



The Friends of Osterley Park



A Supporters Group for the National Trust

Issue 35

NEWSLETTER

December 1999

Chairman's Notes

Ian Conacher

We are now approaching the end of the first full year since we changed our accounting period to coincide with the calendar year. The benefits of this change are now evident; we are now able, in this quiet spell following the end of a season of activity, to prepare the accounts for presentation knowing that there are no outstanding credits or debits, or advance payments to be carried over for activities in the new accounting year.

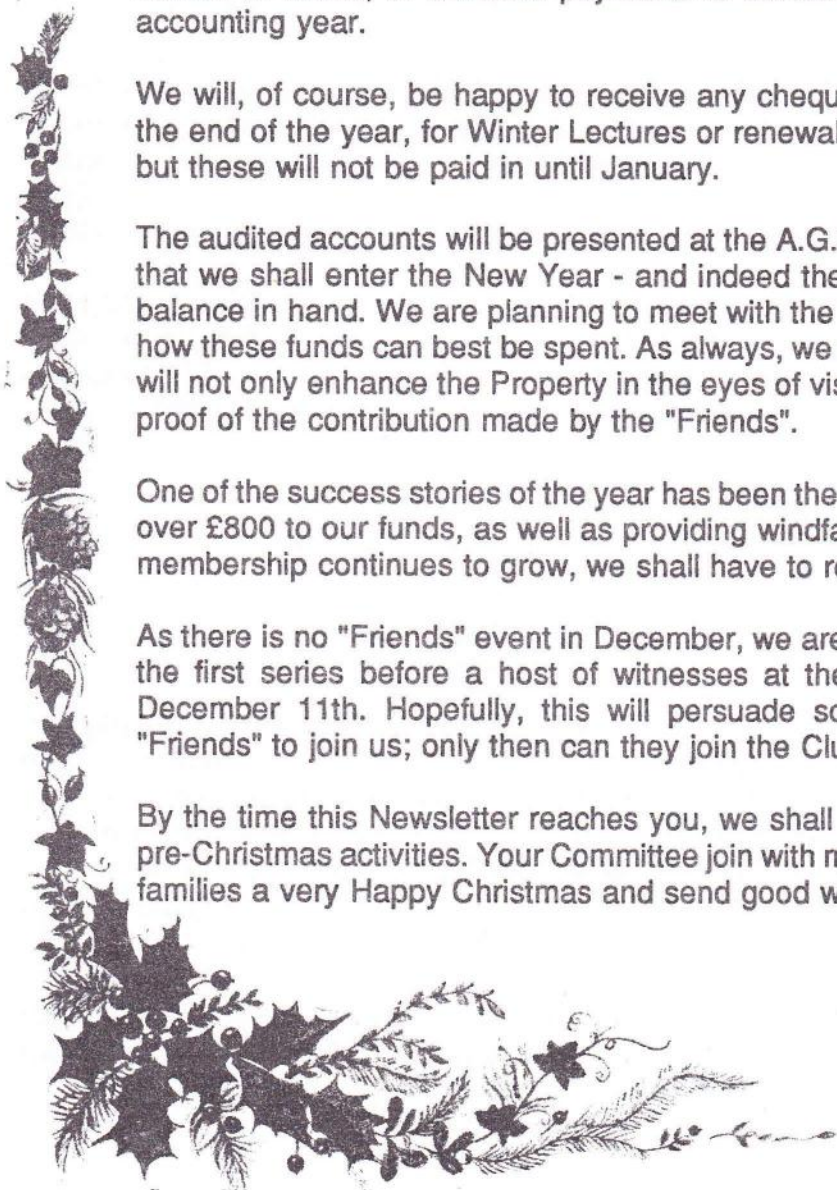
We will, of course, be happy to receive any cheques members may send us before the end of the year, for Winter Lectures or renewal of their "100 Club" subscriptions, but these will not be paid in until January.

The audited accounts will be presented at the A.G.M. in May, but it is already certain that we shall enter the New Year - and indeed the New Millennium - with a healthy balance in hand. We are planning to meet with the Trust's staff in January to discuss how these funds can best be spent. As always, we shall be looking for projects which will not only enhance the Property in the eyes of visitors but will also provide tangible proof of the contribution made by the "Friends".

