

Issue 63 December 2006

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

NEWSLETTER

Useful Contacts

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John Jarrold
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Gardens Lapstry detail
Mrs. Gwyn's gardening hat
Osterley Park House
near 1775

Photo and cover design
Jenni Stacey

Designed by
Alprint & Design
021 499 9589



Dates for your Diary.

WINTER LECTURES 2007.

St Mary's Parish Hall, Osterley Road.

Alternate Thursdays at 8 pm.

15 th February	Royden Stock	"The Gothic Splendour of St Pancras Station Hotel"
1 st March	James Taylor	"Trade with China"
15 th March.	Audie Savage	"Hughenden and Disraeli"
29 th March	Michael Watts	"Plant Medicines from your Doctor"

Full details on Page 10. Tickets £4.00 or £12.00 for the four, available at the door or in advance from Mrs Joan Mound, 59, Whitby Road, Ruislip, HA4 9DU.

MONDAY, 26th APRIL - COACH TRIP

Oxburgh Hall & Ely - see booking form enclosed

MONDAY, 3rd - SATURDAY 8th SEPTEMBER

SIX-DAY COACH TOUR - SOUTH WALES

See pages 14 & 15, and booking form enclosed.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Ian Conacher

2006 has been a challenging year for the "Friends" and for me personally. We have worked harmoniously with our new Property Manager, Sian Harrington, while she settled into her new surroundings; there have been a number of other changes in Trust personnel, notably the departure of Philip King, the Custodian of the House, who moved in August to a rural location in Devon.

Other recent arrivals who have been settling in during 2006 are Chief Warden Terry Buttle, Assistant Warden Jamie Marsh, and the new Garden and Park Manager Andy Eddy. Andy is heavily involved in implementing the changes to the western sector of the woodlands and gardens, announced in our last issue. We look forward to seeing the results of his efforts in the spring.

Caroline Sketchley joined the team in the summer, as Property Assistant, and the new Custodian, Louise Ayres, arrived at the end of the season. Louise started with the Trust as a volunteer Room Steward at Dunham Massey, and then came to the London area, working as Assistant House Steward at Ham House. From there, she went to the Treasurer's House at York and then to Blickling Hall, Norfolk, as House Manager. She came back to London in April 2005 as Custodian at Sutton House. We welcome them all and look forward to working with them in 2007 and beyond.

I wish that I could report a similar influx of new arrivals ready to take part in the running of the "Friends". My appeals in recent issues have not brought any response, and I am still struggling to carry out the duties of Chairman and "Lord High Everything Else" - Acting Treasurer, Newsletter Editor, and Speaker Secretary. Brief "Role Descriptions" for the last three posts are included in this issue; I hope that there will be some response, as otherwise, with my increasing age, and with other pressures on my time, including my wife's health problems, I shall be forced to tender my resignation as Chairman in May at the A. G. M. You have been warned!

NEWS OF MEMBERS.

Ian Conacher

We are sorry to have to report the death of JEAN GRIEVE. My wife, Audrey, met her over 50 years ago, when she and her husband Sidney owned a hairdressing salon in Heston. We later met them as supporters of the 1st Osterley Scouts, where their son was a junior leader when our son was a cub. Her colleague, volunteer gardener Lesley Orton writes:-

"Jean was a long-term resident of Heston and a founder member of the volunteer flower arranging team at Osterley Park House. For fifteen years she was the talented leader of the group of arrangers, and also undertook many of the special displays for events in the House.

Her capacity for friendship and hospitality was well known and always appreciated. Many of us have been guests at her home, where we were made extremely welcome, and where she delighted in indulging us with her wonderful cakes and puddings.

She will be missed by many friends and fellow volunteers at Osterley."

We have also to report the death on September 28th of ELIZABETH HAWTIN, in hospital after a period of illness. She had been a member of the "Friends" and a volunteer Room Steward at Osterley from the early 90's until her move to Wimbledon a few years ago.

