



# The Friends of Osterley Park

IAN



*A Supporters Group for the National Trust*

NEWSLETTER 41

JUNE 2001

*Chairman's Notes.*

*Ian Conacher*

The Annual General Meeting on 2nd May was well attended, with over 60 members, who enjoyed a glass of wine before hearing the reports and updates from the Committee.

In my introduction to the "Chairman's Report", I reminded the meeting that both John Robertson and Jim Tickle had given notice 12 months ago that they would not be standing for re-election this year. Since then, we had learned with some sorrow that Audrey and Maurice Ebison had decided to put their house on the market, with the intention of relocating initially to their flat in Hove.

Audrey was one of the founder members of the "Friends" Committee when it was formed in 1990, prior to the formal take-over of the property by the Trust from the Victoria and Albert Museum. When I was persuaded to take over the Chairmanship from Sheila Chapman at the end of 1991, Audrey took over from me the post of Membership Secretary. She has carried out this duty most efficiently since then; Maurice has also assisted in producing from his computer print-outs of the Membership list and labels for the Newsletter envelopes. We shall be very sorry to lose them both when they leave the district.

We understand that Audrey will continue to attend Committee Meetings until a buyer is found for her house, and will also carry on with helping out at "Friends" events. Her help on the "Bric-a-Brac" stall on "Osterley Day" has been invaluable.

While Audrey and Maurice are hoping in due course to find a permanent home within reach of Osterley, we have had to take action to find a replacement Membership Secretary. Fortunately, Irene Bowles husband, Dilwyn, has been persuaded to take over these duties.

The change-over will take place over the next few weeks. Audrey will continue to process applications received on the form printed on the current (orange) leaflet, which will be withdrawn from circulation as soon as a replacement (green) leaflet is received from the printer. Members who have copies of the old leaflet are asked to place them in the "green box" for recycling!

We have also been fortunate in that two members, Meera Khambadkone and Brian Lane, have come forward offering to serve on the Committee. They were able to attend the Committee at the end of April as observers, and their election was confirmed at the A.G.M. They are most welcome.

We still have one vacancy on the Committee, and are looking for a suitable candidate - ideally recently retired and looking for an outlet for his energy and experience! In due course, the post of Vice-Chairman will have to be filled by a member of the Committee, so that there is a member with knowledge of our activities ready to move into the Chair in any emergency.

### *The Past Ten Years.*

*Ian Conacher*

Preparing the new leaflet gave me the motivation to trawl through the records of the "Friends" donations to the National Trust since 1991. At our formation, some of our then Committee felt that Meetings were boring, and thus in the early years we were not constrained to produce Annual Accounts and present them to the membership.

In 1994, we decided that this was not a satisfactory situation. From that time on, annual reports enabled us to account for our stewardship of members' subscriptions and identify donations to the Trust.

Unscrambling the omelette of the early account books has been a time consuming task, as it was not always clear whether payments to the Trust were for services received or donations - in stark contrast to the immaculate book-keeping of our present Hon. Treasurer, Michael Pfeiffer!

However, the effort has paid off, and I can state with confidence that the total of donations made since 1991 is now close to £30,000! This includes the £4,000 contributed to our Appeal for the Mark I stairclimber (now unfortunately replaced by newer technology) and the profits from the Open Air Theatre in 1994/5/6/7, which were managed by the "Friends".

We have recently paid for the printing of the Trust's "Welcome " leaflet and servicing of the self-drive Battery Cars, with new batteries for one of these. Projects currently in hand, for which invoices are awaited, include a fourth picnic table and notice board in the Park, the winter overhaul of the "Courtesy Bus", leaflets for the Education Department and sweatshirts with logo for the Education Service Volunteers and staff.

### *If You Want a Job Done, Ask a Busy Man!*

We are delighted to be able to report that a volunteer has come forward to take over the management of the "100 Club" from John Robertson, who has stood down from the Committee. John has built up the club to the point where shares are held by around 50% of the membership, generating close on £1,000 per year to be spent on projects for the Trust. We thank John for all the hard work he has put in to achieve this success. John will carry on until the December draw.

