



The Friends of Osterley Park



A Supporters Group for the National Trust

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 29

SUMMER 1998

Chairman's Letter

Ian Conacher

I write these notes in early May, after a cold damp April. The hopes of a mild Winter leading to an early Spring, raised by the early showing of snowdrops and daffodils, have not been borne out by the return to cold conditions over the past few weeks.

However, one benefit of the wet Spring has been the rise in the level of the garden lake, which suffered badly during the last year's hot dry Summer. The water level was, at my last visit, still some few inches below the overflow; let us hope that this year we shall have a pattern of rainfall which will maintain levels through the Summer.

Since re-opening on 1st April, the House has been busy, particularly at weekends, when the public have been moved to take cover from the bleak April showers and the rough winds which "shook the darling buds of May" over the Spring Bank Holiday. Coming back to the House afresh after the winter break, the changes made by the Trust in re-decoration and conservation over the past few years are seen as a whole. In particular, the Long Gallery, with its new paint scheme, new pictures, and newly upholstered chairs and settees, contrasts markedly with its rather shabby appearance in the early '90s..

One of the joys of the new season for volunteers at the property is meeting one's colleagues after the break, and also coming again in contact with visitors. The social benefits of volunteering are immeasurable; it gives one an impetus to get "out of the rut", to make new friends, and meet stimulating and rewarding challenges.

One problem is that as it is now seven years since the Trust first called for volunteers at Osterley, a proportion of the original team are no longer able to give their time and energies to serve at the Property. More help is urgently needed so that the remaining "willing horses" are not unmercifully flogged!

I heartily commend to you the joys of Volunteering, either as "Room Stewards" or as "Mobility Volunteers", driving the Shuttle Buggy or assisting with the loan of Battery Cars. Those with green fingers may wish to consider joining the teams growing flowers in the Walled Garden and arranging these for the displays in the House, which draw many compliments from visitors - contact Sally Rogers at the House if you wish to learn more!

1997-8 - A Year of Consolidation.

The "Friends" financial year ended on 31st March with a substantial balance carried over for the new season. After the expenditure of £2,000 for the purchase of the

stands for the jars in the Long Gallery at the end of 1996-7, no further large targets were identified as needing our finance. Some smaller items, such as the sponsorship of the Welcome and Education leaflets, were discussed and approved during the year, and the bills for these have been settled in the last few weeks. The "A" board for the Battery car operation has been repainted at the "Friends" cost with revised wording.

Also agreed at the end of the year were the provision of tables dedicated to conservation work in the House, and the purchase of picnic tables to be placed adjacent to the new Car Park. These are being well used by visitors who wish to picnic close to their cars before visiting the House.

A number of more major projects are in the pipeline, and news of these will be announced as soon as final decisions are reached.* see page 6!

Summer Reception - 3rd June.

News of this event was given in our last issue, and the response was very gratifying, if not overwhelming! So much so that we have reached the limit of numbers that can be accommodated - so, if you did not indicate your wish to attend when renewing your membership, we must with regret say "House Full"!

Community Week, Sunday 5th July - Sunday 12th July.

Throughout this week, various events have been organised. Many of these are listed below, and further details are given on the enclosed leaflet.

Community Day, Sunday 5th July - Help Wanted!

We hope that many members will come to the Park on this day to see the displays and attractions in store. It is planned to have displays by the Police, Fire Brigade, St. John's Ambulance and local Scouts and Guides, with many other attractions, including displays of spinning, lacemaking, bell-ringing and many, many more!

Stalls are being planned by Ealing N.T.A., as well as by the "Friends". We would be glad to hear from any member willing to help on the day in any way. We need more fund-raising attractions, with simple stalls, such as guessing the number of sweets in a jar or the weight of a cake. Please ring Ian Conacher on 560-8523 with any ideas, suggestions, and offers of help.

Audrey Conacher is still seeking high-quality Bric-a-brac for her stall - please ring the number above with offers!

Pictures and Poems in the Park

Details of the plans for these displays were circulated with our last issue. The response from artists wishing to exhibit their works for sale on the railings around the front lawn on Community Day has been most encouraging, with all available space now booked.

However, the Poetry Trail has not so far attracted a strong response; any member who feels sufficiently moved by Osterley in Springtime to write a poem about it should send it to Barry Williams, who has extended the closing date for entries to 30th June.

Covent Garden Minuet Dancers

Community Day will end with a display of 18th Century dance by the Covent Garden Minuet Dancers, making their third appearance at Osterley. This will commence at 7.30 pm, in the open courtyard of the House. Wine will be available in the interval, and the second part of the programme will include opportunities for "Audience Participation".