Elizabeth had worked for many years at British Airways, and became secretary to the then Chairman, Lord King. She was awarded an M.B.E. for her services to British Airways.

APOLOGY!

You will have noted that on the cover this issue is dated December. Due to various pressures, we were unable to meet this self-imposed deadline.

Future issues will be identified only by the season - like the Trust's own magazine!

THE "FRIENDS" 100 CLUB.

Ron Piper

The second draw of the year was made at the "Friends" Reception on 25th October, and the third on 2nd December, at the Volunteers' Christmas Party in the House.

Winners were:-

October			December		
£100	78	Miss C. Diwell	£100	30	Mrs M. Longhorn
£50	49	Mr M. Pfeiffer	£50	24	Mrs E. Smith
£30	6	Miss N.R. Kelly	£25	166	Mrs K. V. Blackett
£15	14	Dr & Mrs P. Bush	£15	57	Mr I. Conacher
£10	68	Mr & Mrs G. Daniel	£10	78	Miss C. Diwell

The fourth and final draw of this series will be held at the Winter Lecture on 29th March

Members of the "Friends" who are not Members of the 100 Club are welcome at any time. Anyone wishing to join now can do so by sending a cheque for £15.00, payable to "Friends of Osterley Park", to Ron Piper, 44, Kilburn Avenue, Northolt, UB5 4QT. This payment will cover the final draw for the current competition and all four draws for the next competition year which runs from 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008. Please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope so that your Membership Card and the rules of the competition can be sent to you.

Editors Note: - Our thanks are due to Ron for organizing this competition for us. As most of you know, half of the money raised by this competition goes to fund the prizes. The other half, averaging between £800 & £1,000 each year, increases the funds available to make donations to the National Trust at Osterley. You may buy as many shares as you wish!

NEWS FROM THE PROPERTY

Ian Conacher

The scaffolding and netting erected for maintenance work on the East front of the House has now been removed, in time for the Christmas opening at weekends in early December, which were well attended.

The area behind the house was closed on December 17th to allow restoration of the Parkland, woods, and gardens to commence. It is planned to re-open these areas to the public on 14th March, with an admission charges for entry to the Gardens.

Leaves have been slow to fall during the warm autumn; the rain has complicated leaf clearance although the "blower" which the "Friends" bought during the year did give some assistance. The Garden Lake was slow to refill after the dry summer, but is now approaching the top of the overflow pipe. We hope that February will live up to its traditional reputation as "filldyke".

"SITUATIONS VACANT!"

Ian Conacher

We need additional support in order not only to reduce the work load on existing Committee members, but also to enable us to expand the scope of our activities. Applicants should, by our Constitution, already be Members of the National Trust and also of the "Friends". For more details, ring me on 020-6560-8523.

HONORARY TREASURER

- To work closely with the Chairman and the Committee, and to attend meetings of the Committee at intervals of 6 to 8 weeks.
- To receive and pay into our bank cheques and cash as income from subscriptions, ticket sales, trips & tours, and events.
- To draft cheques, for payments of donations to the National Trust, and for the purchase of goods and services.
- To report to the Committee on receipts and payments, current balances, and forecast commitments.
- To keep records of income and expenditure, and prepare these for annual inspection by the Examiner.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

- To work closely with the Chairman and other officers of the Committee, and to attend meetings of the Committee, normally at intervals of 6 - 8 weeks.
- To collect information and pictures from Committee members, staff at Osterley Park, and other sources, and produce "stories" for publication.
- To prepare material for photocopying, and liaise with the printers.
- To organize assembly of documents and arrange for distribution by post and by hand.
- Computer literacy and some experience desirable.

