



# The Friends of Osterley Park



*A Supporters Group for the National Trust*

*Issue 39*

*December 2000*

*Chairman's Notes*

*Ian Conacher*

Once again, we are coming to the end of a year; it does not seem long since we were awaiting the start of a new millennium with some trepidation, after all the gloomy prophecies about the "Millennium Bug", which fortunately were not fulfilled.

Nationally and internationally, the year has been marked by more disasters than triumphs. Conversely, the "Friends" have had a good year. Our membership has increased, and the various activities that we have engaged in have realised a useful income which has enabled us to sponsor a number of purchases by the National Trust at Osterley.

A major beneficiary has been the Education Service at the Property. The Education Officer, Martha Godfrey, has a busy time arranging visits from local schools, and provides activities for pupils in line with the syllabus of the National Curriculum. In addition, she arranges "fun" activities during the school holiday periods which are well supported.

The "Friends" support for this work has taken two forms. Firstly, we have sponsored the "Education Leaflet", which is circulated to schools to give teachers information on the facilities available at Osterley. Secondly, we have donated over £1,100 for the purchase of furniture and equipment for the Education Centre in the stable block at Osterley.

Additionally, we have through the season paid for the printing of the "Welcome Leaflet", which is handed out at the Car Park to all new visitors to the Property, and for the Warden's Bicycles, which are now a greener solution to patrolling the Park than the life-expired petrol golf carts. With other items, money paid over to the Trust this year has already reached nearly £2,800, with a further £1,675 promised for other projects. After allowing for working capital, we expect to carry over a substantial balance into the new financial year, ready to meet the needs of the new season.

Our income came partly from subscriptions, but also from fund - raising activities - the "100 Club", the Tombola and Bric-a-Brac Stalls - and from the profits on events such as the Winter Lectures and the summer trips and tours.

Full details of the end of year accounts will be presented at the A. G. M. in May. Meanwhile, my thanks are due the Committee and to all those Members who have worked so hard and contributed to our success.

## *Christmas At Osterley*

Most National Trust houses, including Osterley, closed for the winter at the end of October, and will not re-open until the end of March. At Osterley, which has little heating and a minimum of artificial light, it would not be feasible to open during the cold, short days of winter; additionally, visitors would be so few in number that it would be tedious for the staff and volunteers who would be needed to stand by. The closure will, as ever, give opportunities for essential cleaning and conservation work.

Meanwhile, the National Trust Shop will be open from Wednesdays to Sundays until 17th December, between 12 noon and 4 pm, and the Tea Room will be open for light refreshments at the same times.

Additionally, a menu of Christmas lunches is offered in the Old Brewhouse during the same period. For further information telephone the Catering Manager on (020) 8232 5057.



### *Carols in the Stable-Yard*

We have once more been able to persuade our veteran but inveterate conductors to in turn persuade members of their choirs to take the lead in the singing of Christmas Carols in the open air (weather permitting). They will be performing between 2.30 and 3.30 pm on selected Sunday afternoons in December, in the Stable-Yard at Osterley.

On Sunday, 10th December, Tony Underwood will lead singers from the West London Opera Company. On the following Sunday, December 17th, Howard Stephens will introduce members of the St Mary's Singers.

Both conductors encourage "Audience Participation", and we hope for a goodly number to raise the echoes.

These events will be advertised locally, and we shall be publicising the work and achievements of the "Friends", in the hope of recruiting new members. During the concerts, collections will be taken to raise funds for the maintenance of the Battery Cars, which are available in the summer for the use of visitors with walking difficulties. Mulled Wine and Mince Pies will be on sale in the Tea Room, which, with the Shop, will be open to 4 pm.

### *Study Base Open Day*

To mark the installation in the Study Base of the new furniture - paid for by the "Friends" - Martha Godfrey, the Education Officer at Osterley, arranged an Open Day in early November, so that members could view the new equipment. Unfortunately, due to the short notice, the attendance was very small.

Martha hopes to be able to issue a further invitation to all members to a Coffee Morning in the spring. Details will be given in our next issue.

## *Winter Lectures 2001.*

These will be held, as usual, in St Mary's Church Hall, Osterley Road, Isleworth, at 8 pm on alternate Wednesdays in February and March.

On February 7th, Tony Leppard will speak on "The Birds of London". Tony has been interested in birds for more than 30 years, and is a Council Member of the London Natural History Society. He is also a member of the R.S.P.B, and of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust.

