

*Spave.*



# The Friends of Osterley Park



*A Supporters Group for the National Trust*

NEWSLETTER

*Issue 37*

*May 2000*

*Chairman's Notes*

*Ian Conacher*

## COMMITTEE CRISIS!

In the last few days there have been developments which are casting doubt over the future of the "Friends". Your Committee, already weakened by the resignation of Olive Marke last May, now faces further losses, as both John Robertson and Jim Tickle have advised of their intention to resign in May of next year.

As most of you will know, Jim has been a valued member of the Committee for many years; his major contribution has been as organiser of the programme of day trips to properties of interest, and more recently of weekend tours. He is also Vice-Chairman. He now finds that his involvement with the Teddington Theatre Club, who are very active after their recent move to a brand new Theatre, requires him to spend time in both acting and producing for them. He will, however, be continuing with the arrangements for the 2001 season, and possibly thereafter if no replacement comes forward.

John has also served for some years on the Committee, and last year masterminded the launch of the "100 Club", which has attracted nearly 150 members and brought in a very useful income for the benefit of the Trust at Osterley. However, his major interest is in rowing, and before his recent accident he was heavily involved in coaching. With increasing mobility, he is now taking up this interest once more, and feels that he will no longer be able to give time to the "Friends" Committee, or to the running of the "100 Club", after May 2001.

The effect of these resignations could be to make impossible what is already a bad situation. According to our Constitution, the Committee should have a minimum of ten members, with the power to co-opt more. We have been running for some years with

a smaller number, and I as Chairman have taken on extra jobs which should ideally have been done by the holders of vacant posts. We were able to "close ranks" when Olive left; however, the loss of John and Jim will leave us with only five members, far too few adequately to perform the essential duties of the Committee. It is now a matter of urgency that members of the "Friends" step forward now to fill the current vacancies, and be ready to take over the organisation of "Trips" and the "100 Club" from May next year.

As I see it, the principal duties of the Chairman should be liaison with the management of the Trust at Osterley, agreement on targets for fund-raising, promotion of new activities and co-ordination of the work of the Committee in meeting its objectives. The extra duties which I have already taken on leave no time for forward thinking, and are eating into the time which I need to devote to my family and other interests.

I have previously indicated that I do not wish indefinitely to continue in this manner. Unless, therefore, members come forward to assist with the work of your dwindling Committee, I too will be forced to resign. If these vacancies are not filled, then the whole future of the "Friends" is at risk.

### *Committee Vacancies.*

#### **REQUIRED MAY 2000:-**

**MINUTE SECRETARY.** Experienced in taking notes at meetings and translating these into a concise and accurate record of decisions taken and follow-up action required.  
**(Present Holder - Chairman)**

**PUBLICITY & RECRUITMENT OFFICER.** Capable of preparing "Press Releases" and liaising with the Media to obtain maximum coverage of "Friends" activities. Arrange "Friends" recruiting stall at Trust events and other Fairs, etc.  
**(Present Holder - Chairman)**

**NEWSLETTER REPORTER.** To write or obtain stories about events and personalities at Osterley, and pass to Newsletter Editor for compiling and preparing for publication. (This job could be combined with Publicity Officer).  
**(Present Holder - Chairman)**

**EVENTS ORGANISER.** Responsible for the arrangements for "Friends" events. Selects speakers for talks, arranges catering for these and for "Receptions". Puts forward ideas for new public events, and for events for members.  
**(Present Holder - Chairman)**

#### **REQUIRED MAY 2001:-**

**VICE-CHAIRMAN.** Ready and able to take the place of the Chairman at "Friends" functions, Committee Meetings, etc., and to assist in the management of "Friends" activities. May also be responsible for one of the duties listed above.  
**(Present Holder - Jim Tickle)**



**OUTINGS ORGANISER.** To work alongside Jim Tickle during the current season, and join the Committee in May 2001 to take over organisation of Day Trips and Tours.

