



The Friends of Osterley Park



A Supporters Group for the National Trust

NEWSLETTER 43

DECEMBER 2001

Chairman's Notes

Ian Conacher

It is now ten years since I took over from Sheila Chapman the post of Chairman of the "Friends". This must be the fortieth time that I have sat down to put together the Chairman's page - and much of the rest of the material for the Newsletter!

As always, I am again fighting against a deadline, trying to ensure that this edition is published before the Carol Concerts in the Stable-yard on 9th and 16th December, and scraping together reports on our activities and details of our future plans. Equally important, of course, is to bring you news of developments within the Trust and at the House and Park.

During the past 10 years, the "Friends" have grown in numbers, and our contribution to Osterley Park has been recognised not only at the Property, but also at the Trust's Regional Office at Hughenden Manor. I have had several kind letters from the Regional Director, Robin Mills, thanking the "Friends" for their efforts.

I first met Robin when he came to a Committee Meeting of the Osterley & Wyke Green Residents' Association, in the mid-80's, when there was a threat to the surroundings of the Park from the developers, Wates, who were proposing to build industrial and commercial properties in Windmill Lane and turn the fields around the Park into a golf course and football pitches. This proposal was fortunately defeated.

Two or three years later, Robin called a meeting of local people concerned about the future of Osterley Park to explain the changes which would follow the Trust taking over direct management of the Property from the V. & A. and the Royal Parks. Those attending were asked to indicate whether they were able to offer practical support; I was among those who put their names on the list.

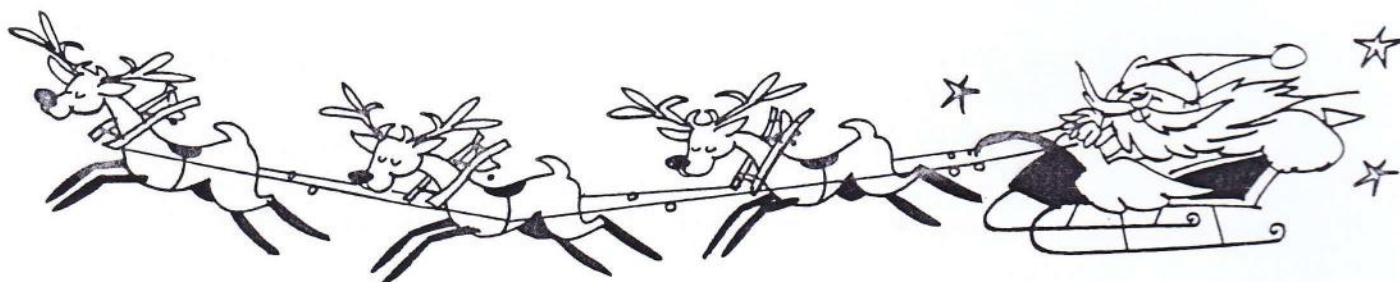
From this list, a number of us were called to meetings with Jenny Baker, the Regional Volunteers' Officer at that time. From this, the "Friends" constitution was prepared and a Committee formed. A "mailshot" resulted in the recruitment of our first Members,

It was with some sorrow that I learned recently that as part of the re-organisation of the management structure of the Trust, the map of the administrative Regions was to be re-drawn, and our present Thames and Chiltern Region would be merged with part of Southern region to form the new Thames & Solent Region. As a result of this

change, Robin will be moving to a challenging new post as Risk Management Director at Head Office.

We shall miss him, not only as the virtual founder of the "Friends", but also as a source of advice and encouragement, particularly on the few occasions, early in our existence, when there were problems with defining our place in the scheme of things. The "Friends" have always been something of an anomaly, being neither a "Local Association" nor a "Volunteers' Group". This situation was resolved by establishing that the "Friends" would report solely to and through the Property Manager, Barry Williams, with whom we have built up a good working relationship..

Robin will be taking up his new post on 1st March next year, and will carry with him our best wishes for success in his new location



News from The Trust

We learn with some regret that **Megan Doole**, the House Steward, is now on her way to Chartwell, Winston Churchill's former home in Kent, on a twelve-month secondment. She will be greatly missed, not only by the volunteer stewards next season, but also at the House during the coming winter of intensive activity in cleaning and conservation work.

Welcome to **Ron Pilcher**, who has joined the Gardening Staff, with special responsibility for the Pleasure Grounds. Ron will divide his time between Osterley and other London properties, such as Carlyle's House, where small gardens require only part-time attendance.