His successor is Ron Piper, who has been a volunteer at Osterley since 1991, and may be found on most Thursdays checking tickets in the Entrance Hall. His other activities - listed in the notes below - mean that he will not be able to serve on the Committee. Ron will take over the running of the Club next year.



## *100 Club Draws.*

*John Robertson*

Since the February Newsletter, we have held two Prize Draws. The first, on Wednesday, 21st March, followed the final talk in the series of Winter Lectures, and the second took place on Wednesday, 2nd May, after the A.G.M.

Prize winners were:-

		21st March.	2nd May.
First	£100.00	P. & B. Higgs	John Buchanan.
Second	£60.00	Ted Taylor.	M. Haswell.
Third	£30.00	A.R. Neale.	Ian Conacher.
Fourth	£25.00	Carmel Short.	Audrey Conacher.
Fifth	£15.00	Elizabeth Hawtin.	Ron Piper.
Sixth	£10.00	Audrey Beaumont.	Marjorie Warman.

The third draw for this year will be at Osterley House, at the "Friends" Autumn Reception, in early October. Those who are not yet shareholders who want to participate in this draw should complete the enclosed application form and send it to me, with your cheque for £12.00 per share. Half of this goes into the Prize Fund, and the other £6.00 goes to pay for projects at Osterley.

A year's subscription to the 100 Club doesn't cost as much as a theatre ticket; even if you don't win you will have the satisfaction of helping to raise funds for Osterley House.

Share renewal forms for June are included with this newsletter.

Thank you all for your continuing support. Without the response we have had from the membership the Club would not have become the success story that it is. Please keep the money rolling in - I will take cash if you see me on duty at Osterley!

Good Luck! I hope to see you all at the next draw!

### *Ron Piper - an introduction.*



I was born in Mapledurham, Oxon. but lived the first 25 years of my life just a few miles away in Reading, Berks.

I joined the Board of Inland Revenue straight from school and in the mid 50's I transferred to London on promotion and have lived in the Borough of Ealing ever since, mainly in Northolt.

I retired from the Revenue after 44 years in 1990, and had a temporary job as Census Area Manager for Ealing, Acton and Hammersmith for the 1991 Census. On finishing this job in August 1991, I was reading the NT Thames & Chiltern Newsletter which contained an appeal for volunteers at Osterley, contacted Christine and was appointed as a volunteer recruiter. Since that time I have been a regular volunteer attending most Thursdays during the season and in recent years working mainly on the front desk or on Batricars.

I am married with two children and three grandchildren and am also the Chairman of the 2nd Northolt (Wood End) Scout Group. This is a large Group with almost 150 boys and girls from age 6 to 20 and so takes up a lot of my spare time which is why I feel unable to accept a post on the "Friends" committee. However I feel I will be able to cope with running the 100 Club and carry on the extremely good work put into it by John who has run it since it's inception.



### *Foot and Mouth Precautions.*

*Ian Conacher.*

As with all National Trust properties, the outbreak in the U.K. of this disease led to the closure of areas at Osterley where livestock were at risk. Initially, these included the whole of the front lawn, and meadow and farmland between Middle Lake and Osterley Lane. This has now been relaxed, and the area closed now consists of the two drives to Osterley Lane, the length of the Lane between them, and the triangular field bounded by these, in which Farmer Sutton's cattle are confined.

## *Trips and Tours.*

We were greatly relieved to learn from Jim Tickle that, although no longer on the Committee, he will continue to organise and manage these activities.

He reports that the April outing to Wimpole Farm had to be replaced with a trip to Cambridge and Saffron Walden, which was much enjoyed by the party.

There are still a few vacancies on the trip to Tattershall Castle in Lincolnshire on 19th June. This will leave Osterley at 9 am, and the cost will be £10.90. Please ring Jim on (020) 8894 4174 if you are interested.