This event is being managed by the "Friends". Tickets, priced at £6.00 will be available by post from the Chairman - booking form enclosed - and will also be on sale at the Information Point in the Stable-yard.

Community Week Exhibition

This will be staged in the Jersey Galleries from 5th to 12th July - opening times and days as for the House. Many local societies will be mounting displays of their work.



OPEN AIR EVENTS PRESENTED BY THE NATIONAL TRUST

Alice in Wonderland - Wednesday 15th July, at 6.30 pm.

The children's classic, presented by a Company from "Illyria", in the open air. Tickets £8.00 Adult, £5.00 Child, £26 Family (2 Adults and up to 3 children). Booking Ref. A35.

The Taming of the Shrew - Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th July, at 7 pm.

Shakespeare's comedy, presented by a company from "Illyria", in the Pleasure Grounds. We learn that advance bookings at the Hughenden Box Office have been going well - so hurry to reserve your ticket! Prices in advance: £8.50 Adult, £5 Child, £25 family. Booking Ref. A38 (Sat), A39 (Sun). All tickets at gate £10.

Glenn Miller Band Concert with Fireworks - Saturday, 8th August, at 7.30 pm.

Hits of the 'forties, played in the original style, with the band under the portico and the audience on the lawn in front of the House. Bring your own rugs, chairs, picnics and enjoy a summer evening's music. Gates open at 5.30 pm. Free parking. Tickets in advance £12.50 Adult, £6 Child, £28 family. Booking Ref. A49.

ADVANCE BOOKINGS FOR THE THREE EVENTS ABOVE MAY BE MADE:

In person - at the Information Point in the Stable-yard on days and times when the House is open

By Post - National Trust Box Office, P.O. Box 180, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP14 4XT - quoting Ref. no. as above

By Telephone - Hughenden Box Office - 01494 522234 - a charge of 75p will be made for credit card bookings - quote reference nos. as above.

'Friends' visits

Jim Tickle is pleased to announce that all his trips, including the Holiday in Wales, are sold out - except for the visit to Sheffield Park Gardens on Tuesday, 6th October.

Letters Received

We print below letters received from Barry Williams and Sally Rogers, acknowledging recent donations by the "Friends".

Dear Ian,

Many thanks for your letter of 24th April enclosing a cheque from the Friends for £654. May I, through your Chairman, express my thanks to the Committee and members for all their help and support? Our Education and the Welcome leaflets reflect Osterley's commitment to deepening interest, broadening the appeal of the property and increasing visitor appreciation and enjoyment. I was, therefore, delighted when the Friends chose to support both these publications. In return, I hope that they will give you additional publicity and increase public awareness of the important role played by the Friends of this property.

With best wishes,

Barry Williams

Dear Ian,

I am writing to thank the Friends of Osterley for enabling us to purchase three tables for the House.

*I chose tables with dark green tops especially so that they are easily recognisable and have labelled them *For House Use Only (Not To Be Taken Outside)*.*

You will be interested to know that these tables were greatly needed for any conservation work that frequently takes place in the House. As you can imagine with the fragile contents of Osterley we are very vigilant about dust etc. and must have clean areas to work on. Only textile work or book work will take place on these tables.

We are delighted to have our 'own' tables. Please thank all the Friends for their continuing support - it is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Sally Rogers.

Annual General Meeting

This will be held at Osterley on Wednesday, 7th October, 1998. The agenda and Annual Report will be circulated with our next issue, to be published in September.

Last November I took 6 months off from my job at Osterley Park as Visitor Services to spend the winter living and working in St. Maarten, a small island in the Caribbean, north of Antigua. I had some friends over there already; my best friend and her family had been sailing round the Caribbean for the past six years. They spent the winters in St. Maarten working. When the hurricane season came in June they sailed south to islands like Grenada and Tobago and relaxed for the summer. There was a whole sailing community made up of yachts from all over the world who would do the same thing. So when I arrived in November, many of the boats were just arriving back from the South.

The sailing community over there was very close, very friendly and everyone knew each other. I found this quite strange at first, having lived in London where you don't even know your neighbours. If a stranger walked into the bar then everyone there wanted to know who they were. Consequently, it did not take me long to meet people and make friends. The bar was "The Soggy Dollar". It was the main meeting point of the area, not only because sailors like a drink but because it was also right next to the dingy dock, so you had to go through it to get home. Of course this usually meant that you got back home later than you planned. In fact it was almost impossible to avoid it. There was always someone you knew there.