On the 21st, Andrea Cameron makes a welcome return. Andrea has recently retired from her post as Archivist in the Library service of the London Borough of Hounslow, and is a Past President of the Hounslow Local History Society. Her subject this year will be "The History of Spring Grove".

Barry Williams, the Property Manager for the National Trust at Osterley Park, will speak to us on March 7th on "The Significance of Osterley Park to the Community". Barry has for the past 10 years been responsible for managing the transition since the Trust took over, in 1991, the direct responsibility for the running of the House and Park from the Victoria & Albert Museum and the Department of the Environment respectively.

On 21st March, Dennis Ashbourne, who spoke to us last winter about Hampton Court, will return to give a talk entitled "Sir Christopher Wren - our Great English Architect". Dennis is a Chartered Architect and Town Planner, and gives guided tours of the City of London and Wren's Historic Churches.

These are informal and friendly occasions; talks last about an hour, followed by questions. Coffee and biscuits are then served, and the evening concludes at about 9.45pm.

The talks are open, not only to "Friends" but also to their friends and relations and to the public at large. Ticket prices are being held at £3.00 per lecture, or £10.00 for the series of four. A Booking Form is enclosed with this Newsletter.

## *News from the Park*

The rains of the past summer have continued into autumn, and should at least have had the effect of eliminating any concerns about the water table for some time to come. The four cygnets on the garden lake are now as big as their parents, although not yet in full white plumage. In the next few weeks, they are likely to leave Osterley so that the parent birds can prepare for the raising of a new family in the spring.

While on duty with the "Courtesy Bus" in November, I was intrigued to see a van from the R.S.P.C.A. in the Stable-Yard. A closer look revealed they the driver was transferring two cages to the care of Linda Mills, the Head Gardener; one contained a magnificent cockerel and the other a domestic hen. Linda tells me that these are "rescue birds" who will now be joining the menagerie under her care in the walled garden.

Linda and Kevin now have more than twenty birds and beasts in their charge, and Linda has given us some notes about recent events.

Poor Puzzle Mills has been diagnosed with arthritis in his back legs; he is having treatment from the vet and lots of tender loving care and he will go on for many years yet. He may not be able to do his waggonette stint on 2nd December for the volunteers party as he has got to be cleared by the vet! Fingers crossed he will be OK!

On a sadder note, Bill the Pig has died and gone to the great pig heaven. He passed away on Saturday 18th November at only 6 years old. He had a heart attack. Kevin thinks he had one Yorkshire pudding too many. Too much good living from the tearoom, a lesson to us all. Barry pig was a bit sad for a few days but seems to be getting on OK now. Perhaps he'll get a new friend soon!!

*The New Property Assistant**Farah Qureshi*

Just a quick note to introduce myself. Despite the exotic name, I was born and raised in Osterley! Before taking up this appointment in May, I worked for the Department for International Development in Victoria, and before that spent my holidays working in an antiques shop in Richmond.

I spent several years living in Cornwall, where I studied Ceramics at Falmouth College of Art. I still continue with my ceramics and have a little studio in Hounslow, although this is now a rather part-time activity. I also enjoy drawing, sewing, reading, and I am a member of a riding club where I ride and muck out once a week.

Farah can frequently be seen exercising Linda's horse Puzzle from the Stables at Osterley.



## *Telephone Numbers*

A new telephone system has been installed at the Property, which will simplify external and internal communications. All general enquiries regarding opening times, events, etc, should be directed to Farah Qureshi of Visitor Services on 8232 5050.

Other numbers for specific purposes are:-

House Office - Philip King - Room Stewards Arrangements 8560 3918

Education & Study Base - Martha Godfrey 8232 5069

National Trust Shop - Theresa Kember 8232 5062

Tea Room - Melanie Hanmore 8232 5057



*Jim Tickle*

From verbal reports received, we understand that this year's programme of day outings and the tour of the West Country were greatly enjoyed by members. The reputation of these events leads always to a rush of bookings as soon as the programme is published, and some trips have been sold out within days of the announcement.