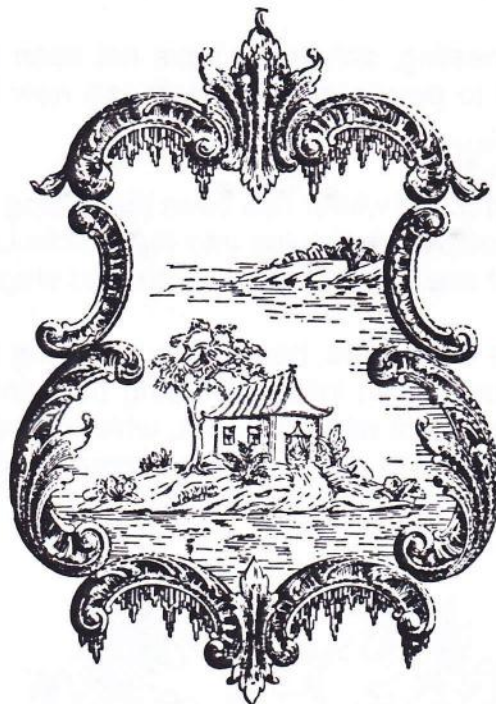
## *Entrapment!*

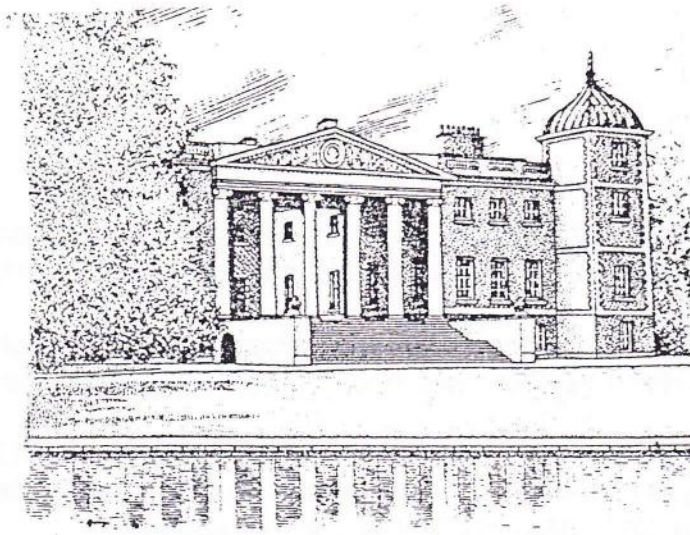
*Ian Conacher.*

One afternoon in early April, I received a telephone call from a journalist on "The Times", who told me that he was collecting material for a series on London gardens, and was asking for information on the garden at "The Aviary". In spite of my attempts to steer him away from this, with talk of the delights of the Pleasure Grounds at Osterley, he seemed more interested in pumping me for details of the alterations made by the Sultan of Brunei at the Aviary - about which I could tell him little.

Judge my surprise when I was told the following morning that my name had appeared in a piece on the Aviary - the London Home of the Sultan - whose name was being linked by the "Times" with the Earl and Countess of Wessex. Her indiscreet revelations to an unprincipled and devious reporter were at that time headline news in the tabloid newspapers.

The warning is clear - be very careful when talking to the Press - it is not only the tabloids who are devious!





## *Notes from The Park*

*Ian Conacher.*

The "Ting" has gone! This Chinese-style structure, mounted on a pontoon at the East end of the Garden Lake, was donated at the time of the "Chinese Osterley" event in the late eighties. It has required regular maintenance and repainting, but at the end of last summer it was evident that the woodwork of the base was rotten and needed replacement.

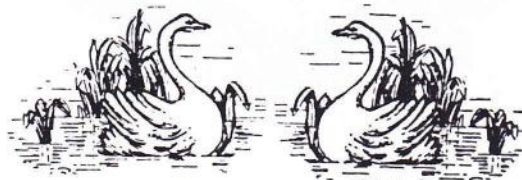
As the structure had no historical significance, it was decided that the money which would have to be spent on repairs could be better used elsewhere at the Property. It was accordingly dismantled in March. A poem by John Stacey celebrating its removal appears on another page.