The Visitor's route upstairs in the House has been extended, to take in the rear passageway behind Mrs Child's Dressing room, and there will be more to see in this area. This is, of course, dependant on an adequate number of Room Stewards - see appeal on a later page!

During the winter months, specialists will be working on the decorations in the Eating Room and the Etruscan Room, Work in the Etruscan room is the first stage of a programme of works in the State Rooms, which will extend over some years.

A new Conservation Exhibition will be housed initially in the Garden Room, on the right when leaving the Etruscan Room. This will show the materials and techniques used in the construction of the House and 18th century furniture, and the methods adopted for conservation and restoration work.



A Taste of Christmas

Pre-Christmas lunches in the Stables Tea Room will be provided from 12 noon on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, until 21st December. Booking is essential - please ring Melanie on 020 8232 5057.

"Coffee Heaven" This is now the title of the event planned for Tuesday, 11th December, which will be conducted by an expert from Taylors of Harrogate - described to us as the "Indiana Jones of the Coffee World". The event runs from 10.30 am to 2.30 pm, and includes morning coffee, tastings of various coffees, and lunch. The cost is £20.00, and bookings should be made on 01494 -755572.

A **"Childrens Trail"** is offered at the Information point in the Stable Yard at weekends up until Christmas,. Children are asked to follow a trail of snowflakes to find the Christmas Fairy. Free - no booking required!

A large Christmas tree will be erected in the Stable Yard in early December, to set the scene for the Carol Singing.



100 CLUB.

IAN CONACHER

The third draw of the year was ably conducted by John Robertson at the "Friends" Reception on 17th October. Winners were:-

First Prize	£100.00	No 139	J. Talbot
Second	£60.00	No 21	E. Moores
Third	£40.00	No 145	A. Graham
Fourth	£25.00	No 154	M. Ashwell
Fifth	£15.00	No 59	D.H. Huffer

This was John's penultimate appearance. He will be making the final draw of the year - and of his period of office as organiser - at the Volunteer's End-of-Season Get Together on Saturday, December 8th.

The task of running the Club has been taken on by Ron Piper, whose notes for the New Year appear below. I would like to add to his remarks my own thanks to John for all the hard work he has done in making such a success of this venture, and to wish Ron every success in carrying on the good work.



100 Club

Ron Piper

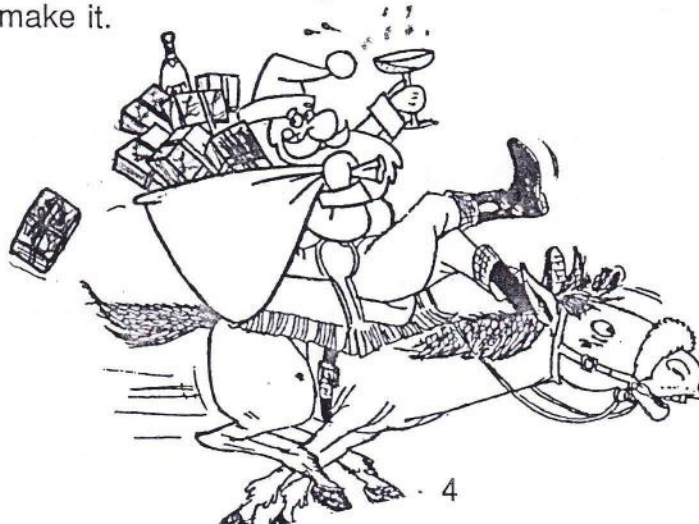
As you already know I am taking over the running of the 100 Club from 1st January 2002 and the first thing I would like to do is to pay tribute to John Robertson who has spent much of his spare time doing this for the last three years. It was his idea - he started from nothing and has built the Club up so well that when he handed over to me the members held a total of 165 shares. I only hope that I can build on his foundations.

For those of you who have share subscriptions due on 1st January 2002, an invitation to renew is enclosed with this newsletter. I hope that you will all continue as shareholders and that perhaps some may even wish to increase their holding. Those who have shares for which subscriptions are due on 1st April, 1st July or 1st October 2002 will receive an invitation to renew at the appropriate time.

The present membership gives the Club an income of over £1800 of which 50% is given as prizes with a top prize of £100 four times a year and the other 50% is held by the "Friends" to further their basic aims of giving financial support for the benefit of Osterley Park.

For those who are not members of the 100 Club and would like to join, please send a cheque made payable to Friends of Osterley for £12 for each share to me at 44 Killowen Avenue, Northolt, Middlesex UB5 4QT. Please give details of your name and address, telephone number and "Friends" membership number and enclose a stamped address return envelope so that I can send you your membership card, draw number(s) allocated and the 100 Club rules.