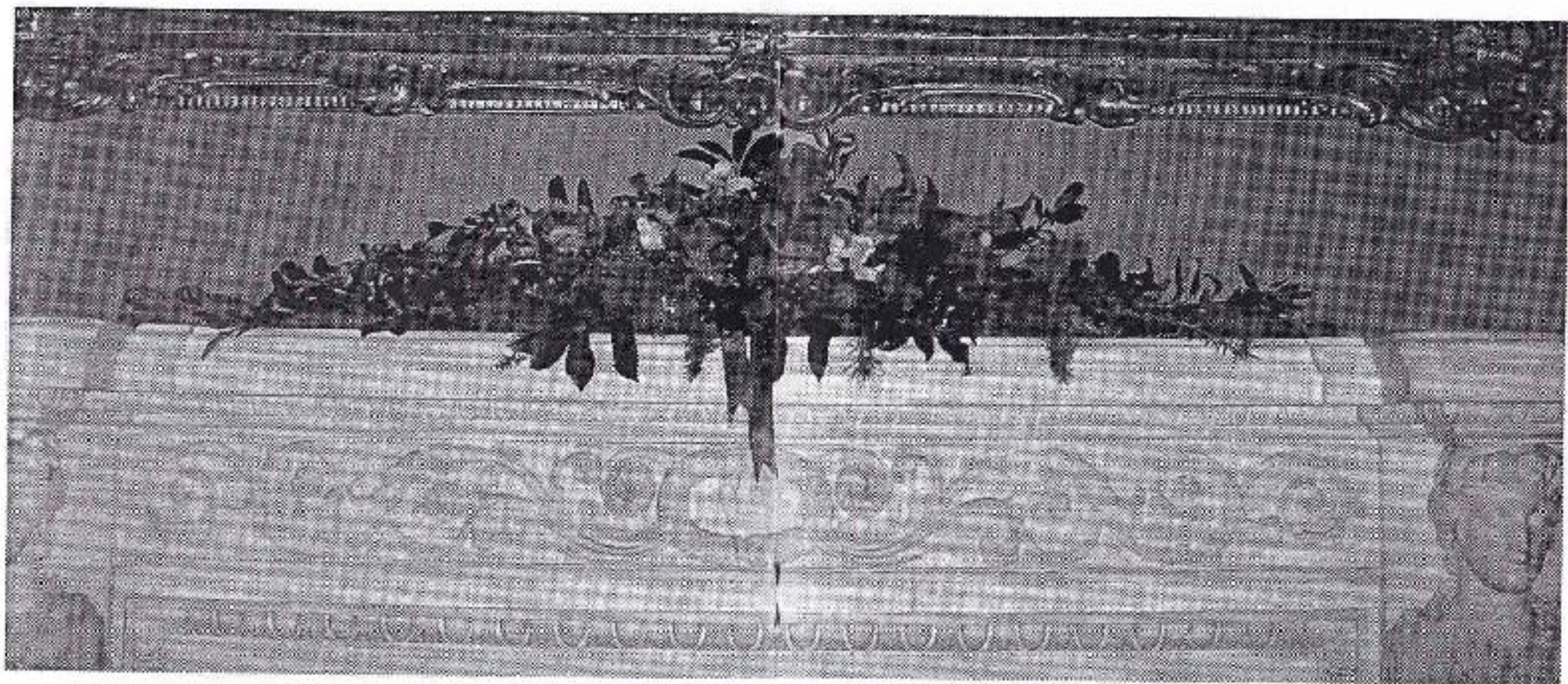
SPEAKER SECRETARY.

- To obtain details of speakers, subjects offered, and recommendations from other groups as to their suitability.
- To make proposals to the "Friends" Committee on the selection of speakers.
- To book venues for talks and arrange for equipment.
- To arrange for publicity in local press for open meetings.
- To organise printing of tickets
- To arrange for the provision and serving of refreshments.
- To control expenditure so that costs do not exceed income.

WE ARE NOT ALONE!

We have had a letter from former members Audrey and Maurice Eblson, who now live in Hove. They enclosed a copy of the Newsletter of Brighton & Hove N.T.A. who have similar problems to ourselves in persuading members to join the Committee. Their co-opted Chairman and Newsletter Editor is threatening to resign at their next A.G.M.!