I lived with some friends on a 50-foot yacht that unfortunately had seen better days. It had no electricity, running water or even a toilet. What it did have was lots of rust, a few holes and cockroaches that were getting bigger by the day and refused to die no matter what we tried. It was very basic but it was free, which was great because accommodation over there was really expensive. It had previously been lived on by a couple who had stripped it of everything they could sell and had tried to sink it to cover their tracks. Luckily for us, they chose a spot that was too shallow. When we got it, it was a mess, but with a lot of work we made it into home. It became home to quite a few of us. Because of its size it could sleep about eight, and there were always people coming and going. Living on "Drifting Clouds" was very sociable. With no television we had to entertain ourselves, which meant a lot of barbecues and parties and people stopping by all the time for a chat.

All we had to cook on was a one ring gas stove, so to make life easier we often ate out. The local Caribbean cuisine often involved barbecues of ribs and chicken, although I preferred the fresh fish like snapper, swordfish, tuna and even shark. The only trouble with eating in the local Caribbean restaurants or Rum Shacks was that they were so slow! They think nothing of making you wait an hour for your food; you get it when they are ready to serve you. This is the way of life over there and you come to expect it. It is not just in the restaurants. Things happen when they happen, and sometimes they don't happen at all.

I worked on a 120 foot motor yacht called "Our Toy" - only a multi-millionaire could regard it as a toy. It was worth \$15 million, and no expense was spared in its decoration. There was a Renoir in the master bedroom and a Jacuzzi on the top deck. I was paid \$80 a day as a deck hand to help maintain the boat. I worked from 8 to 5, cleaning and scrubbing, sanding and painting. It was hard work, especially in the mid-day sun, but the money was good. The owners would fly down from America once a month to use the boat, the rest of the time it was docked. So I would work for about three weeks and then have a week off.

On our days off we would often travel to other islands near by, like Anguilla, St. Barts and Tintimar. They were a lot less spoilt with fewer tourists. Then we really did feel like we were on holiday, we would go sight seeing, swimming or simply lounging on the beach working on our tans. We would often go snorkelling, which I loved. I was always amazed by the colours of the fish and the coral. I also managed to do quite a lot of sailing while I was there, including taking part in the Heineken Regatta.

Living in the Caribbean was great fun. There was always something to do or see, there were lots of parties and new experiences to be had. It was particularly nice to live in the sun. However, after five months I was ready to come home. Living in paradise is not as easy as you might think. After a while even the sun gets too much, and I longed for the basics in life like a shower and a toilet. I had a great time living in the Caribbean, many are surprised I wanted to come home, but I can honestly say I am glad to be back.

Spring Plant Fair - 17th May.

This was a well attended event, with the stable-yard filled with stalls set up by the "Friends", by Ealing N.T.A., by volunteers from the Region, and by commercial growers.

Unfortunately, possibly because of difficult growing conditions caused by the cold April, donations from members of plants for sale at this event were down on last year. Our thanks are due to those who did provide us with some stock, and to the Estate Gardeners whose contribution combined with members' offerings to make an attractive show.

Thanks to this, a total of £117 was raised during the day - including £40 received for

Thrash 98.

This is the title of a Reunion planned for 13th - 15th November at Kingston Lacey, in Dorset, aimed principally at Volunteers who participate in outdoor working holidays. The weekend includes "working parties" as well as guided walks. Meals are provided, and accommodation is on a school floor - bring your own sleeping bag!

It seems unlikely that there are many among our membership who would relish such a weekend. If there is anyone out there who is interested, Ian Conacher can supply further details.

Indeed, if there is among the Membership anyone who feels moved to recruit and manage a group of outdoor volunteers for tasks at the Property, then Barry Williams would be delighted to hear from him - or her!

an estate-grown Irish Yew Tree, about five feet high!

*** Stop Press!***

At a meeting on Thursday 21st May the "Friends" Committee decided to pay the cost of purchasing a Cabinet to contain the Coin Collection, begun by Robert Child, which has been donated to The Trust by Lord Jersey. The Cabinet, with its splendid contents will stand in the entrance to the Strong Room.

The "Friends" Committee also agreed to purchase five more Osterley Bird Pictures which have come onto the market. Four pictures from the same set were acquired by the "Friends" and now hang in the Child's Bedroom. These were painted by William Hayes for Mrs. Child as a record of her collection of rare and exotic birds at Osterley.

OSTERLEY PARK SUMMER EVENTS '98

FRIDAY - SUNDAY

12 - 14 JUNE

Live Crafts Fair

10am-5pm

150 craft makers & artists demonstrate original, contemporary & traditional crafts, including blacksmith, bee keeper and more. **Adult £3.50 Seniors £3 Child £1** NT Members free on Friday

COMMUNITY WEEK

SUNDAY 5 JULY

Community Day with

Pictures, Music & Poetry Trail

11am-5pm

Local artists & musicians display & perform their work around the Park.