The first draw for 2002 will take place at the "Friends" winter lecture on Wednesday 20th March. Unfortunately I may not be able to attend that evening but I am pleased to say that John Robertson has agreed to come out of retirement and officiate for me if I cannot make it.





Winter Lectures 2002

Our usual venue for the last ten years, St Mary's Parish Hall, will still be available to us next winter. Demolition and rebuilding are not scheduled to commence until April, with completion hopefully in time for the 2003 season.

We have, therefore, engaged speakers to address us on Wednesdays, 6th and 20th February, and on the same dates in March. As usual, talks will begin at 8 pm, and be followed by coffee and biscuits.

On Wednesday, 6th February, we have a return visit from Doris Sherwood, who will be speaking on "Old London Bridge and Southwark Cathedral" Doris is a Blue Badge guide for the City of London, and has offered to conduct guided walks for the "Friends" during the coming Spring and Summer. We shall be taking a "straw poll" of the audience to judge the level of interest; if numbers are sufficient, plans will be announced in the March Newsletter.

On 20th February, we shall welcome Anna Chalcraft, who will speak on "Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill". As members will know, Walpole was a frequent visitor to Osterley at the time when Robert Adam was working there; some of his comments - not always favourable - are quoted in the guide to the House! Strawberry Hill was a "fun" house, the first example of the Gothic Revival which influenced much of later suburban development, and was also a very "green" house with much use of recycled materials.


Mike Watts will speak to us on Wednesday, 6th March, on "The National Trust and Nature Conservation". Before retirement, Mike was, as a Chartered Engineer, engaged on work for the Royal Air Force and the British Standards Institute. He is a Volunteer Lecturer for the Trust and other bodies, and also a Guide at the Chelsea Physic Garden.

Finally, on Wednesday 20th March, Andrea Cameron makes what we may now call her annual appearance in our programme, to speak on "Freeman of the City of London and Liveryman of the Stationers Company - a Personal View".

Tickets for each lecture are £3.00, or £10.00 for the series of 4. A booking form is included with this Newsletter, and tickets will also be available at the door.

These talks are open to the public, and will be advertised in the local Press. So bring along your friends and relations to swell the numbers - and hopefully join the "Friends"! The normal £5.00 subscription paid during the series will give membership through to 31st March 2003!

Finally, at the March talks, Members will be able to pay their 2002-3 subscription, which will be simpler than returning the Renewal Form to be published in the March Newsletter!



Are you ready for the Euro?

As most of you will know, the present currencies of most countries of the European Union will cease to be legal tender early next year. The National Trust is looking to members for donations of the odd coins and notes left in your hands after European travel. These are being collected at the House, and donations should be made before 15th January. For further details, ring Farah on 020 8232 5050.

2002 Opening.

It has been requested that all Trust Properties should open a month earlier in future. At Osterley, the House, Tea Room, and Shop will open at weekends, commencing Saturday 4th March. From 27th March onwards, opening times will be as usual - Wednesdays to Sundays and Bank Holidays, 1 pm - 4.30 pm.

The late spring Bank Holiday, normally falling on the last Monday in May, has been combined with the extra holiday for the Queen's Golden Jubilee, to give a two day holiday on 2nd and 3rd June. This will give 12 days of continuous opening for the House!

The Joys of Volunteering

Ian Conacher

Acting as a room steward at Osterley can be fun! Not only do you meet a number of interesting characters, both fellow volunteers and members of the public, but you pick up more and more fascinating facets of eighteenth century life and the details of the craftsmanship that went into the creation of the splendours of the House.

It is obvious that those of us who have stewarded at the Property since the Trust started operations in 1991 are now 10 years older. I know that my joints are creaking and I am not as supple as once I was!

Also, the number of rooms opened continues to increase - see news above. "Free Flow" of visitors through the basement has replaced the "Guided Tours" of this area, which means that additional stewards are needed for the Kitchen, Steward's Room, and Strong Room.

For this reason, more volunteers are desperately needed for the coming season. As little as two sessions a month, from 1 pm to 4.30 pm would be useful - particularly at weekends! They will need to have a couple of hours of training beforehand, preferably in early February, but no skills or academic qualifications are required! Any "Friends" - or friends and relations of "Friends" should contact Philip King on 020 8560 3918.

