

The Friends of Osterley Park

A Supporters Group for the National Trust



NEWSLETTER

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New Year News

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This short edition of the Newsletter has two main objectives - firstly, to send members all good wishes for the New Year, and secondly, to give notice of the Winter Lectures planned for February and March - see details below. We also have space for a brief round-up of news of happenings in and around Osterley since our September issue.

Winter Lectures 1998

Speakers have now been booked for our 6th series of talks, to be held in St. Mary's Parish Hall, Osterley Road, on Wednesday evenings at 8 pm. All talks will be illustrated with slides, and will be followed by coffee and biscuits.

On February 4th, Richard Pailthorpe, Administrator at Syon Park, will give a talk on *Syon Park - Past, Present and Future*. Richard came to Syon fairly recently, having previously been Manager of the Weald and Downland Museum at Singleton, Sussex, where a collection of "rescued" buildings have been re-erected to show the development of vernacular design and technology. Syon House will be presenting him with challenges of an entirely different nature, especially following the recent announcement by the Duke of Northumberland of plans for changes in the Park.

Our speaker for February 18th will be Mrs Merida Drysdale, London Representative of the National Trust for Scotland, and a Member of Council of both the National Trust and the N.T.S. Her subject will be *Treasures of the National Trust for Scotland*. Merida will include coverage of some of the works of William Adam and his son Robert.

On March 4th, we shall welcome Mark Wallis whose subject will be *Satin, Snuff, and Scandal - London Life in the 18th Century*. Mark is the leader of a company called *Past Pleasures*, specialising in providing costumed actors to act as guides and presenters of the history of sites or properties.

Finally, on March 18th, we have a return visit from Andrea Cameron, local historian and Archivist for the London Borough of Hounslow, whose subject will be *Round and about Osterley*. Many of our members will already know Andrea, who has spoken to the "Friends" on many previous occasions.

Talks are open to "Friends" and to the public. Tickets for each talk will cost £3 - or £10 for the series of four, and may be obtained by using the enclosed Booking Form - or at the door, if any tickets remain!

Autumn Arrival

Many of you will know Sian Evans, who has worked for the Trust at Osterley for some 4 years. Sian began Maternity leave on 26th October - and gave birth to a daughter, Martha, on November 7th. Our best wishes go to them both.

'Friends' Annual General Meeting

This was held on October 21st, and attended by about 50 members. After a glass of wine, the formal business of the evening was disposed of swiftly, and we were able to enjoy a talk from Barry Williams, reviewing the season and announcing changes for 1998.

Chief among these is a change in the opening hours for 1998; Osterley is one of 11 properties of the Trust, where, in order to preserve delicate furniture and fabrics, there is a need to reduce the exposure to daylight. Therefore, for the new season, commencing on 1st April, 1998, opening hours for the House will be 2 pm to 5 pm from Wednesday to Saturday, and 1 pm to 5 pm on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Winter at Osterley

The closure of the House for the winter does not mean that House staff have had time to relax. This year, for the first time, the operation of "Putting the House to Bed" was demonstrated to visitors. Volunteers attending a coffee morning early in November had the opportunity of a sneak preview of the rooms under wraps, and of seeing the Yellow Taffeta bedroom stripped ready for redecoration, which is now in progress.

In the Park, the mild autumn delayed leaf-fall, so that spectacular colours persisted well into November. The recent rainfall is beginning to make a small difference to the level of the Garden Lake, but heavy rain is still needed in the next few months for this to recover to its normal level.

National Trust Spring Plant Fair - Sunday, 17th May, 1998

Osterley will again be taking part in this National event, and the "Friends" have been invited to set up a stall for the sale of plants. It is not too soon to begin thinking about this, and we hope that members with greenhouses will sow a few extra boxes of seeds to provide plants for sale on the day. Bedding plants and vegetables such as tomatoes are always good sellers, and House plants and well-rooted shrubs are also welcome.

A New Lectern for the Lecturer.

Lewis Orton has built a lectern for use at the "Friends" Lectures, constructed out of reclaimed hardwood. Lewis will be a familiar figure to many members, manning the ticket sales table at the lectures or stewarding in the Information point in the stable-yard and other locations which are wheel-chair accessible. Our sincere thanks are due to him for taking on this challenging job for us.

Apology

When listing exhibitors in the Community Week Exhibition last July, we omitted to mention the name of local artist Frank Winterbourne. Frank is now in his eighties, and has been painting local views for years. Many local residents give a prominent place in their homes to his pictures of Osterley House and the Park. We apologise to Frank for this omission.

Carols in the Stable-yard

On Sunday, 7th December, Tony Underwood led a choir from West London Opera in the singing of Christmas carols in the stable-yard. On the 14th, Howard Stephens led St. Mary's Singers in a similar programme. On both days, the weather was fair, and a good number of visitors gathered to join in the singing. Collections taken on the days raised a total of £87 for the Battery Car Maintenance Fund.