PHOTOGRAPHS. John Stacey's pictures show on the cover the straw hat in the tapestry; the centre spread shows Christmas decoration of a gallery mantelpiece.



Our regular series of informal talks will be held as usual in St Mary's Parish Hall, Osterley Road, Isleworth. This year, we shall be meeting on Thursdays, at 8 pm.

On 15th February, we shall welcome Royden Stark, to talk about the restoration of Gilbert Scott's Neo-Gothic masterpiece, the former Midland Railway Hotel at St Pancras Station. The building will be converted to a luxury hotel, and the station is now being extended to become the terminus of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. Royden has contributed to several television programmes featuring the wonders of Gilbert Scott's décor.

On 1st March, our speaker is James Taylor, Honorary Curator of the Royal Naval Museum in Portsmouth Dockyard, adjacent to H.M.S. Victory His subject will be the growth of trade with China from the 17th century onward, which contributed to the profusion of Chinese artefacts in Osterley House.

15th February sees the return of Anne Savage, a National Trust speaker, who will be talking about Hughenden Manor and Disraeli. Anne is retired pharmacist, and has spoken to us previously.

Also making a return visit is Michael Watts, also a National Trust speaker, who has spoken to us on a number of occasions in past years. His subject this time is "Plant Medicines from your Doctor".

Doors will open at 7.30; following the talk, coffee - or tea - and biscuits will be served. We normally clear the Hall before 10 pm.

Tickets for each talk are £4.00, or £12.00 for the series of 4, and can be obtained in advance from Mrs Joan Mound; 59, Whitby Road, Ruislip, HA4 9DU. Cheques should be made payable to "The Friends Of Osterley Park". Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope for the return of tickets. Alternatively, they may be bought at the door.

THE STRAW HAT IN THE OSTERLEY TAPESTRY.

Margaret Friday.

Straw hats had been worn by country people for centuries and became fashionable in town in the late 1600's. Francis Child, founder of Child's Bank and Samuel Pepys were contemporaries, and when Samuel and Mrs. Pepys visited Hatfield in 1667 she tried on a country straw; Samuel declared that "it did become her mightily".

In 1727 a Swiss traveller, Charles de Saussure tells us that "vastly becoming small hats of straw were being worn by ladies of the highest rank when they went walking or visiting in town". At first these hats were made locally in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire or Buckinghamshire but the finest straw came from Leghorn in Italy, which produced wheat straw which was long, strong, smooth and flexible, allowing it to be plaited and made up more easily.

In France, straw hats with a low crown and a wide brim, fastened with ribbons under the chin or behind the hair, were called "bergere" or shepherdesses hats.

Our Gobelin tapestry close-up photographed by John Stacey shows the delightful shepherdesses hat in all its splendour. The hats also appear with Venus and Vulcan in the forge scene of the tapestry, from *The Loves of the Gods* by Boucher. We know that Marie Antoinette was familiar with this tapestry for she sent a copy as a present to her mother Maria Theresa. It still hangs in the Palace in Vienna.

Marie Antoinette, the young Queen of France, and her milliner Rose Bertin made the hat a very important part of French fashion. The hat making materials, straw, ribbon and lace originally came from around Milan, which became known as "millinery". Rose, the first famous milliner, had a shop in Paris called Le Grande Moghol. As well as the Queen of France, her customers included the Czarina of Russia, and many of the English nobility and the French aristocracy. Rose became known as *Ministre de Modes* by those who objected to the frivolity of the French court.

After the French revolution she continued to make hats for Marie Antoinette before her execution; also made the tricolore cockades worn by those supporting the new regime. Rose travelled around Europe to visit her customers; she made hats for those in England during her stay. It is possible that she made hats for Mrs Child, her daughter Sarah Anne, Lady Westmoreland and her granddaughter Sarah Sophia, Lady Jersey, before she retired in 1810.

