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The Friends of Osterley Park



A Supporters Group for the National Trust

NEWSLETTER 42

SEPTEMBER 2001

Chairman's Notes

Ian Conacher

I am writing these notes in late August, in the hope of getting all the material for the Newsletter together for the mid-September deadline. There will, no doubt, be a number of late items to write up before we close for press, but after - literally - an "Event" full summer there are already plenty of stories which must be reported.

The major influence on Events this summer has been the weather. Experience of past years has perhaps led to undue optimism about the suitability of the English climate for outdoor events; this year, we became aware of the harsh reality of the fickleness of the weather. Fortunately, in most cases we were lucky enough to escape total disaster - but at the cost of periods of anxiety, hoping that by some miracle conditions would improve on the day! Reports on the Events appear on a later page.

Your Committee, strengthened by the election of three new members at the A.G.M., has been further boosted by an offer from Anne Drakeford to join our numbers. Anne is Headmistress of a primary school in Harrow, and will make a valuable contribution to our support for the Education Service at Osterley. This brings the number of Committee members up to 9 as Audrey Ebison, who has continued to attend Committee meetings in now hoping that the sale of her present home will be completed next month.

Audrey was a founder member of the Committee in 1990, and with assistance from her husband Maurice has kept the Membership records and printed the labels for our Newsletter, as well as helping out on the Bric-a-Brac stall and at "Friends" functions. We wish her every happiness in her their new home in Hove.

Michael Pfeiffer, our Hon. Treasurer, is also on the move. He has sold his former home at 59, Woodlands Road, and is living temporarily a few doors away at No. 65, while continuing to search for a house in the district. His telephone number remains unchanged at 8 568 4599.

The main challenge to the Committee during the coming months is the organisation of activities for the New Year. We have established a pattern of events, but always there is the thought that more could be done. However, the running of any new events - and some parts of traditional ones - will have to be delegated to volunteers from the Committee; your Chairman has in past years done much of the detailed work in the organisation of events himself, and with increasing age and family responsibility, is now working at or above maximum capacity!

Suggestions from Members for additional "Friends" activities would be welcomed - especially if they are accompanied by offers of help with the running of these!



Osterley Events 2001

The week preceding the Jazz Concert on 14th July brought some periods of heavy rain. This had the inevitable effect of reducing advance bookings. Though the weather was better on the evening, the improvement came perhaps too late to encourage some people to turn out. However, those who did come were treated to a lively performance by the Pete Allen Jazz Band, with many of the great classics of the Jazz repertoire. At the end, the audience were vociferous in demanding more!

The following day, 15th July, was "Osterley Day". This dawned bright and dry, and, in spite of some anxious moments, stayed fine for the whole of the day. As usual, the Park railings were lined with the display of works by local artists, and many local groups had stalls upon the front lawn. Activities for children were organised by Martha Godfrey, the Trust's Education Officer, and included story-telling sessions in the Private Garden.

Also in the "Private Garden", two local wood-turners were giving demonstrations and selling their wares, and the neighbouring Garden Gallery housed a week-long exhibition of the work of the Heston Art Group. The Jersey Gallery in the House contained a display of embroidery work entitled "Stitch the Garden".

For the "Friends", activity centred on the Stable Yard where our stalls were set up. Thanks to the generosity of members, Felicity Bernstein's Tombola stall and Audrey Conacher's Bric-a-Brac tables were loaded with goods. Audrey, assisted by Committee Members Audrey Ebison, Margaret Friday, and Meera Khambadkone, took £400, while Felicity, with help from Irene Bowles and others, raised an astonishing £500 on the day.

An additional attraction was a small stall, run by David Bowles, where children were asked to "Guess the Number of Smarties in the Jar". This brought in a further £10.

All in all, the day was a great success; however, it is to be hoped that in future years there will be an even greater participation by groups from the local Community, an even greater number of visitors, and more fund raising stalls from the "Friends"!

The "Big Band Concert" on August 4th was again given by the "Glenn Miller Band". It followed a wet afternoon, although fortunately the rain abated during the actual performance. Audience numbers were down, but a fair sized crowd turned up with their chairs and picnics, determined to sit it out until the end.