**OTHER VACANCIES (Not necessarily requiring membership of the Committee):-**

**"100 Club" Organiser.** Recruit members, collect subscriptions, and arrange for Prize Draws once a Quarter. **Present Organiser - until May 2001 - John Robertson).**

**Newsletter printing and despatch.** Obtain prepared material from Editor, assemble for printing, deliver to and collect from Printer, collate pages, fold and stuff into envelopes, stamp, label, post or issue to street volunteers for local delivery by hand.  
**(Presently done by Chairman - and his lady!)**

Any Member thinking of offering help with the filling of these vacancies should contact the Chairman, Ian Conacher, on (020) 8560 8523, preferably before the A.G.M. on 17th May.

The Committee meets at approximately 6 week intervals; some Members are able to offer the use of their homes, but this is optional. Meetings are friendly occasions, with business usually preceded by a glass of wine!

*The Year So Far*

*Ian Conacher*

The Annual Report for the year ending 31st December is enclosed with this Newsletter. This year, we got off to a good start with our series of "Winter Lectures", which attracted a good attendance. Our speakers were well received, and the audience were appreciative, and as usual came forward, without any prompting, to assist by setting out and putting away chairs! Altogether very "Friendly" occasions! The numbers in the audience were such that we not only covered costs but earned a useful surplus which will go to the support of the Trust at Osterley.

After the last lecture, John Robertson conducted the first of this year's "100 Club" draws. A list of prize-winners is given elsewhere; although there was some doubt initially about the viability of this venture, the Club has now attracted about 40% of the membership, and is generating a useful income. John's decision to resign from the Committee in May of next year will leave a gap which will be hard to fill.

Jim Tickle's programme of day trips, and the 5 day tour of the West Country, has as always generated a tremendous response. The tour, and most of the day trips, are already fully booked. The first trip of the season to Sherbourne Castle was blessed by a day of sunshine, and those attending enjoyed meeting Sally and Graham Rogers in their new environment.

The hard work that Jim has put into the organisation of these outings has been much appreciated by members and by the Committee. His will be a difficult act to follow.



## *Activity in the House.*



As many of you will be aware, this season Visitors to the House have the opportunity to explore below stairs at their leisure. **The Kitchen, Steward's Room, and Strong Room** are open on a "free flow" basis each day the House is open. For those who have not previously seen these areas, a visit is well worth while. Treasures on show in the Strong Room include 18th century Child family silver and 19th & 20th century Jersey cups and trophies.

**The Jersey Galleries**, also in the basement, contain the ***Fifth Annual Exhibition of the Surrey Sculpture Society***. Outdoor pieces are also displayed in the Private Garden. This show is always of a very high standard, and all works are for sale. The Exhibition is open at the same hours as the House, until 29th May.

Following this, from 7th - 18th June, is an ***Exhibition of Paintings by Charles Neal***, entitled "Spaces and Places". Charles exhibited previously here in 1996, and once again profits from sales will go to the Trust's "Enterprise Neptune" Appeal.

## *In the Park*

The soggy spring has had the benefit of filling the lakes to overflowing, but the downside is that many areas of parkland are now saturated. This has caused the cancelation of the Rally of the Humber Post-vintage Car Club scheduled for 30th April, because of the likely damage to the grass show area. The wet conditions have also prevented mowing of the lawn in front of the House.

The warmth of February and early March brought out a fine display of snowdrops, crocuses, and daffodils. Bluebells have also been early - so come soon if you want to see any of these!

Bird life is abundant on the Lakes. Swans are nesting again on the Garden Lake, in the reed bed beyond the Cork Oak, and newly hatched cygnets have been seen. Hopefully they will have a higher survival rate than last year, when only 3 of the 7 hatchlings survived their early days.

I also notice that some pairs of Tufted Duck have stayed with us this spring; many of these migrate to Scandinavia for breeding, The Chinese Mandarin ducks have already established a large breeding presence here.