One of the success stories of the year has been the "100 Club", which has contributed over £800 to our funds, as well as providing windfalls to some fortunate members. If membership continues to grow, we shall have to rename it the "200 Club"!

As there is no "Friends" event in December, we are planning to hold the final draw of the first series before a host of witnesses at the Volunteers Christmas Party on December 11th. Hopefully, this will persuade some volunteers who are not yet "Friends" to join us; only then can they join the Club!

By the time this Newsletter reaches you, we shall be into December, and the usual pre-Christmas activities. Your Committee join with me in wishing all "Friends" and their families a very Happy Christmas and send good wishes for the New Millennium.





Carols in the Stable Yard.

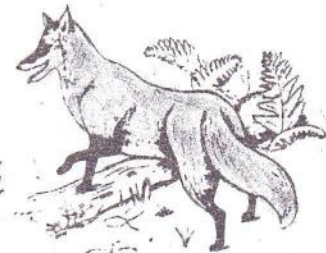
On Sundays, 5th & 12th December, choirs led respectively by Tony Underwood and Howard Stephens will lead Carol singing in the Stable Yard, from 2.30 to 3.30 pm. We hope to meet many "Friends" there.

Christmas Shopping.

The National Trust Shop at Osterley will be open on Saturdays and Sundays, from 12 noon to 4 pm, until 19th December. The Tea Room will also be open on those days.



Nature red in tooth



Walking with my 7 year old granddaughter in the Isabella Plantation of Richmond Park in September, we came across a group of 8 or 10 crows in noisy dispute near one of the boundary fences. Two of the birds were engaged in beak-to-beak combat, and all of them were oblivious to our presence. Suddenly, a quick brown fox jumped out of a nearby bramble bush, seized one of the combatants, and made off with it.

This surely was the sort of incident from which Aesop or La Fontaine could have drawn a moral, possibly to the effect that those who quarrel in public may draw unwelcome attention to themselves! I was also left wondering how the well-intentioned members of our present Parliament propose to control hunting **BY FOXES!**



- and claw!

Looking out of our kitchen window one October morning, I saw a strange bird pecking at something in the grass at the bottom of the garden. Closer examination through binoculars revealed that it was a female sparrow-hawk feeding on her prey. She remained in view for some 10 or 15 minutes, turning her head to look over her shoulder at a couple of magpies, who were evidently seeking a share of her meal. I took my eyes off her for a moment, and she was gone, evidently carrying the carcass with her, as all that was left on the lawn were a few pigeon feathers.

This was, I thought, a unique sighting for a suburban garden - until I spoke to our local bird expert, Patricia Barratt, who tells me that possibly the same bird has been sighted several times in other gardens in the neighbourhood.



Winter Lectures 2000.

Once again we have reserved St Mary's Parish Hall, Osterley Road, for our series of talks. As usual, these will be on Wednesdays at 8 pm, and will be illustrated by slides. Coffee and biscuits will be served at about 9.15, and the evening will conclude before 10 pm.

On 2nd February, Barry Williams, known to you all as the National Trust's Property Manager at Osterley, will give a talk entitled "Osterley Park - Identifying the Spirit of the Place". This is in line with a National Trust initiative to prepare a "**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**" for all of the properties in its care.

On the 16th of the month, Doris Sherwood will speak to us about "Sir Thomas Gresham and the Royal Exchange" Doris is a long term lecturer at the City Literary Institute, and is a volunteer lecturer on the History of London and the History of Art for the University of the Third Age.

March 1st sees the return of Andrea Cameron, recently retired from her post in the Archive Section of Hounslow Borough Library. Andrea has spoken to us many times before, and has always drawn a large audience. This year, her subject will be "The visits of Tudor and Stuart Monarchs to our local Great Houses".

Finally, on 15th March, we shall welcome Dennis Ashbourne, to talk about "Hampton Court Palace and the Great Fire of 1986". Dennis is a Chartered Architect and Town Planner, conducts guided tours in London locations, and has lectured at University of London, Birkbeck College, and London City University, and also to NADFAS and the WEA. He is also a Member of the Guild of Guide Lecturers at Hampton Court Palace.