This band is now led by Ray McVay, who has infused new vitality into the performances, not only of the Glenn Miller repertoire, but also of contemporary Big Band classics of the 'forties. His efforts were rewarded by the participation of about 200 members of the audience, who danced on the forecourt in front of the steps. One side effect of the rain was that we were spared the clouds of dust which have in past years been stirred up by the dancing!

A programme of Indian Classical Music, performed in the Entrance Hall of the House, was well attended, with the audience sitting on cushions on the floor in traditional style.



Trips and Tours 2001

Jim Tickle's season of summer outings has, from all accounts, again been very successful. In particular, Patricia Barratt tells us that the tour of Shropshire was "sheer delight", due to the variety of places visited, which included the superb gardens at Powys Castle and the Victorian village and the Coalport and Tile Museums at Ironbridge. We hope to be able to give advance details of Jim's programme for 2002. in our next issue.



Comings and Goings

We are glad to welcome JULIE KERANS to Osterley, who has been appointed Chief Warden in place of Nathalie Muller. Nathalie has moved to Kent, as Chief Warden at Scotney Castle - with Gary and of course Ted!

We are sorry to learn that MARTHA GODFREY is leaving Osterley for a post with "Gardening Which", involving the planning and installation of a Children's Garden at the Hampton Court Flower Show next year. Martha has presided over the development of the Education Department at Osterley over the past three years, and has been kept fully occupied, not only with the regular visits of parties from local schools, but also with the organisation of special programmes in school holidays and at Christmas and Easter. The support given to the Education Department by the "Friends" was acknowledged by Martha in a letter to the Chairman, in which she says

"It is really thanks to the "Friends" that Osterley Education Service now boasts a fully equipped Study Base, with all the essential furniture, equipment and resources...."

We wish Martha every success in her new post.

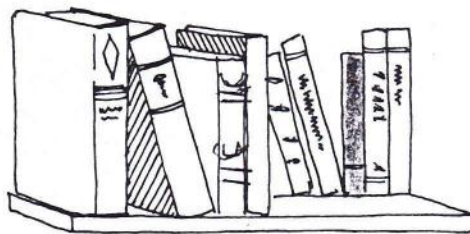
News from the Lakeside

The resident swans, with this year's hatch of four cygnets, are still a feature on the garden lake. The cob is very rigorous in guarding his territory, and has seen off not only one of last year's brood, who returned to its old home in early August, but also some intruders coming up from the Middle Lake.

An unusual sight has been a solitary tern, which was patrolling the lake and diving for fish in the summer months. I am told that there is a colony of these on the Grand Union Canal.

The daytime population of Canada Geese seems to have increased, possibly strengthened by this year's hatch of goslings. These birds are also prominent in the air, following their favoured routes between grazing sites and roosting places. Many of these wear wide orange rings; Patricia Barratt tells me that these have been fitted as part of a survey by the British Airports Authority, who wish to investigate flight patterns as they are concerned about the risk of "bird strikes" to aircraft using Heathrow.

Osterley Book Fair



Donations of good second-hand hard-back books are requested for a "Book Fair", to be held in the Old Brewhouse at Osterley on Sunday, 4th November. Please contact Farah on 020 8232 5050 to arrange delivery. Proceeds will go to the National Trust at Osterley.

The Fair will be open from 12 noon until 4 pm.



Trust Autumn Events



Osterley House will remain open to visitors until Sunday, November 4th, from 1 pm until 4.30 pm.

On Wednesday, 24th October, there will be a "Family Halloween Fun Day", from 11am to 3pm, aimed at children during the half-term holiday.

Demonstrations of "Putting the House to Bed" will be held on 8th, 9th, and 10th November, from 10 am to 2 pm, and on Thursdays 15th November and 6th December there will be guided tours in the House "Exploring the Parts other Visitors Don't Reach!"

On Thursday 22nd November there will be a Guided Walk in the Park with Kevin Mills, looking at some of the fine trees on the Estate, and on 29th November Warden Julie Kerans will lead a Guided Walk around the Estate.