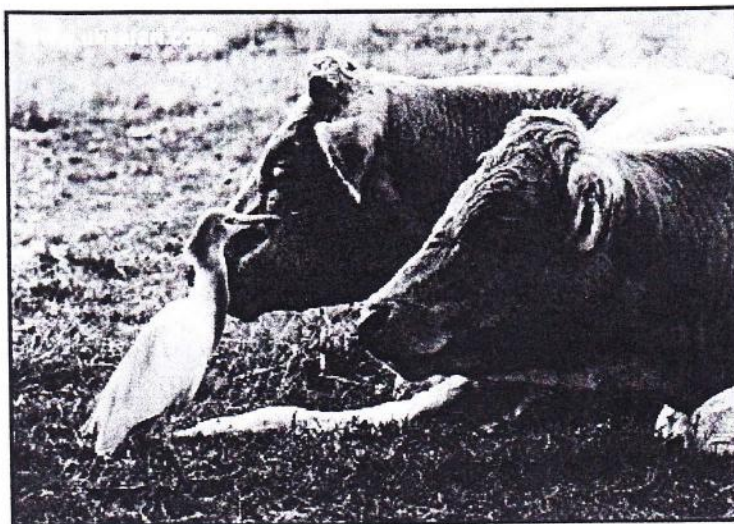
The success of these trips owes much to Jim Tickle, who has been managing the arrangements for the past eight or nine years, with the able assistance of the coach owner-driver, Barrie Pyle. Together they agree the programme and plan each day's itinerary. Where necessary, Barrie has been known to survey the route and select convenient points for coffee stops and comfort stations!

Members will be concerned to learn that Jim has recently been in the Hammersmith Hospital for major heart surgery. He is now convalescing at home, and "Doctors Orders" are for a period of rest before taking on any arduous tasks.

We wish him a speedy recovery, and hope that his declared intention to continue with the organisation of our outings in 2001 will be achievable.

## *Visitor spotted eating flies!*

*Gary Bradley*



It's not often that the staff at Osterley Park stop what they're doing to stand and stare at one of the visitors, but that's exactly what happened last week!

The object of their attention was a rare bird, called a "cattle egret", which had made an epic journey all the way from North Africa to the Park. It was spotted by staff, calmly removing flies from the faces of the Osterley farm cows.

On hot sunny days (when we get them) the flies buzz around the eyes of the cows, which can get quite irritating for them. Fortunately, the cattle egret can catch and eat more than 100 flies an hour, so it rapidly became very popular with the herd.

Full grown cattle egrets stand around 20 inches tall, and are normally all white. This one is in its breeding plumage, with buff coloured plumes on its head, breast and mantle. You can find more photos of the egret, and other wildlife at: [www.uksafari.com](http://www.uksafari.com)