The swans who raised a brood on the Garden Lake have nested again this year, and four cygnets were seen with the pen, foraging by the causeway this week. The cob has been very protective, and has driven away all but one of last year's brood, who is chased off the lake whenever he ventures onto the water. However, as he cannot take off from the land, his chances of escape are minimal.

Ducks and coots are also nesting, although I have not seen any young so far. The resident herons, who used to perch on the "Ting", can now be seen fishing in the shallows.

One benefit of the wet autumn and winter has been the raising of the water table. The lake is now full and continuously overflowing into the Middle Lake, which is also well filled. Hopefully we shall not see again the low levels and stagnation of recent years.

Linda and Kevin, the Estate Gardeners, have been mourning the loss of one of their pigs, "Barry", who succumbed to an infection during the winter. One of their more recent acquisitions is a magnificent white peacock, which I glimpsed from the window of the "Batricar" shed, displaying to and terrorising some of Linda's geese!





*First Impressions*  
by John Stacey.



*The House*  
first glimpsed, poised serene,  
amid the gentle play of  
Wind and Water and Willow.  
The eye relaxed by leisurely curve,  
- not dragged, snagged, forced  
to look midway between; at  
that barely floating Pagoda thing  
(the technical term alludes).  
It's gone now, shed no tears,  
and give even more cheers,  
for the newly liberated vista.  
Sure the birds and the fish,  
might come to wish,  
that it'd never been taken away.  
But, gone for good, dismantled; It's had its day.

*"Friend's" Activities.*

*Ian Conacher.*

A number of "Friends" assisted Martha Godfrey, the Education Officer, with the running of the Easter Egg Trails and other children's activities on Easter Sunday. This event was well attended and much enjoyed by those taking part. A report on the day from Irene Bowles appears on another page.

We shall hopefully be setting up a stall on "National Gardens Day", June 10th. We have had no response from the membership offering plants for sale on this day, so will be confining our efforts to recruitment and information. Any member with plants to dispose of should contact the Head Gardener, Linda Mills.

On "Osterley Day", July 15th, Felicity Bernstein and Audrey Conacher will again be running the "Tombola" and "Bric-a-Brac" stalls. Donations of good quality items for these are wanted in June, in good time for sorting and pricing.

We are still open to suggestions for other stalls which could contribute to the festive scene - simple things for the children like "How many Smarties in the jar?" Let's be hearing from you!

## *Easter Day Festivities at Osterley*

*Irene Bowles*

On Sunday 15th April, my son David (aged 15) and I ventured forth to help Martha and her band of assistants with the fun day at Osterley. Having run a Playgroup for a few years a decade ago, I was looking forward to working with small children again.

On the drive from home to the House, I looked across at David and noticed he was wearing a white sweatshirt. White clothes do not stay white for long on David at the best of times, and knowing the sort of activities that would be happening I did not want to think about the state of his sweatshirt by the end of the day. However, to my great embarrassment, it was me who ended up covered in paint and David stayed in pristine condition!!

Martha soon put us to work - having helped to set up all the activity tables initially, I took charge of the Badge making stall. David was assigned to help Audrey Conacher and Audrey Ebison in the administration of the Easter Egg Hunt. He definitely drew the short straw - there was a queue which seemed to stretch for miles of eager children and their long-suffering parents ready to go hunting for eggs. It very soon became apparent that the demand would exceed the supply of clue sheets and pencils, and there was a hurried scurry of staff to photocopy more sheets, and David hunting our more spare pencils or any other writing implement available. Very soon, the black, blue and other dark coloured felt pens were all missing from the badge stand and colouring competition table. Thankfully, there were more than enough Easter Eggs for all those successful children - in excess of 300.

The badge making went well, with many children displaying very individual badges. Teenagers also were plentiful customers, making badges of their favourite pop groups and their symbols. Other very successful stalls included Easter Hat making. This was quite slow to take off, but by the end of the afternoon all the hats had been sold, and there were many unhappy children who had missed out. There were also eggs to be painted, salt dough shapes to decorate and coloured eggs to be pulled out of sand to claim prizes.

