposing that the money raised by the Open-air theatre at Osterley last year should be used to fund the replacement of these with new purpose made covers.

Subscription Renewals.

The Membership Year ends on 31st March, and subscriptions for 1996/7 are now due.

A renewal form is enclosed with this Newsletter. Members may return this either by post or by bringing it with their subscription to any of the 'Lectures' noted above - thus saving 38 pence on postage!

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