This self-consciously rustic straw hat recorded so beautifully in our Gobelin tapestry became the sophisticated choice worn by fine ladies sitting for portraits by Gainsborough and Reynolds. The straw hat was the height of fashion in eighteenth century Europe in town or in the country - the perfect hat to wear on that summer weekend visit to Osterley Park House.

AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY CHRISTMAS, *Margaret Friday.*

The traditional dressing of houses and churches with holly, ivy, yew and fir tree boughs, was detailed by Joseph Addison, when describing Sir Roger de Coverley's Christmas in "The Spectator" in January 1712. Sir Francis Child was Addison's contemporary.

Sir Roger holds open house over the twelve days of Christmas and welcomes everybody to his great hall. He has had 8 large hogs prepared and the meat distributed liberally around the village. In addition, hog's puddings and a pack of cards are sent to each poor family in the parish. For those visiting the great hall a double quantity of malt has been added to the beer and cold beef and mince pies are always on the table. Sir Roger says "I love to rejoice their poor hearts at this season, and to see the whole village merry in my great hall."

As Sir Francis Child was Hogarth's model for the diligent apprentice, we can only believe that he celebrated Christmas in the fashion of Sir Roger. We know he was fond of a good party for he re-established the lavish celebrations surrounding the Lord Mayor's inauguration when he became Lord Mayor of London in 1698. That party cost him £4000!

Later in the 18th century Thomas North writes about the excellence of Christmas in an eminent London merchant's house: -

"We had turtles, geese, capons, puddings of a dozen sorts more than I have ever seen in my life, besides brawn, roast beef, minc'd pyes in abundance and a thing they call plum pottage which may be good...but seems to me to have 50 different tastes.

Our wines were of the best as were all the liquors, in short, the God of plenty seemed to reign here, and to make everything perfect. Our company was every way agreeable, nothing but mirth and loyal healths went round.

If a stranger were to have made an estimate of London from this place, he would imagine it not only the most rich but the most happy city in all the world."

These descriptions of 18th century Christmas celebrations from Joseph Addison and Thomas North leave us with a vivid picture of how Osterley Park House would have been at Christmas in the 18th century.

There is a recipe for a "Mince Pye" (with or without meat) in "The Experienced English Housekeeper" by Elizabeth Raffald, published in 1782. Mrs. Glasse's recipe for plum-pottage, contained amongst other ingredients a shin of beef, currants, nutmegs, cloves, prunes, raisins, and a quart each of sack and claret, plus 3 pounds sugar. This would account for Thomas North's difficulty in describing the taste of a plum pottage!

TRIPS AND TOURS

Ian Conacher

On the following pages, Jim Tickle describes the itinerary for the six day tour of South Wales. Audrey and I have visited many of the sites on Jim's itinerary, and can assure you that there are treats in store!

Additionally, Jim is preparing a programme for day trips each month in the summer. The first of these is to Oxburgh Hall and Ely cathedral on Monday, 16th April. This is a return visit; I have happy memories of our visit there in the mid 90's. A booking form is included herewith. Details of trips later in the year in our next issue.

Excursions 2007

Jim Tickle

Before embarking on future plans, may I share with you some of the comments that I received from several satisfied customers after our September break in Cornwall.

a delightful holiday. The accommodation was great and the company — well — what can I say! I was so pleased to visit such a varied selection of properties, some I had wanted to see for years.
(Olive Marks)

I loved the first port of call, A La Ronde. It's small, round (16-sided actually) and perfect. We gazed up at the Shell Gallery which is too fragile to withstand the patter of not-so-tiny feet. Another favourite was the gardens and surroundings of Lanhydrock, with a stunning display of colourful flower beds. In the tortuous lanes leading to Castle Drogo, when our coach met a convoy of oncoming cars, I was reminded of the irresistible force meeting the immovable object.
(Joan Scarratt)

..... such an enjoyable holiday. It's many years since I went to that county and it brought back some very happy memories.
(Gwen Fox)

a most memorable Cornish Holiday, - conducted with your usual expertise, aplomb, kindness and forbearance. I couldn't have had a better time.
(Doris Sherwood)

We were lucky with the accommodation, the weather, the driving and the places to visit. I had forgotten how special Cornwall is.
(Pat Horad)

..... another successful holiday. The Friends are truly friendly on these trips.