For further details and booking arrangements for the above events, please consult the Trust's "Autumn & Winter Events" leaflet - copy enclosed.

The Christmas Party on 8th December and the "Sparkling Winter Wonderland" event on 15th December, advertised in the Regional Events Leaflet, have had to be cancelled.

Christmas lunches in the Stables Tearoom can be booked from 12 noon on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays throughout November and up to 21st December. Ring the Tearoom on 020 8232 5057.

The tearoom will also be open for light refreshments from 12 noon to 4 pm, Wednesdays to Sundays, until 23rd December..

The National Trust Shop will be open on Wednesdays to Sundays, from 12 noon to 4 pm, from 7th November to 23rd December.

Finally, for details of the programmes of "Winter Workshops" and "Lecture Lunches", ring the Box Office on 01494 755572.



Members Reception, Wednesday, 17th October, 7 pm.

This will as usual be held in the Old Brewhouse in the Stable Yard, where parking will be available from 7 pm. Wine or fruit juices and nibbles will be served, and a talk will be given by Philip King, the Custodian of the House.

The third draw of the year for the "100 Club" will take place during the evening.

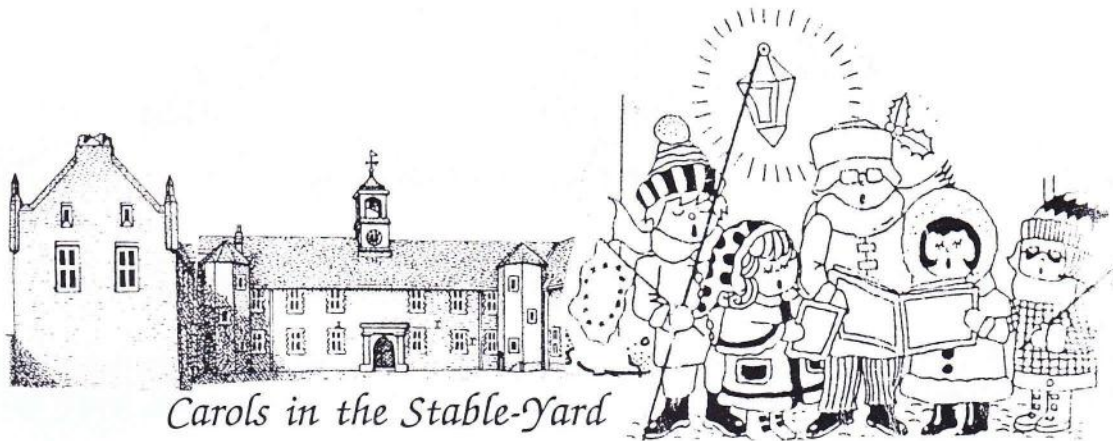


Winter Lectures 2002

This is the rather awe-inspiring title of a series of talks which we put on each year, on subjects of interest to members. These are, naturally, friendly occasions, giving opportunities for members to meet socially. As they are open to the public, there is also the hope that new members for the "Friends" will be recruited!

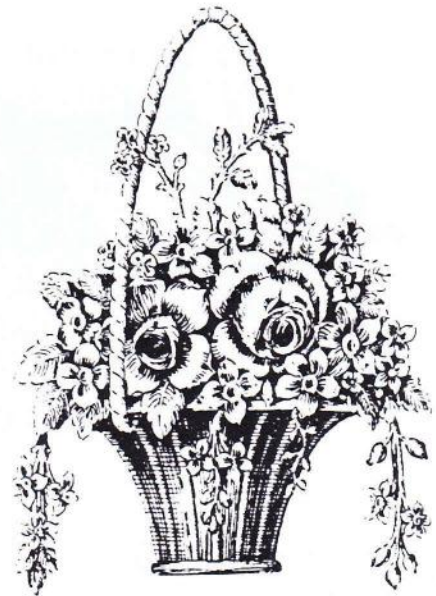
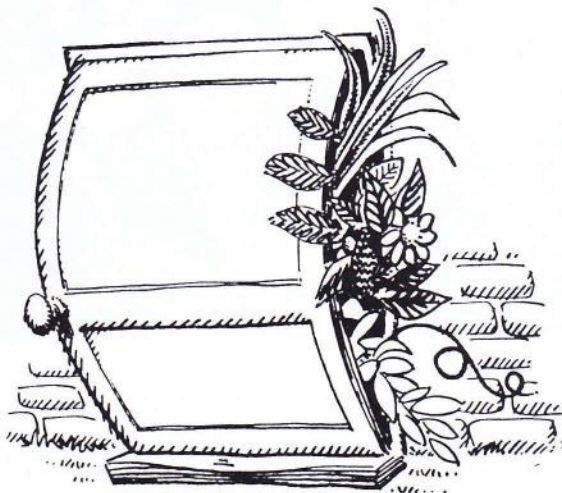
For the last ten years, these talks have been held in St Mary's Parish Hall, Osterley Road. Plans for the replacement of the existing building with a new and enlarged Hall were mooted last year, and we were contemplating moving to an alternative site during the rebuilding operation.

