

 **The Friends of Osterley Park**  
*A Supporters Group for the National Trust*

# NEWSLETTER

Issue 58 September 2015

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Unveiling the  
New Trafalgar Dispatch

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## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

### **"FRIENDS" AUTUMN RECEPTION**

**BREWHOUSE, 7 pm, WEDNESDAY 26<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER.**

A chance to meet new Property Manager, Sian Harrington.

### **LONDON WALKS WITH DORIS SHERWOOD.**

**Tuesday, October 4<sup>th</sup>. Church of St Bartholomew the Great & St Bartholomew's Hospital – Barbican Station, 11 am.**

**Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> October- British Museum – Russell Square Station, 11 am.**

**Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> December - Draper's Hall - Meet on steps of Royal Exchange, Bank Station, 10.45 am.**  
*Advance booking essential.*

Further details and Booking arrangements see Page 6.

### **CHRISTMAS CAROLS IN THE STABLEYARD**

**Sundays, 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2.30 – 3.30 pm.**  
Details of Choirs to be advised

### **WINTER LECTURES 2006**

**Full booked for 8<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> February and same dates in March**  
Subjects and Speakers to be advised.

## **CHAIRMAN'S NOTES**

**IAN CONACHER.**

This summer has been a mixture of highs and lows, both in the weather and in the fortunes of Osterley. We have seen wide variations in temperature, with periods of exceptional heat, and periods of near drought followed by torrential rainstorms.

High spots of the season have been a number of well-attended events. These included "Osterley Day", on 10<sup>th</sup> July, when the park was filled with visitors viewing the paintings displayed on the railings and the "Friends" set up their stalls in the Stableyard.

The Glenn Miller Band made a welcome return on 6<sup>th</sup> August, and as usual attracted a large crowd, bringing their picnics to enjoy on the lawn before the concert.

Staff numbers at Osterley have suffered further losses, and those remaining are working under considerable pressure. However, with the imminent arrival of a new Property Manager to replace Barry Williams, things will surely improve!

Thankfully, the main attractions of the Park are there for all to see- the lakes, the magnificent trees, and of course the House. There are moments when one's attention is caught by a minor event in the Park, such as when a curmudgeon swimming on the lake attacked and drove off a swan standing on a floating nesting platform. Then one joins with the poet W.H. Davies in thinking

"A poor life this if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare!"

## STAFF NEWS FROM THE PROPERTY.

Some members will already know that **SIAN HARRINGTON** has been appointed Property Manager, and will be taking up the post early next month. Sian comes from Sutton House, in Hackney, where she was Property Manager, working in an urban environment. No doubt she will encounter some similar problems in suburban Osterley.

**FARAH QURESHI**, who has been for some years Property Secretary at Osterley, left at the beginning of September to commence training as a secondary school Art Teacher at Roehampton. Her cheerful face will be greatly missed.

**JENNY BLAY**, Community Education Officer at Osterley, left in early July to take another post. She was very active in work with groups from local schools and with the Youth Theatre.

We were glad to see **MELANIE COBLEY** back at work as Shop Manageress after a lengthy period of sick leave.

Congratulations to **MELANIE PIERCE**, Catering Manageress at Osterley who, as reported in our last issue, won the Regional heat in the Trust's Annual Cookery Competition. She came second in the National finals held in Plymouth.

Congratulations also to Alan Rideout who completed a London to Brighton sponsored cycle ride for the British Heart Foundation.

**MARIA STREETER**, wife of George, both of whom had been on the staff at Osterley for many years, died in July after a long and painful illness. Our sincere condolences go to George and his family.

## TRIPS AND TOURS.

Jim Tickle's day trip programme has in general been very popular, and most of the outings were fully booked. The Lancashire tour was also well supported. In spite of empty seats on some day trips, plus the rising cost of fuel, careful budgeting ensured that a small surplus was carried over into the "Friends" funds.

He is now making plans for 2006, and is excited to find that Exeter University have a satellite campus in Cornwall. He is now hoping that it will be possible to use it as a base for next Summer's tour – details hopefully in our next issue.