These lectures are open to "Friends" and friends of "Friends", and will also be advertised to the public. Tickets for each lecture will cost £3.00, or £10.00 for the series of four, and will be on sale at the door. However, to make sure of a seat, you may wish to use the advance booking form included with this Newsletter.

This may well be the last time that we shall meet in the present Parish Hall. Plans have been prepared and funds are being sought by St Mary's for a new building on the present site, and if the money is available it is hoped to put the work in hand during the Spring and Summer of 2000, with completion by the end of the year. We wish the clergy and P.C.C. every success with this project.





Since our last issue, there have been several changes in the Trust's staff at Osterley.

Keren Manley, who had worked for some years as Events Organiser, has left to take up a similar post for the "Friends of Kew Gardens", where she will be responsible for major events at that venue.

Susie Keepin, who had been House Steward at Osterley for some time. has obtained a post at Windsor Castle, and will be leaving Osterley at the end of November. We shall be saying farewell to her at the Volunteers' Christmas Party on December 11th.

Our thanks are due to both these young ladies, who have been very supportive of the "Friends" during their time at the Property. Our good wishes go with them for success in their new locations.

The '100 Club'

The third draw in the first year of the Club was made at the "Friends" Reception at the House on 13th October. At that time, the membership was 139, and the prizes totalled £205. Winners were:-



First Prize	£100	Karen Thorpe.	No.144
Second Prize	£50	John Stacey	No.43
Third Prize	£25	T.G.Weiler.	No. 9
Fourth Prize	£20	M.V.McQueen	No. 32
Fifth Prize	£10	Ted Taylor	No. 64.

The fourth draw of the first series will be made at the Volunteers' Christmas Party on 11th December. In accordance with Rule 6, the names of all previous winners will be withdrawn from this draw, to give an extra chance to those who have not yet won.

Any new members joining before the draw will of course be included. With 20 prizes to be won in the New Year, the odds are short so don't delay! Ring John Robertson now on (0181) 892 6753.

Existing members holding numbers up to 92, who joined before the first draw in March of this year, will have received with this Newsletter a reminder from John Robertson that their subscription renewals are now due.

The Hon. Treasurer has arranged with our Bank that subscriptions to the "100 Club" may be paid by standing order. This offer is available to new members and existing members at time of renewal.

Winners names for the December draw will be published in our next Issue.

Philip King - an introduction

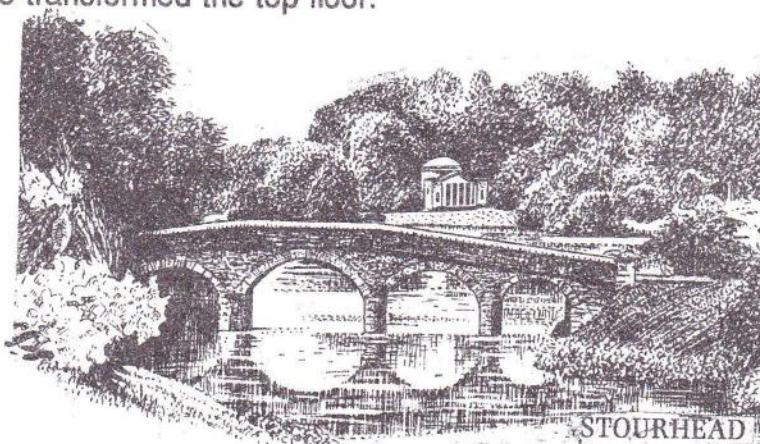
by Philip King

Philip has worked for the National Trust in various disciplines since the early 1980's. He and partner Julie have two children - Megan, six years old, attends Heston Primary School and Esther is two years old. Amongst Philip's interests are music, cricket and natural history.

