 **The Friends of Osterley Park**  
*A Supporter's Group for the National Trust*

# **NEWSLETTER**

Issue 61 June 2006

*Useful Contacts*

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Detail, Library  
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## THE DATE FOR YOUR DIARY!

### OSTERLEY DAY, 9<sup>TH</sup> JULY.

ON THIS DAY, ARTISTS HANG THEIR WORKS ON THE PARK RAILINGS, DRAWING A LARGE CROWD TO VIEW AND PURCHASE

ON THIS DAY, THE "FRIENDS" SET UP THEIR FUND-RAISING STALLS. WE NEED GENEROUS DONATIONS FROM MEMBERS FOR THESE.

- THE BRIC-A-BRAC STALL sells glass, fine china, ornaments, costume jewellery, etc
- THE TOMBOLA STALL gives a prize every time, and needs donations of items large and small - unwanted gifts, cuddly toys, cans of soft drinks, etc.
- THE BOOK STALL sells good clean hard and soft-backed books, tapes, CD's, videos, etc.

Offers to Audrey and Ian Conacher on (020) 8560 8523 by 30<sup>th</sup> June. Ideally we would prefer delivery to our home in Isleworth or to the Volunteers' Tea Room at the House. Where essential, collection can be arranged.

**COME ON THE DAY - TO HELP OR TO BUY!**

## HELP WANTED!

IAN CONACHER.

There are a number of crises facing the "Friends" at this time. First and most urgent is the need for support on "Osterley Day". This has for many years been our major fund-raising event, contributing several hundred pounds annually to our funds, dedicated to purchases for the National Trust at Osterley.

The Notice opposite gives details of donations wanted for the stalls, but we need additional members to help in staffing the stalls. For various reasons, some of our regular helpers will not be available this year, so the need is urgent. Experience not required - but if you have ever helped on a Scout, Guide, P.T.A. or other stall you would be doubly welcome on the team!

Secondly, we have a Membership problem. As I write in early June, about 25% of Members have not yet renewed their subscriptions, and the number of contributors to the "100 Club" is also down. At the Annual General Meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, it was decided to postpone the first Draw of the 2006/7 season; this will now be held on Osterley Day. A reminder notice is included with this newsletter for those who have not yet renewed their subscriptions or their membership of the "100 Club".

Thirdly, we have a crisis situation on the "Friends" Committee. Our Hon. Treasurer, Paul Lucas, tells us that for family reasons he will be out of the U.K. for a large part of each year, and will therefore be unable to provide the continuity needed for this post. A replacement is therefore required, preferably with the computer skill which Paul has brought to the job - although this is not essential!

Next year, I will be celebrating a landmark birthday and feel it is time to start reducing my work load. There has so far been no

response to my appeal in the last issue for assistance with the putting together of the Newsletter – someone more computer literate than myself, and with more time to spare.

I also would be glad to have a member take on the role of "Speaker Secretary", to take over the organisation of our "Winter Lectures", to book the Hall, find suitable speakers, and set up the equipment for the evening.

Without some help in these areas, I shall have seriously to consider whether I can continue adequately to perform as Chairman.

#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 3<sup>RD</sup> MAY 2006.

This was not so well attended as in past years, possibly because of the earlier date. The Officers and Committee were all re-elected unopposed. Minutes will be circulated in due course, but I must at this time again thank the Committee for their support during the year, and also thank Alan Rideout for his talk on St George's Chapel, Windsor, where he has served for many years as a Volunteer.

#### SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER.

Members who have not yet paid their Subscription will find a reminder form enclosed with this Newsletter. We would like to receive all outstanding subscriptions by the end of this month.

Those of you who were also members of the "100 Club" up to 31st March may use one cheque to pay the Club Subscription on the same form. This will cover your entry to the first draw of the 2006/7 season, to be held in the Park on Osterley Day, 9<sup>th</sup> July.

#### 100 CLUB DRAW, 22<sup>ND</sup> March

This draw was held at the last of our Winter Lectures in St Mary's Parish Hall. Winners were:-

Mrs M. Groombridge	No. 143	£100.00
Mr P. Howard	No. 139	£60.00
Mr P.B. Ratcliffe	No. 63	£30.00
Mrs S. Underwood	No. 2	£20.00
Mr R.L. Sleight	No. 65	£11.00

Total income during the year from 143 members was £1,662, with half going to the Prize fund and the balance of £831 available for purchases for the National Trust.