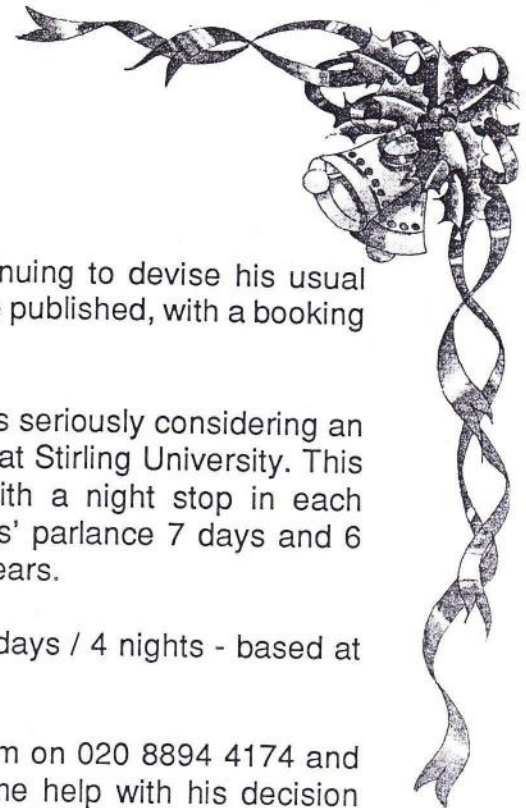
Summer Visits and Tours

Although no longer on the Committee, Jim Tickle is continuing to devise his usual varied programme of day excursions for 2002. Details will be published, with a booking form, in our next issue in early March.

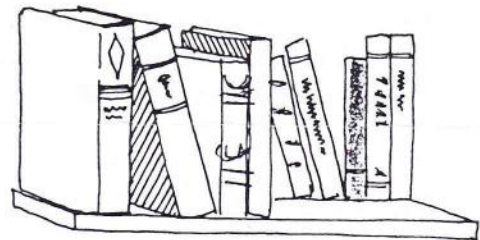
He is also looking at alternatives for the summer tour, and is seriously considering an ambitious plan for travelling to Scotland, with a tour based at Stirling University. This would involve a journey of about 450 miles, possibly with a night stop in each direction, with four nights at Stirling, giving in travel agents' parlance 7 days and 6 nights! The cost would obviously be greater than in past years.

Alternatives also under consideration are shorter tours - 5 days / 4 nights - based at either Cardiff, for South Wales, or Norwich, for Norfolk.

Members interested in these proposals may wish to ring Jim on 020 8894 4174 and advise him of their preferences, so that he may have some help with his decision making.. These preliminary expressions of interest would not involve any commitment; formal bookings would only be taken on the form, to be issued in March.