However, development has been delayed, and we have accordingly booked ourselves into the old familiar building for the evenings of Wednesdays 6th and 20th February and the same dates in March. Note these dates in your diaries - the list of speakers and a booking form will be published in our next issue!



Carols in the Stable-Yard

The "Friends" have again arranged for Christmas Carols to be sung in the Stable Yard on Sundays 9th and 16th December, from 2.30 to 3.30 pm. We were sorry to hear from Tony Underwood that due to poor health, he would be unable to take part this year. However, Howard Stephens has risen to the challenge, and will conduct the St Mary's Singers on both days. During the afternoon, a collection will be taken for the "Friends" Battery Car Maintenance Fund.



Volunteers Required

Megan Doole is currently advertising for additional Flower Arrangers, which she hopes can be recruited and gain experience of the job during September and October, ready for the 2002 season. No experience required - training will be given! Contact her on 8560 3918.

Phillip King is always seeking additional recruits to join the rota of Room Stewards, to help out twice per month, either mid-week but especially at Weekends. Contact him on the above number.



"Friends" 100 Club

Since its formation in 1999, the 100 Club has paid out prizes to a total value of £2,030, with an equal amount going via the "Friends" to benefit the National Trust at Osterley. The success of this venture is wholly due to the initiative of John Robertson, who proposed its establishment and masterminded its development to the point where a very large proportion of the "Friends" are now members.

The remaining draws this year will take place at the "Friends" Autumn Reception on October 17th, and at a Volunteers' Party in December. Hopefully, John will be conducting these draws, before handing over to Ron Piper for the New Year.

Renewal notices for those whose Subscriptions to the Club have expired are enclosed with this Newsletter. Please return cheques to John before the date of the draw.

"Friends" who are not yet members of the "100 Club" should send the Application form enclosed to John with their cheque for £12 per share. Remember, this is a painless way to support the Trust and have a little flutter at the same time! Our odds are better than the National Lottery!



Butterflies in the Park

Since June, I have been carrying out surveys of the butterflies present in the Park. So far this year I have recorded 14 of the 18 species seen last year. These include Meadow Brown, Large and Small Whites, Small Tortoiseshell, Pearl bordered Fritillary, Common and Holly Blues, Peacock, Painted Lady, Speckled Wood, Small Copper, Comma, and Red Admiral.

Late July and early August gave the greatest abundance, with counts of well over 100 individuals in half-an-hours survey.

The North east Meadow was particularly good for Meadow Browns. Speckled Woods, and Holly Blues frequented glades in the South West woods.

I missed the Orange Tips this year, which fly in May and June, and have yet to see the Purple Emperors which have been spotted in previous years. These are one of the largest British butterflies; they are extremely local, being confined to the larger oak woods of the southern half of England. They would have been on the wing in July and August.

I would be interested to hear if anyone else has seen these impressive butterflies, as it would be good to know if these are still present in the Park.

Julie Kerans



Rare Visitor to Osterley

Twitchers were out in force in the first week in September, when a hoopoe was sighted in the field between Osterley Lane and Windmill Lane. This large buff-coloured bird has a large distinctive crest, and its range is normally limited to the English Channel.

Hoopoe