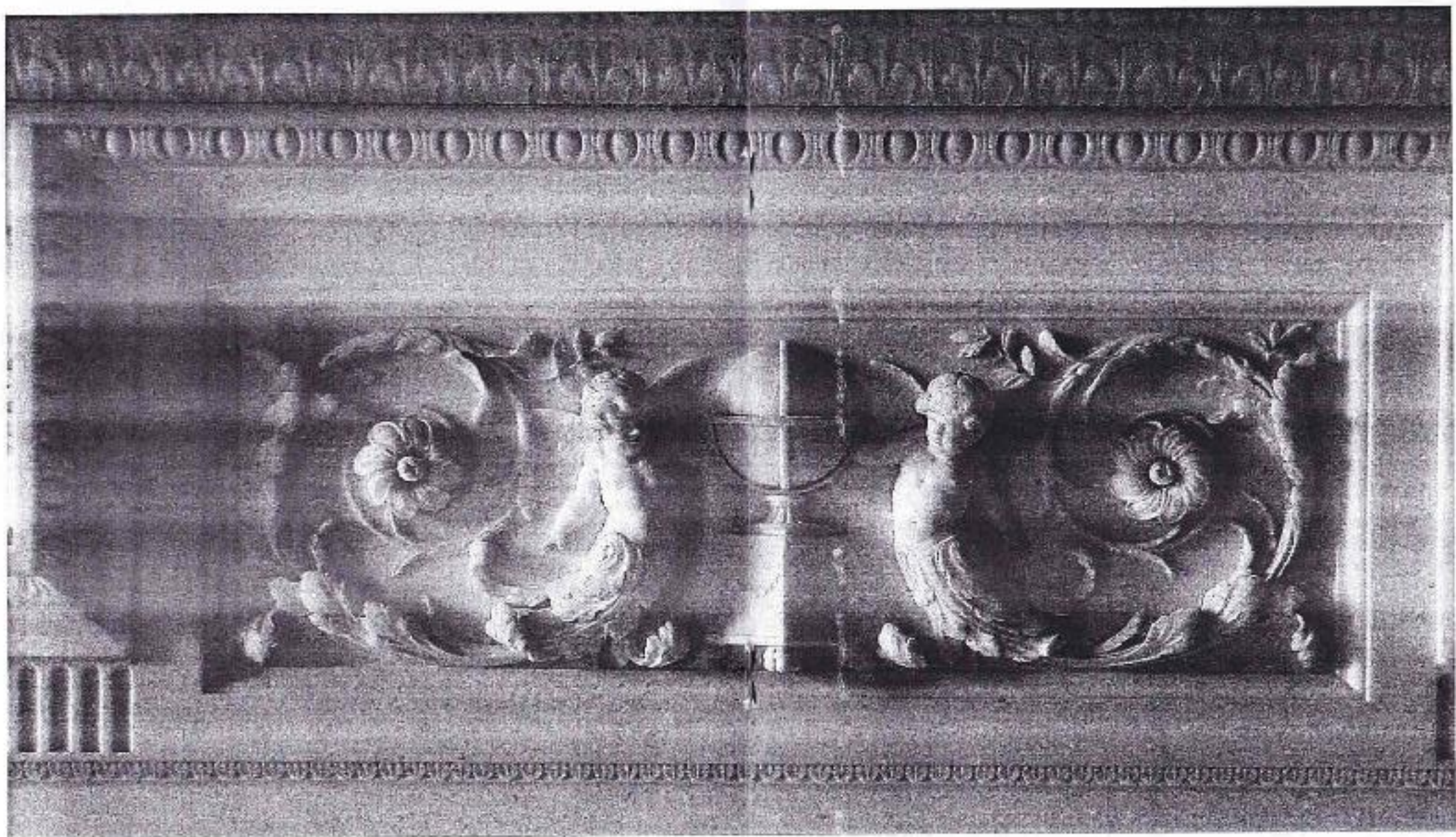
New Members are always welcome, and may purchase one or more shares at £12.00 each for the four draws each year. Cheques should be sent to Ron Piper, 44, Killowen Avenue, Northolt, Middlesex, UB5 4QT, to arrive in time for the first draw of the new season in the Park on Osterley Day, July 9<sup>th</sup>.

Remember – our odds are better than the National Lottery!

#### OUR PICTURES THIS ISSUE.

Our cover picture is a detail of the plaster picture frame in the library, featuring the face of Minerva, and the centre spread is a detail of the Adam Mantelpiece in the Library, with the Orrery. These which form the subjects of Margaret Friday's article in this issue.







## NEWS FROM THE TRUST.

Breaking news is that Philip King, Custodian of the House, will be taking up a new appointment as Assistant Property Manager for the Trust at Coletton Fishacre, near Brixham in Devon. Philip has been at Osterley for some years, and will be remembered for his trombone playing and for his spirited performances as the dragon in the Osterley Mummers Christmas play.

There are a number of new faces at Osterley. Yussif Muslim has been appointed as House and Function Steward, filling the gap left by Gary Eustone's move to Lyme Park in Cheshire. Caroline Sketchley has been appointed as Property Assistant, replacing Farah who left in September to start a teacher training course, and there are two new Car Park attendants, Neil Henken and Tony Mann.

Many members will already be aware of the Trust's decision to make facilities available at certain properties, for Corporate Hospitality and "Fine Dining". Osterley is one of the properties selected for such events – truly a case of "What goes around comes around", as the House was used by Robert Child the banker for entertaining clients in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and more recently by the V & A when they were managing the property!