Born in Birmingham, Philip studied geography at Plymouth Polytechnic and later, ecology at University College, North Wales. His first job with NT (funded by the then MSC) was identifying and mapping the many thousands of trees and shrubs at Stourhead, Wiltshire - part of the creation of a National Woody Plant Catalogue for gardens and arboreta throughout the British Isles. This was followed by a short contract at Cliveden surveying the hanging woods above the Thames before the storm of 1987. Later, after a number of ventures outside the Trust he joined the accounts department of the Wessex region again based at Stourhead. Life then was devoted to ledgers, brass bands and cricket. Being a founder member of the newly revived cricket team that plays on a square given to the estate villagers in perpetuity by Henry Hoare and sited not 500 yards in front of his great house, and playing with the town bands in Frome and nearby Mere.

A move to Head Office meant time in the treasury department and internal audit followed by a return to regional account in Thames and Chilterns. After a further year in accounts he was offered a secondment to Hughenden Manor working with the house steward, gardener and estate warden throughout the 1994 visitor season and including one of the early regional open days.

The following Centenary Year saw Philip become custodian at Claydon House, he was in post for the return to the house of the Verney Family who have occupied a house on the site since before the English Civil War. Highlights of his time at Claydon were the development of a popular handling collection, major filming activity (1995 - Emma, Hollywood; 1998 - Vanity Fair, BBC) and the return to the house of over 20 family portraits which have transformed the top floor.



Excursions - This Year and Next

Jim Tickle

Thanks to the many Friends and fellow-travellers who loyally supported this year's excursions, we can again record a very successful Season. We at last obtained a party booking to the magnificently restored Uppark and visits to other Trust properties, including Ascott, Clevedon Court and Hinton Ampner proved to be highly popular. On the one occasion when there were a few empty seats on the coach (perhaps caused by the long distance to Belton House or August holidays with the family), many of us were intrigued by the charming and historic old town of Stamford in Lincolnshire.

Charm and antiquity figured greatly in the October trip to Rochester, with its Cathedral, its lofty Castle guarding the Medway, echoes of Charles Dickens and several fascinating museums. Coupled with our visit to English Heritage's Roman Villa at Lullingstone (the personal audio-guides were brilliant!), this trip was voted 'The Best Yet' by several of our regular travellers.

The four-day break, which now appears to be established as an annual feature (!), this year took us to Northumbria where, from our base at Durham University's Stockton Campus, our excursions included Craggside, Wallington, Housesteads Roman Fort on Hadrian's Wall and the rugged grandeur of Lindisfarne. En route through Yorkshire, we also took in Robert Adam's Newby Hall, Mount Grace Priory and English Heritage's northern flagship, Brodsworth Hall.

Back at home, I was delighted to receive so many letters of appreciation expressing comments such as:

"Every place was well worth a visit a definite bonus was the call at Mount Grace Priory"
(Patricia Barrett)

"Everything was perfect, - even the weather"
(Pat Digby)

"The vision and peace of Lindisfarne will linger in my memory for a very long time"
(Margaret Collins)

"I met old friends and made new ones and enjoyed every minute of our short break"
(Greta Alexander)

"Barrie's excellent driving....good accommodation and food....pleasant company....
Where are we going next year, please?!"
(Ruby Warne)

"I can't think what you will be able to devise next year, but I'm sure you have 49 people
already waiting to know!"
(Rita Ford)

Well, Ruby and Rita, you'll be pleased to know that Barrie and I are currently assessing the possible advantages of accommodation at the Universities of either Exeter, East Anglia, York or Shropshire and are working on a four or perhaps five-day break between 6th-10th of September 2000. Full details will appear in the next Newsletter, but meanwhile for anyone who is interested, please keep those dates clear.

Our first day trip next year will be on Thursday 6th April and during the Season we would hope to include Chartwell, Dover Castle, re-visit Hidcote and Laycock Abbey and renew our acquaintance with our former Custodian, Sally Rogers, at privately-owned Sherbourne Castle. The programme for all the excursions will be published in February.

Finally, might I suggest that some of you may wish to join us on Barrie's Cornish Gardens Tour, based at the Rosemundy Hotel, St Agnes from 25th March to 1st April. Cost £280 (+£25 for Singles), all rooms ensuite. Full details from European Heritage Tours (0181 977 5143).