One matter of concern to the Wardens is the gross over-feeding of water fowl by well meaning visitors. At the end of a weekend afternoon, one can see half loaves of bread lying soggy and untouched by the birds. This then produces an excess of protein in the water, leading to pollution.

The new Ice Cream Kiosk is now in position near the Car Park. Operated by the Tea Room staff, it is doing a good trade in Wall's products. This replaces the commercial van; the constant running of its diesel compressor was the source of adverse comments about pollution!



## *Volunteer Opportunities*

The increase in the number of rooms in the House on show to the public has led to a shortage of volunteer stewards. This is most marked at weekends; any recently retired member with time to spare, or younger people still with work commitments, who feel able to spend a couple of afternoons a month as stewards should get in touch in the first instance with Barry Williams.

Volunteer drivers for the courtesy bus, carrying visitors from the Car Park to the House, are also needed, again for a minimum of two afternoons a month; training will be given on this simple vehicle.

The "Battery Car Service", issuing self drive vehicles to the less mobile, began on 1st May. Here again, more volunteers are needed able to give say two afternoons a month on Wednesdays, Thursdays, or Sundays.

Finally, volunteers are also needed to support Martha Godfrey, the Education Officer, working with school children visiting the Park and House.

For further details of all these Volunteer Opportunities, contact Barry Williams at the House on (020)-8560-3275.

## *Departures*

We were sorry to say Goodbye to **Gudrun Alsobrook**, who left Osterley in early April after two and a half years at Osterley. She has gone to join Keren Manley at Kew Gardens; we shall miss her smiling face.

Her successor, Melanie Hanmore, will start on May 15th,



### *Spring Reception & A.G.M.*

This will be held at Osterley on 17th May, at 7.45 pm. A glass of wine will be served before the meeting, and it is hoped to arrange some other attractions. Full details will be found on the Agenda included with this Newsletter.

Please note that the gates of the Park are closed to arrivals after 7.30pm.



The first 100 club draw of the millenium was held at the last of the Winter Lectures. With a lot of huffing and puffing we were able just to maintain the 140 subscriptions that we ended up with last year. Thus we were able to keep up the prize money. The prizes were as follows:

First Prize - £100 F. E. Purnell no. 53  
 Second Prize - £50 J. Latchford no.81  
 Third Prize - £25 C. M. Davy no.91  
 Fourth Prize - £20 E. Smith no,89  
 Fifth Prize - £10 V. Francis no.94



The second draw will be made at the A.G.M on 17th May at Osterley House.

May I make a plea to those of you who haven't yet participated in the 100 Club. It was formed to raise money by the Friends of Osterley House in order to support the house in a fun way. A draw is held four times a year and half of the money raised is paid out in prize money to the participants. Please support us especially at this time as we need to maintain the shares at 140. Of course, if we can increase the number of shares the prize money will increase!

A annual subscription to the 100 Club doesn't cost as much as a theatre ticket. Even if you don't win you still have the satisfaction of raising funds for Osterley House.

Please complete a request form and send it to me. As long as you get it to me by 17th May it will be in the next draw.

Good Luck to all of you - I look forward to seeing you at the AGM and 100 Club draw.

### *Osterley Day, 9th July - Donations Wanted!*

Once again, the "Friends" will be running fund-raising stalls at this event. Felicity Bernstein is once more organising a "TOMBOLA" stall, and Audrey Conacher will again be in charge of the "BRIC-A-BRAC".

Donations of unwanted gifts, ornaments, fine china, costume jewellery, etc would be greatly appreciated. Last year, your generosity enabled the ladies to make a profit of £500 - this year we want to beat that target!

Members wishing to offer items for the stalls should initially contact Audrey on (020) 8560 8523. Goods can either be picked up from the House or we can arrange collection.

There has so far been no response from the Membership, with suggestions for additional stalls or offers of help. Any contributions, please, to Ian Conacher on (020) 8560 8523.