Additionally, it is hoped to erect a semi-permanent Marquee for events at the south end of the lawn behind the House (where it will largely be screened by trees). This will hopefully make it unnecessary to have tents on the front lawn for weddings!

Developments of this kind are becoming more common in many areas of what must now be called "the Heritage Industry". Even Royal Palaces such as Hampton Court, Kensington, and Kew are having to raise funds in this way!

## NEWS OF MEMBERS.

In our last issue we omitted to record the death, after a long period of illness, of Tony Underwood. Tony was well known in the community, having been for many years organist at St Paul's Church, Brentford, and conductor of the West London Opera Group. In the 1990's, he shared with Howard Stephens the task of conducting "Carols in the Stableyard" each Christmas. Our condolences go to his wife, Sheila.

We have also to record the passing of Doris Coleman, of Osterley Crescent, one of our founder members.

On a brighter note, we send our good wishes to Olive Marke, a founder member of the "Friends" Steering Committee set up by the Trust in 1990. Olive served two terms as "Chair" (sic) of the Ealing National Trust Association, and was a tower of strength in our early days. Olive has moved to Bath to be near her family – but I would not be surprised to hear that she is again active in Trust affairs in her new location!

NEWS FROM THE PARK. After a wet May, when the water level in the garden lake rose almost to the overflow, the recent hot dry weather is causing the level to fall once more. However, there are plenty of waterfowl on the lake, and the resident pair of swans have produced seven cygnets. As well as the herons, there are occasional fishing forays by single cormorants and terns. Missing, however, are the Great Crested Grebe; I have not seen any on either lake for some months.

SPARE SEATS ON DAYTRIPS! Five seats are available on the trip to Charlecote & Stratford on 14<sup>th</sup> July and 4 on the trip to Moseley Old Hall on 16<sup>th</sup> August. Contact Jim Tickle on (020) 8894 4174 for details.



**ENLIGHTENED LIVING AT OSTERLEY - NATURAL  
PHILOSOPHY, THE ARTS  
AND THE ORRERY**

**MARGARET FRIDAY**

The Orrery supported by arabesque boys features as part of the decoration in the marble fireplaces in the Library - but what is an orrery and why is it so called?

An Orrery is a model of our solar system in which the planets are moved by clockwork to demonstrate their movement around the sun. There is a large example on display in the Enlightenment Gallery at the British Museum. It was invented in about 1710 by George Graham. John Rowley made one for Charles Boyle, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Orrery and named it in his honour rather than for the inventor. Many people have suspected that the name was a derivation from the orbits which the instrument displays so clearly. The Orrery was described as "one of the literary ornaments of the reign of Queen Anne"

In the age of Enlightenment the Orrery became a popular amusement and a progressive teaching device for it helped man to understand his world. There are many references to the Child family interest in eighteenth century natural philosophy (now called science) and the arts in the library.

Above the marble fireplace showing the Orrery is the face of Minerva, goddess of Wisdom, forming part of Robert Adam's plaster picture frame for Antonio Zucchi's painting of Sappho writing her verses. Apart from Minerva herself the library depicts a number of important women. Sappho is flanked by a Muse presenting Ovid with a pen made from a feather from Cupid's wing. Its companion is Virgil reading to Roman emperor Augustus and his wife Octavia, an important Roman woman

Apart from Minerva herself the Library is filled with paintings of powerful women. Above the entrance door is Britannia rewarding the arts and sciences, flanking this is Minerva and Apollo and the muses representing the arts and poetry. On the right Plato with his disciples. Next to the fireplace, Aspasia discusses politics with Socrates and Pericles. Its pendant shows Catullus writing an epitaph on his mistress' bird - a clear reference to Mrs. Child's aviary and love of birds. Over the fireplace Anacreon honours the three graces. On the window wall Pythagoras is shown freeing birds and animals and finally Aristippus discovers mathematical marks on the beach where he and his companions have been shipwrecked revealing that the island is inhabited thus depicting observation aiding in the understanding of the world.

Interestingly some writers, including Doreen Varwood in her book Robert Adam published in 1970, attribute the library paintings at Osterley to Angelica Kauffman rather than Antonio Zucchi. Angelica was another example of an important woman and a talented artist. Zucchi was courting Angelica whilst working at Osterley and is said to have used her work as his inspiration. They married in 1781 and returned to Italy. Her influence may be seen here regardless of who actually did the paintings in the library. The inlaid panels by Christopher Fuhrlong on the commodes in Drawing Room showing "Sacred and profane love" are based on her paintings.

The Grisaille portrait of Sir Isaac Newton in the Entrance Hall draws attention to the pursuance of enlightened philosophy by the Child family. The Childs displayed their delight in the arts and sciences by decorating their house using the latest ideas, creating a fine example of enlightened living, with Robert Adam and Angelica Kauffman portraying Minerva, Goddess of Wisdom. Sir Isaac Newton and that instrument of the enlightenment and literary ornament, the Orrery