## IN MEMORIAM – EILEEN MOORES.

After several months of distressing illness borne with her typical stoicism, **Eileen Moores**, a long-standing Friend of Osterley, died recently at the age of 84. Eileen particularly enjoyed the Friends' Excursions, hardly missing a single day trip or Summer holiday since the outings first began in 1993. Eileen had already paid for the last three excursions of this season; her daughter has agreed that this money, together with contributions made by fellow Members on the September visit to Grey's Court, should be used to plant a tree at Osterley. An entry will be made in the Book of Memory, held in Mrs Buncer's Room in the House. We hope that Eileen's daughter, Catherine, will be able to attend the planting ceremony. For further details, please contact Jim Tickle on 020 8894 4174

## LONDON WALKS WITH DORIS SHERWOOD.

Two walks in October were announced in our last issue. In spite of the recent attacks on the Underground system, these will go ahead as planned - providing sufficient members are willing to take part! However, it is now desirable for those intending to join the party to advise Ann Proffitt on 020 8758 0281 in advance so that she and Doris can decide whether the walk is viable! Please note that Ann's telephone number was incorrectly given in the last issue!

The first of the October walks is on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup>, meeting at Barbican Station at 11 am, to visit the Church of St Bartholomew the Great and also St Bartholomew's Hospital - admission charge £3.00 plus the £3.00 walk fee.

The second is on Tuesday, October 18<sup>th</sup>, visiting the British Museum, meeting at Russell Square Underground Station, Piccadilly Line, at 11 am - walk fee £3.00.

On Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> December, Doris has planned a visit to the Hall of the Draper's Company, one of the London Livery Companies. For security reasons, the Draper's Company require advance booking. The entrance fee is £3.00, plus the "Friends" fee of £3.00 - £9.00 in total. Please ring Ann Proffitt with your booking by Thursday, December 1<sup>st</sup>.

## "FRIENDS" AUTUMN RECEPTION, WEDNESDAY, 26<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 7 FOR 7.30 PM.

This will again be held in the Old Brewhouse; members will be able to drive up and park in the Stableyard. We have asked the new Property Manager, Sian Harrington, to be our Principal Guest at this occasion.

Wine will be served from 7 pm; the second "100 Club" draw of the 2005/6 season will be held towards the end of the evening, which will finish at about 9 pm.

## "FRIENDS" 100 CLUB.

The 100 Club is a means of combining a modest flutter with fund-raising for the Trust. The Annual Subscription is £12.00, half of which is used by the "Friends" for the benefit of the Trust, while the other half goes into a "Prize Fund" which is distributed to Members in four quarterly draws, each with a first prize of £100.00. In October, with over 140 members, prizes will total over £200.00!

Any member of the "Friends" wishing to join during the year will subscribe £3.00 for each remaining draw in the season. Thus, anyone wishing to join before October 26<sup>th</sup> should send a cheque for £9.00 to the Organiser, Ron Piper, at 44, Killowen Avenue, Northolt, UB5 4QT.

## WINTER LECTURES 2006

St Mary's Parish Hall, next to the church in Osterley Road, has again been booked for our series of talks on alternate Wednesdays, 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of February and the same dates in March.

We are currently booking speakers for these talks; details and a booking form will be included in our next issue. Talks will begin at 8 pm, and coffee and biscuits will be available after the talks.

## THE NEW TRAFALGAR DESPATCH AT OSTERLEY.

The reproduction post-chaise, carrying an actor representing Lieutenant Lapenotiere passed through Hounslow and called at Osterley Park on September 6<sup>th</sup>, in a re-enactment of the journey made in 1805 carrying news of the victory at Trafalgar and the death of Nelson.

Our cover picture shows the Mayor of Hounslow and the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of London flanking a copy of the original "Despatch". Our centre spread shows the arrival of the post-chaise at the House, with a piped welcome from local sea cadets.



## REPAIRS AND REDECORATION.

Most of the scaffolding around the Stable Block clock tower has now been removed, but, as forecast in our last issue, scaffolding has now been erected around the portico on the east front, which will remain in place until November. This means that access to the House for staff and visitors will be by the "Family Entrance" on the north wall.

A programme of redecoration of doors in the Stable yard has been commenced; much of the work is being done by volunteer and "Friends" Hon. Treasurer, Paul Lucas.

The "Friends" are continuing to pay for repairs to metal benches which have been damaged by vandals in the Park.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES.