I had a grand time. If there's a trip next year, I hope I shall be able to come on that one, too.
(Rita Ford)
(Olive Cakebread)

And yes, Olive. As you may have already discovered from the booking form inside this Newsletter, there is another six-day break planned for 2007, based at the University of Wales in Cardiff, an ideal stepping-off point for an exciting tour of the many unique attractions of South Wales. We have already reserved the usual single en-suite half board accommodation in the University's Talybont Village complex, which is close to the City Centre and Cardiff Castle and the date for your diary is Monday, 3rd to Saturday 8th September.

I am very pleased to say that we have even been fortunate enough to maintain the cost at current prices which, at just £319, represents excellent value. Though there are not many National Trust properties in South Wales, the Trust has a reciprocal arrangement with their Welsh counterpart, Cadw, which grants to NT members free admission to their properties on presentation of a current NT Membership card. Entry fees may be payable at other places, e.g. St. Fagans, Caerleon and Cardiff Castle, — but



as of yet, we are unable to quote details, though I trust that any extra admission fees will be relatively nominal. Our proposed programme is currently being arranged, but should include all three of the National Trust properties just north-west of Cardiff, i.e. Aberdulais Falls, Dinefwr Park and the Dolaucothi Gold Mines (details of which can be found on pages 335, 340 & 341 of the 2006 NT Handbook). We should be able to visit these three properties in one day, but be advised that a good pair of walking shoes is recommended at both Aberdulais and Dolaucothi.

Apart from the beauty of its mountains and valleys, the turbulent history of Wales and its struggles with its English neighbour is well documented by the vast number of castles dominating the landscape. We plan to visit two castles owned by Cadw. Caerphilly, the largest castle in Wales was built between 1268 and 1271 by Gilbert de Clare, a powerful red-headed nobleman of Norman descent who was in dispute with the powerful Welsh lord, Llywelyn. In 1648, Cromwell's soldiers tried to destroy the castle, but only succeeded in tilting the south-east tower, which still leans at a perilous angle over the moat. Castell Coch is chiefly considered as a romantic folly, representing a medieval Welsh chieftain's stronghold. Built in the 1870s on the remains of a genuine 13th century castle that was perhaps originally owned by Gilbert de Clare, Castell Coch was designed by William Burges for the 3rd Marquess of Bute and possesses the most amazing interior decoration.

A visit to the small town of Caerleon takes us much further back into the historic heart of South Wales. Here was the 50-acre site of the Roman legionary fortress of Ica, the permanent base of the Second Augustan Legion in Britain from about AD75. One cannot fail to be impressed by the remarkable preserved remains of the fortress baths, barracks and amphitheatre.

Our most relaxing day will probably be a delightful drive via the spectacular scenery of the Black Mountains to Hay-on-Wye, a charming town renowned as a paradise for book-lovers. Even its tiny, tumbledown castle has been converted to a second-hand bookstall! There is quite a significant number of ecclesiastical sites in South Wales, e.g. Tintern, Llantony, Neath, and our route back to Cardiff takes us through the Golden Valley with a brief call at the Cistercian Abbey Dore, built by French monks in 1147 and still used as a most notable Parish Church. Close by are the Abbey Dore Court Gardens which, time permitting, will be well worth a visit.

Our stay in Cardiff would not be complete without a trip to nearby St Fagans, the Museum of Welsh Life in the grounds of St Fagans Castle, a 15th century manor house. Like the Weald and Downland Museum in Sussex, it contains re-erected buildings from different historical periods, including houses, a school, farm, chapel and a splendid Workmen's Institute, giving the visitor an insight into the rich heritage and culture of Wales.



Caerphilly Castle.



Tintern Abbey



St Fagans Castle



Castell Coch