

# The Friends of Osterley Park

## *A Supporters Group for the National Trust*



Issue 5

NEWSLETTER

December 1991

### CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

After the bumper autumn Newsletter we decided to send you a simple one this Christmas but the next issue will be back to normal with interesting articles.

Sadly, after the very successful Christmas Party last December, there can be no party this year. The House is being rewired at the moment which means there are workmen everywhere, floor boards up etc. Also the National Trust are still deciding on an 'events' policy for both the House and Park at Osterley. As 'Friends' we all realize the fragile state of the house and furniture and would not like to see any more damage occurring.

Instead of the Christmas Party there will be an 'Opening Party' in the entrance hall on Friday 10th March 1992. Please see the enclosed application form for details. All Friends (and their friends) are invited, but you are asked to dress warmly as there will be no heating and March can be cold!

A great deal has happened since you received your first Friends Newsletter last December. Barry and Christine Williams were still in Malawi. Jim and Pat Rumsey were at Claydon and Simon in Bristol. They have made a strong team and have coped admirably with all the problems such as cracked plaster on priceless ceilings and the need to train volunteers to be reasonable room stewards. I hope everyone will agree that the first season under the auspices of the National Trust has been a success.

### WINTER LECTURES

There will be a series of four Evening Lectures in January and February in St. Mary's Parish Hall Osterley Road at 7.45 p.m. The subjects of the lectures will all relate to Osterley and it is felt the 'Friends' would be interested to learn more (these lectures are open to everyone) If this series is successful it is hoped to repeat the pattern next winter.

Wednesday 15th January 1992

Ted Fawcett will speak on the Park and Gardens.

Wednesday 29th January

Mr T.S. Rosoman will speak on 'County House Technology'.

Wednesday 12th February

Andrea Cameron will speak on local history.

Wednesday 26th February

Myrtle Ellis will speak on 'Adam Silver in Adam Houses'. Although 'Osterley' has no silver it will be interesting to learn what might have originally been used.

An application form for tickets is enclosed.



## MEMBERSHIP

Friends are reminded that the initial membership period expires on 31st December 1991. We hope that all members will wish to continue their support for the Trust's activities in management and conservation of the House and grounds by renewing their membership. The individual subscription of £5.00 will give membership this time until 31st March 1993 in order to bring the membership year in line with its "Open Season" for the House.

An application form is attached for return to the Membership Secretary.

## VOLUNTEERS

The first seasons's opening of Osterley Park House under the National Trust's care has been successful. A target of 21,500 visitors was set - actual visitor numbers were 21,951. Volunteers have been much in evidence in both the House and Park. In the House about 150 people acted as Room Stewards (this amounted to 8133 hours). Over 40% of the stewards were Friends; we realize that many Friends are unable to volunteer as they work, are elderly or disabled but we value your support and are pleased you are a Friend as all support is valuable to Osterley.

Volunteers have also acted as Guides and next year will be helping with school parties. They have also been out in force on Monday mornings as Litter Wardens and have done an excellent job keeping the park clean. They have been a great help to the gardeners saving them valuable time on picking up litter. The Trust has a policy of dispensing with litter bins as they feel these produce more litter and staff have to empty the bins. Osterley actually does have four litter bins - in the Car Park, near the Ladies & Gents Toilets and by the Pump House - where there are also dog-litter bins. Volunteer flower arrangers (the vase of fresh flowers in the fireplace certainly has brightened up Mr Child's Dressing Room) and volunteers are working in the walled garden.

Other volunteers have done the Inventory, helped with cleaning, recruiting, making case covers, doing research and taking photographs. Last, but not least, there have been two volunteers working on word processing.

## BATRICARS

The two Batricars, collected from Ashridge early in September for the benefit of the less mobile visitors to the Park, have been used only once so far. Although an appeal for volunteers to assist in running the service was widely circulated, only one person has come forward, and it was impossible to offer the facility, other than on an *ad hoc* basis, during September and October. Both cars have now been 'put to bed' in the Stable Block for the winter, and will re-appear when the House opens again, fully-charged and raring-to-go IF we have enough volunteers to sustain a meaningful operation.

Please contact Christine Williams, or Dudley Foy (081 570 8900) if you can help.

A number of local organisations caring for the less mobile will be circulated with details of Batricar availability early in the new year.

## OUTING TO SUTTON HOUSE

A coach outing has been arranged to Sutton House, Hackney for **Saturday 11th April 1992**. This is a Trust property which has been leased out for many years; it was built in the early 16th century but has had many later additions and alterations. The Trust is taking it back to its original form and the house is undergoing substantial repairs and refurbishment. It was felt that Friends of Osterley Park might be interested in seeing the work going on there. Further details will be in the next Newsletter, but please make a note in your diary to keep the date free

With good wishes for a happy Christmas.