National Trust Book Sale, November 4th

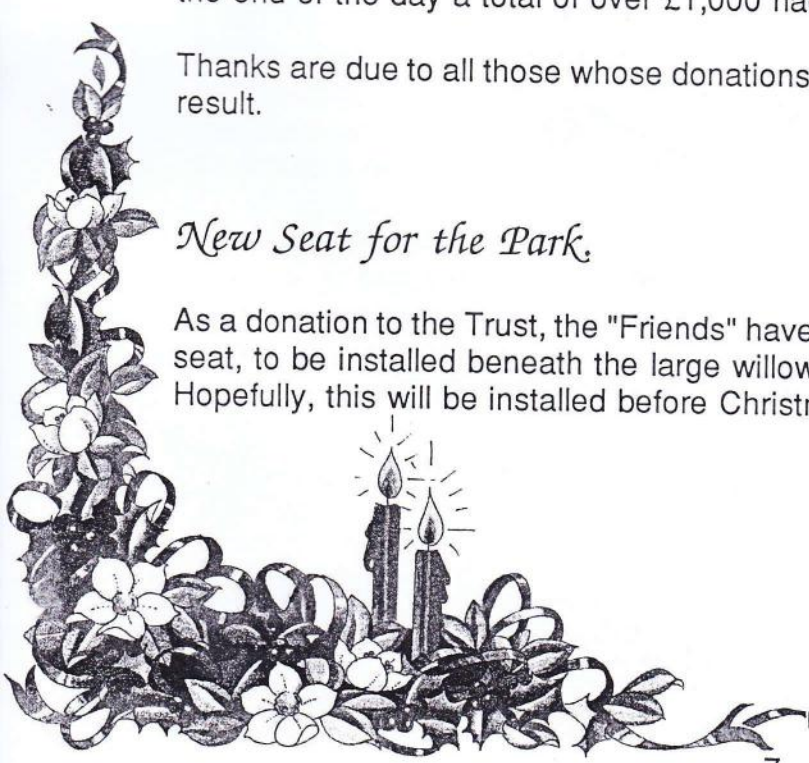


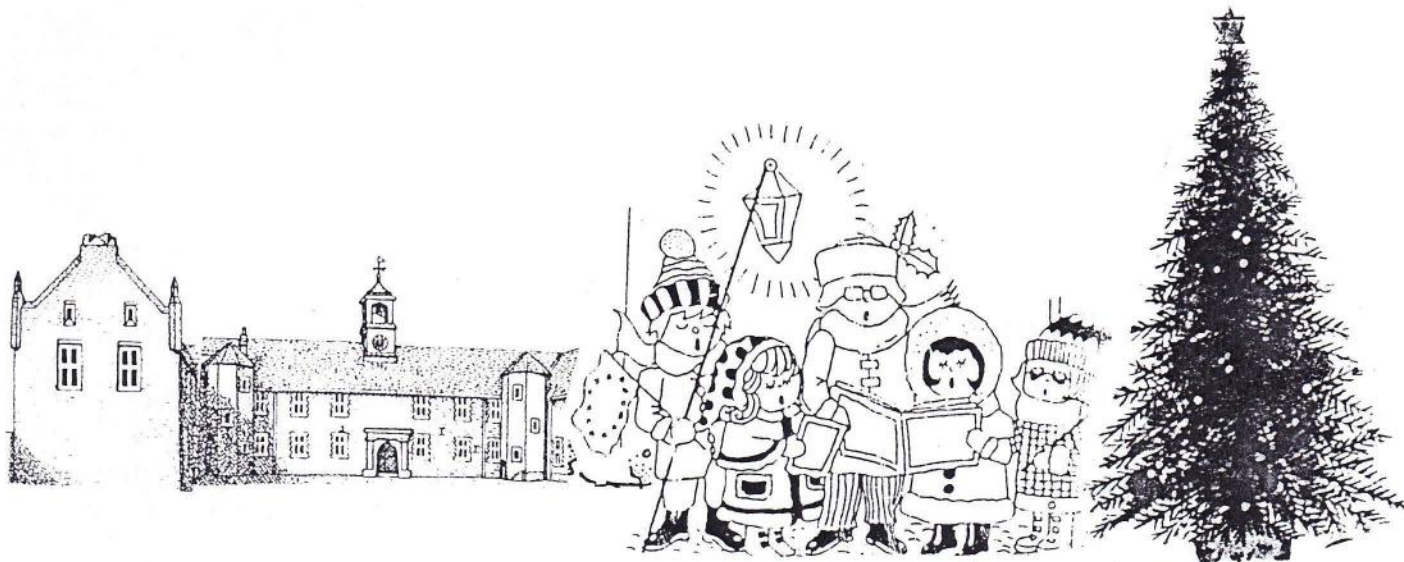
This was held in the Old Brewhouse, and was well supplied with donations of good quality second hand books. Attendance was better than had been expected, and by the end of the day a total of over £1,000 had been taken over the counter.

Thanks are due to all those whose donations assisted in achieving this very satisfying result.

New Seat for the Park.

As a donation to the Trust, the "Friends" have placed an order for a new circular metal seat, to be installed beneath the large willow tree at the corner of the Garden Lake. Hopefully, this will be installed before Christmas.





Carols in the Stable-Yard.

9th & 16th December

Once again, we have arranged for a local Choir to lead the singing of traditional Christmas Carols in the Stable-yard at Osterley on two Sundays before Christmas, This year, Howard Stephens will conduct the St Mary's Singers on both the 9th and 16th of December, from 2.30pm to 3.30pm. We shall miss Tony Underwood, who has in past years led singers from the West London Opera on one of the days; unfortunately, ill health has forced him to stand down this year. We are very grateful to Howard for volunteering to step into the breach and cover both days.

As usual, a collection will be taken during the afternoon for the "Friends" Maintenance Fund for the Battery Electric self-drive cars which are available for the use of less-mobile visitors to the Park during the Summer months.

The Trust's Tea Room and Shop will be open on both days, from 12 noon to 4 pm. The Courtesy Bus will run on both days between the Car Park and Stable-yard.

Many of the books remaining unsold were passed to the 1st Osterley Scout Group, for sale at their Annual Bazaar on the following Saturday - which was again a very profitable event!



*The Chairman and Committee send
Good Wishes to All Members for a
Joyful Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.*