Plus children's games, displays, dancing, stalls & much more. A fun day out for everyone!

Free parking & admission to park

The Covent Garden

Minuet Dancers

7.30pm

In period costume perform 17th/18th century dances on the Portico.

£6 (to include a glass of wine)

Advance booking.

WEDNESDAY 8 JULY:

TREE WALK

with our Assistant Head Gardener. Look at some of our many interesting trees in Osterley's 350 acres of landscaped park and farmland.

Walk start at 7.30. Tickets **£2**

THURSDAY 9 JULY

ESTATE WALK

with our Property Manager, to hear about managing the estate as we approach the 21st Century.

Walk start at 7.30. Tickets **£2**

FRIDAY 10 JULY

TEN SUMMER WINES

Wine tasting presented by *Unwins*, the wine merchants, followed by a summer buffet of assorted quiche and salad and dessert. **£15** per head.

Advance booking essential

SATURDAY 11 JULY

Horse Drawn Wagonette Rides around the Park

£5 for a 20min ride around the park.

2 - 4pm. No need to book..

WEDNESDAY 15 JULY

Children's Theatre in the Park

"Alice in Wonderland"

6.30pm (gate opens 5.30pm)

Performed by *Illyria* in the Pleasure Grounds. Bring a rug or chair and a picnic for this open air performance.

Adult £8 Child £5 Family £26

SATURDAY & SUNDAY

18 & 19 JULY

Shakespeare in the Park

"The Taming of The Shrew"

7pm (gate opens 6pm)

Boisterous battle of the sexes comedy, performed by *Illyria* in the Pleasure Grounds. Bring a rug or chair and a picnic for this open air performance.

Adult £8.50 Child £5 Family £25

All Tickets on the gate **£10**

EVERY THURSDAY

30 JULY - 27 AUGUST

Warden's Fun Days

10am-3pm

Have a go at pond dipping or a mini-beast trail through the Park.

Bring a picnic.

£4 (children only !)

SATURDAY 8 AUGUST

Summer Band Concert with Fireworks

7.30pm (gate opens 5.30pm)

The Glenn Miller Orchestra's open-air spectacular. Bring a picnic & seating and dance the night away to Big Band favourites. 40's-style dress optional!

Raffle. Spectacular firework finale.
Adult £12.50 Child £6 Family £28

SATURDAY 19 SEPTEMBER

Great British Pet Walk

10am

Sponsored by Petplan.

Further information & registration

Tel: 0181-580 8080

FRIDAY 25 SEPTEMBER

"Aspects of Osterley"

A one-day conference

Please telephone for further details
0181-568 7714

£30 (to include coffee, lunch and tea)

Advance booking.

TUESDAY 17- THURSDAY 19 NOVEMBER

"Putting The House to Bed"

10am-12.30pm

Go behind the scenes at this National Trust house during the Winter. **£10** (to include tea & cake) Advance booking.

HORSE-DRAWN WAGONETTE RIDES

Wednesday - Friday April -October

Pre-booked horse-drawn rides around the Park for a maximum of 6 at a time.

£5 per person (minimum charge **£25**)

Advance booking.

GLIMPSES OF HOUSEKEEPING

10 Jun, 15 Jul, 12 Aug, 9 Sept, 14 Oct

See and talk to our House Steward while she undertakes an example of day-to-day conservation housekeeping.

Free with house entry.

JERSEY GALLERIES

The Galleries are open from 1-5pm

Wed-Sun during exhibitions.

Admission is free

SUNDAY 5 - SUNDAY 12 JULY

Community Week Exhibition

Local schools, artists, art groups & staff exhibit their work.

WED 5 - SUN 16 AUGUST

Creative Embroidery

by Margaret Griffiths

A wide variety of embroidery techniques will be exhibited and demonstrated including stumpwork, silk painting, trapunto quilting, needle sketching, patch work and needlepoint.

3-20 SEPTEMBER

New Artists

An exhibition of quilting & soft furnishings, sculpture and prints.

FRI 25-SEPT-SUN 18 OCTOBER

"The Art Works"

Legassick Studio Artist's Work

WED 21 OCT - SUN 1 NOV

The work of Anita Young, a local artist who works with the landscape. Anita tutors artists at the Richmond Adult & Community College

PLEASE NOTE

Details are accurate at time of going to press in May 1998. All advance booking events can be booked through Osterley Park Visitor Services on 0181-568 7714 or at our Visitor Information Point in the Stableyard during House opening hours.