As always, there are ongoing vacancies for new blood to maintain the numbers of volunteer Room Stewards needed to support the Trust. After 15 years, the original team has been reduced by natural wastage, and there have been occasions this summer when it has not been possible to open some rooms – or even whole floors – to the public. Academic qualifications are not required; after a short training session, recruits will "learn on the job" from more experienced volunteers.

Volunteer Gardeners are also required, both in the Park and to join the team working on Monday mornings in the walled garden to provide cut flowers for decoration of the rooms in the House. This is a challenging task, as flowers are needed from March to October!

A further team, working on Tuesdays, cut and arrange flowers in the rooms. There are frequent favourable comments from visitors on these

"Mobility Volunteers" are needed to make available the vehicles which have been provided for the benefit of the less-mobile visitor. Drivers are needed for the Shuttle Bus, or "buggy", which plies between the car park and the stable yard on afternoons when the House is open. The self-drive electric cars, or "Baticars" are available to visitors with mobility problems on summer afternoons.

## AUTUMN EVENTS AT OSTERLEY.

We enclose a copy of the Trust's leaflet giving full details of all the activities at the Property between now and the end of the year.

You will see from this that the House will be open as usual from Wednesdays to Sundays until 30<sup>th</sup> October, from 1 to 4.30 pm.

**Special Christmas opening** – with the House decorated in festive style and preparations for a Ball in progress – Saturdays & Sundays from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> December, 12.30 to 3.30 pm.

**Osterley Remembers** – an exhibition of life in the 1940s – will run in the Jersey Galleries from 19<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> October, Wednesdays to Sundays, 1.30 to 4.30 pm.

**The Tea Room and Shop** will be open from 12 noon to 4 pm, Wednesdays to Sundays, from 2<sup>nd</sup> November to 18<sup>th</sup> December.

## CAROLS IN THE STABLEYARD.

The trust are arranging for local choirs to sing Christmas Carols in the Stableyard, from 2.30 to 4.30 on Sundays 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> December.

**WARTIME MEMORIES OF OSTERLEY. EUNICE SMITH**

*( Eunice Smith, nee Reed, worked as a Land Girl at Osterley in the latter years of the war, and has kindly given us these notes. We would be glad to hear from any other Member who has a similar story to tell!)*

I thought I would put pen to paper before my memory goes completely, and while there are still some people around who will remember the names I mention.

During the War I served in the Women's Land Army. On the death of my brother in 1944, I was given a "compassionate posting" to enable me to live at home and look after my father - we lived in Penwarris Avenue. At that time Osterley Park was allocated 3 Land Girls, and I was fortunate enough to become one of them.

I was employed by Mr Little, Lord Jersey's Agent (or Estate Manager). I worked under Mr Batten, the foreman, who lived in Bothy Cottage, most recently occupied by Linda and Kevin Mills.

We worked in pairs, and my partner was Bill Pottifer, who lived in the bungalow which is now the farm shop. Mr Perkins was the Gamekeeper, who rode around on a bike with a gun and a dog. He and Mrs Perkins lived in the Lodge at the Thornbury Road entrance. We also worked with Italian Prisoners-of-War, who wore brown uniforms.

The other Land Girls were billeted with Lily, who lived in the "Bothy" over the top of the stables, which was entered by the stone staircase to the right of the present Tea Room; we all had breakfast and other meals there. Lily used to call us her "Land Gals", and lived there until a few years ago, when she moved into sheltered accommodation in Hounslow.

We did a variety of jobs on the Estate. In the walled garden we grew vegetables for the Earl of Jersey, including asparagus and artichokes.

There were greenhouses for tomatoes, and peaches, nectarines and figs growing around the walls. The Earl of Jersey, with Virginia Cherril would collect these each weekend for the house; any balance was sold to local people.

The other walled garden beyond the temple we called "Dartmoor", and in there grew soft fruits of all kinds, with beautiful plum trees and especially black gages.

Although we normally worked outside in all weathers, if it was really bad we washed flower-pots in the potting shed, which I believe is still in the walled garden. We used to drive a small open lorry, which we called "Aggie", which had to be started with a starting handle (this caused a few dislocated thumbs until we learnt better!) In this we collected leaf mould from the "Indian Clump" beyond the old car park, and manure from the cow and pig sheds. We also took all the rubbish to the dump - a massive hole opposite the main lake; this was eventually filled in, and became a bird sanctuary. It is now on the path from the new car park to the east meadow.