Linda's Animal Family Christmas Party

## *The Wiggly Worm or Serpent*

*Linda Mills*

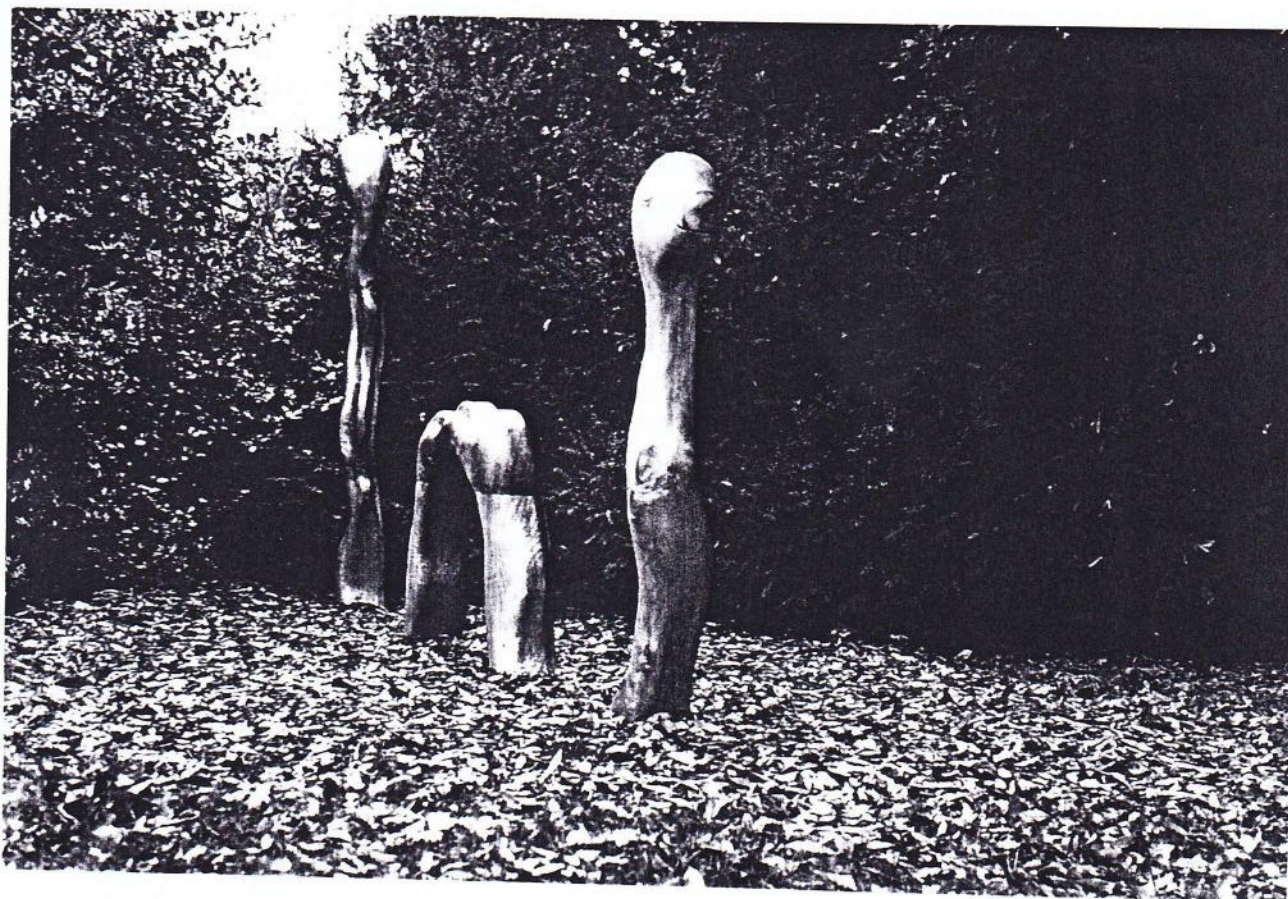
This sculpture was commissioned by Mr. and Mrs. Edwards in memory of their daughter Winona, who died when only 9 months old.

The all wood Wiggly Worm made from storm blown cedar from Osterley Park, is designed for children to climb, swing and play on as well as to touch.

Mr. and Mrs. Edwards presentation took place on 15th October to a gathering of 50 people who were entertained by musicians playing medieval wind instruments.

The sculpture is by Martin Cundell of the Society of Surrey Sculptors. He displayed some of his work earlier this year at Osterley in the Jersey Gallery. The Wiggly Worm sculpture was helped into place by Mr Cundell with the assistance of George and Kevin.

Wiggly Worm - or Serpent - consists of 3 carved wooden sections of a creature appearing out of the ground - first a long neck with a small head, next a loop of body, and finally a tail section - also with a head! This imaginative play sculpture can be seen and experienced adjacent to the path leading from the carpark to the East Meadow. We hope it will give children as much pleasure in its new guise as it did when a great cedar tree.



The third 100 Club draw of the year was made at the "Friends" Autumn Reception on 11th October 2000. The number of shares held at the time of the draw had increased from 142 to 156, the first increase made this year, and we were thus able to increase the Prize Fund to £230. Prize winners were:-

First	£100	No. 25	Ron Piper.
Second	£50	No. 10	H.S. Eaton
Third	£30	No. 56	Ruby Warne
Fourth	£25	No. 149	C.W. White
Fifth	£15	No. 44	J. Dingwall
Sixth	£10	No. 75	Geoff Spice.



The fourth and final draw of this year will be made at the Volunteers Coffee Morning on 14th December, at the House. With the present membership and an added bonus the prize fund will be £260. If you are not yet a member and wish to join, please complete the application form enclosed and send to me with your cheque for £12 per share by Friday, 10th December.

A year's subscription to the 100 Club doesn't cost as much as a theatre ticket - and even if you don't win you will have the satisfaction of raising funds for Osterley House!

Renewal forms for 2001, for existing members whose subscription falls due before March, are enclosed with this Newsletter. The first draw of the year will be made at the "Friends" Winter Lecture on 21st March. Please return your forms and cheques as soon as possible, and no later than 16th March.

Thank you all very much for your continued support, without which this Club would not survive. I am pleased to be able to say that I think another member is willing to take over the running of the Club from the end of next year - so please keep the money coming in!

Good luck to all of you, and if I don't see you again this year I would like to wish you all a Happy Christmas and a good New Year.