The weather was not too unkind - there was only one quick shower - and a good time was had by all. I hope that Martha will repeat the activity next year, it was great fun. I am sure that there are a large number of children living in the local area who will agree. Thanks are especially due to Martha, who worked tirelessly throughout the afternoon, and ensured that the event was a great success.







## *Trust Events*

We had hoped to include with the last issue copies of the Trust's Events Leaflet, with full details of the summer at Osterley. Unfortunately, these were not available to meet our deadline, so a brief typed summary was enclosed. We give below extra details of some major events.

Both the major Open Air Concerts - the Pete Allen Jazz Band on July 14th and the Glenn Miller Orchestra on August 4th - take place on the grass of the Pleasure Grounds and Front Lawn respectively - so bring your own chairs or cushions!

Similarly, seats will not be provided for the Classical Indian Music concert in the Entrance Hall. Bring your own cushions in the classical Indian style!

On Osterley Day, 15th July, admission to Osterley Park House will be free, from 1 pm to 4 pm.

Full details of these and other events are given on the Trust's colour leaflet which is enclosed.

## **STOP PRESS! - ERRATA AND ADDENDA!**

After the material for this Newsletter had been sent to Margaret Friday to prepare for printing, we found that there were some errors and omissions - and some space available to deal with these!

### **COMMITTEE NUMBERS.**

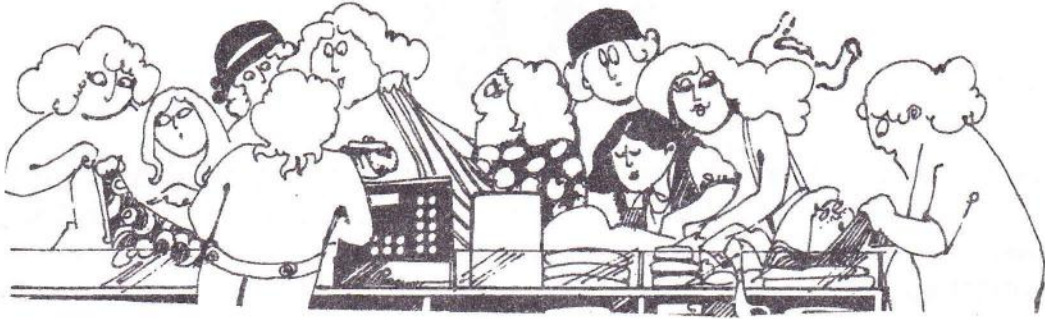
Ian admits to being confused about the number of members on the Committee. There were in fact three resignations at the A.G.M, leaving five original members and three new members elected. The Constitution calls for ten - so there are thus **TWO** vacancies, not one as stated on page Two - so the need for recruits is twice as pressing!

### **A.G.M. REPORTS.**

The Committee has decided to send out the minutes of the Annual General Meeting on 2nd May, together with the Annual Accounts presented at that meeting. These show a balance of £7,350 carried over into the current year. After retaining minimum working capital, there was, therefore, approximately £4,500 to be available to the Trust to finance specific Projects.

The sum of £1,042.34 quoted for general expenses includes printing and postage of the Newsletter (£742), and refreshments at Receptions (£126.50). The general administrative expense amounts only to £174.

The figure of £78.47 quoted against Batricars is the balance remaining after the total of donations at the Carol Concerts and elsewhere (£228.20) had been deducted from the cost of general maintenance and battery replacement (£306.67).



**OSTERLEY DAY - JULY 15TH.**

**TOMBOLA AND BRIC-A BRAC STALLS.**

**DONATIONS WANTED!**

Felicity Bernstein and Audrey Conacher are in desperate need of  
donations for these stalls.

The Tombola stall gives a prize every time - ranging from small items to  
major prizes such as bottles of wine, large cuddly toys, unwanted gifts -  
all in as new condition.

The Bric-Brac Stall welcomes donations of china, vases, costume  
jewellery, hard back books, etc - all in good condition.

Please - no chipped china or tatty paper backs!

Ring Audrey on 020 8560 8523 to arrange collection.

*In past years these stalls have raised over £600 for the Trust on the day.*

*Please give generously so that w can repeat this success!*