We learned how to wield an axe and use a two-handled saw to fell some large trees. We cleared out the lily ponds on the lawn in front of the House, cut all hedges by hand - and there were many of them! We dug over the walled garden by hand, and also Mr Little's garden in Jersey Road, backing on to the Park.

The whole of the field by the "Hole in the Wall" was given over to mangel worts; corn grown on the Estate was threshed in February when hired equipment was available.

A herd of black cattle were kept on the Great Meadow, behind the House; there were also a pair of cows kept in a field near the Lodge on Osterley Lane, to provide milk for the House. One of my tasks was to milk these by hand - no machines in those days! As a result, I strained my back, and was invalided out of the Land Army.

## SARAH SOPHIA AND OSTERLEY IN THE

### NAPOLEONIC WARS

MARGARET FRIDAY

The new nineteenth century brought changes to Osterley. On 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 1804 Sarah Sophia married George Villiers, Viscount Grandison in Berkeley Square. The date was specially chosen for it had been her mother, Sarah Ann's wedding day in 1782 when she eloped with John Fane, the 10<sup>th</sup> Earl of Westmoreland to Gretna Green.

In 1795, after his wife's death, John Fane had taken his young family to live in the Child town house at 38 Berkeley Square. George and Sarah's was the only marriage to take place in the elegant 60 room town house decorated by Robert Adam. Following her marriage Berkeley Square became the centre of Sarah's lavish social life in London. In 1805, the same year as the Battle of Trafalgar, George Villiers became the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Jersey and Sarah his Countess had many social obligations to fulfil. She was on the board of Almacks, the most prestigious club in London. It was said to be more difficult to get into Almacks than to enter Heaven - and Sarah had a casting vote!

On 4<sup>th</sup> March 1806 Sarah celebrated her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and inherited her grandfather Robert Child's enormous fortune including Child's Bank, 38 Berkeley Square, Osterley Park House and Upton Park in Warwickshire. The terms of Robert Child's will decreed that the fortune would remain in Sarah Sophia's hands throughout her lifetime overseen by the trustees. George Villiers then changed his name to Child - Villiers in recognition of the huge fortune that he and Sarah had just acquired.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Earl was not fond of Osterley. He preferred the Jersey family country seat at Middleton in Oxfordshire. With the new wealth he pulled down the old house at Middleton and built a new villa designed by Thomas Candy. It was here that he kept his fine racehorses. Three were Derby winners and the exquisite racing trophies in the strongroom

at Osterley attest to this. We also find indications of Sarah Sophia's tastes here as she had much of the Child and Jersey old family silver re-gilded. Her travelling dressing table set, also known as the Jersey Toilet Service was made in the 1720's but Sarah had it re-gilded and the plainer pieces decorated with her cipher. She also commissioned the making of an elaborate rococo mirror to complement the set. A special case was made so that the dressing table set could travel with her to country house weekends. Today this beautiful, yet practical set, along with its travelling case, may be seen in the Osterley strongroom.

Sarah Sophia was good friends with the Duke of Wellington and he was godfather to her daughter Clementina. He presented her with a collection of mementoes from the Napoleonic wars and she displayed these in the Long Gallery at Osterley. The Napoleon Curios included portrait miniatures gathered by Wellington at the Battle of Mont St. Jean, ornate bees used to decorate Napoleon's coach, a huge bust of Napoleon, a circular table with an engraving of the Shield of Achilles commemorating Wellington's victory at Waterloo. Sarah herself purchased Thomas Lawrence's unfinished portrait of the Duke of Wellington, and added it to her collection of memorabilia in the Long Gallery.

This look at the life of Robert Child's heir, Sarah Sophia reveals her to be a romantic young lady, choosing her mother's wedding date 23<sup>rd</sup> May, as her own, changing the Child Bank accounting year to coincide with her birthday on 4<sup>th</sup> March and restoring the beautiful family silver now in the Osterley strongroom. Sarah continued the traditions of those other important Sarah's, her mother and grandmother with a love of the arts and entertaining and a high spirited nature which contributed to her honorary title "Queen Sarah".