

The Friends of Osterley Park

A SUPPORTERS' GROUP FOR  THE NATIONAL TRUST

NEWSLETTER

Issue 74 AUTUMN 2009 £1 (free to members)

Useful contacts

Chairman

Ian Conacher
020 8560 8523

Membership Secretary

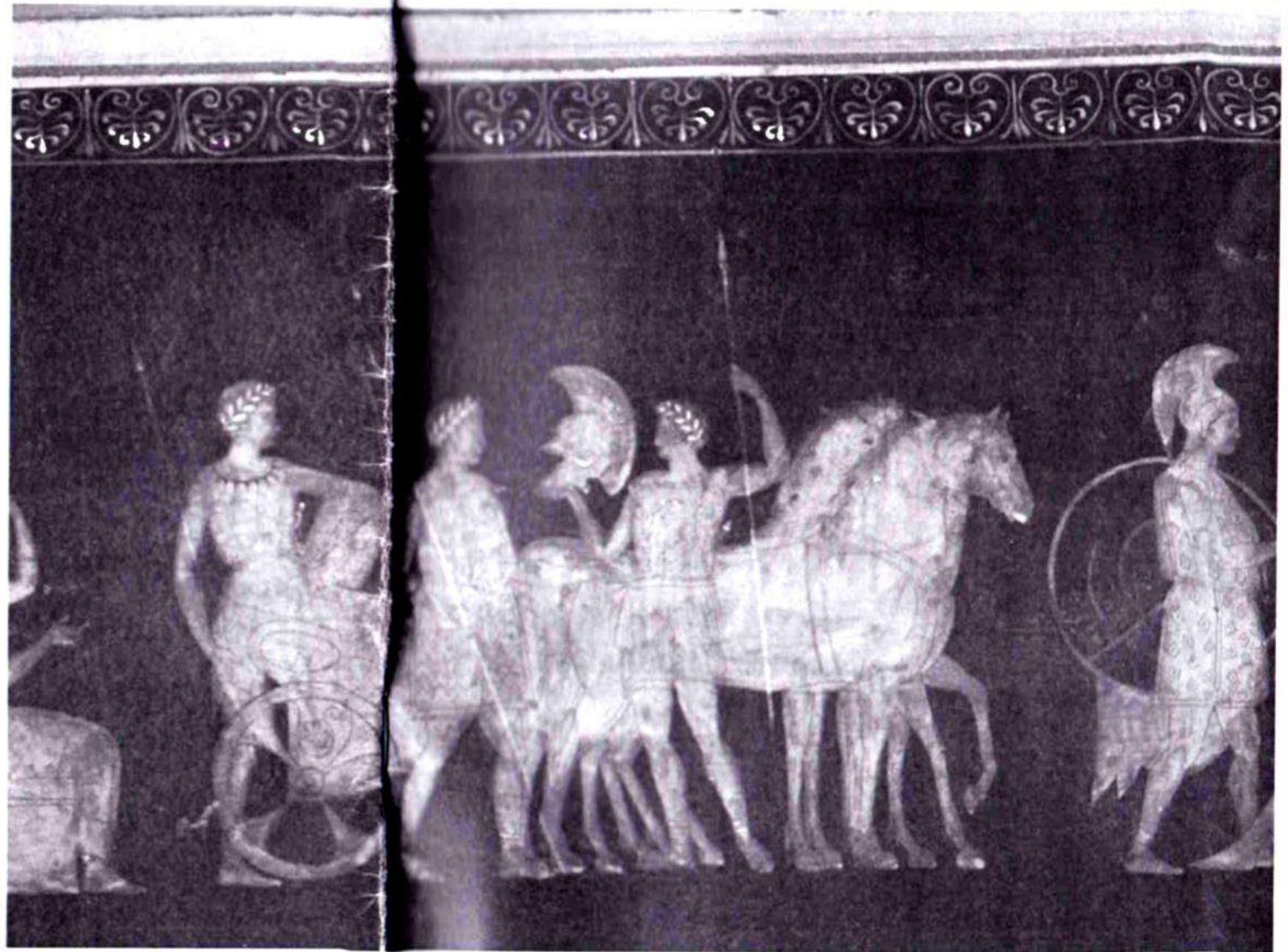
John James
020 8232 8683

Newsletter Editor

Wei Hei Kipling
020 8840 5939
28 Airedale Road
London W5 4SD
kiplings@tiscali.co.uk

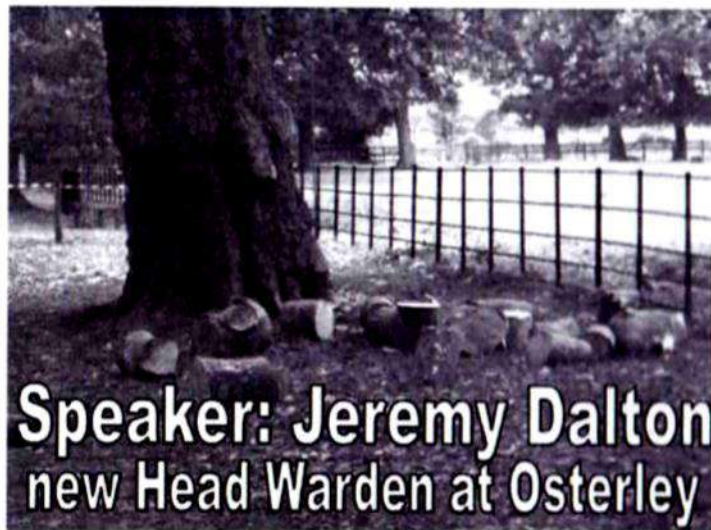
Pembroke Table, Etruscan Room
Osterley Park
see article on page 16
Photo John Stacey

Printed by:
Colormax (West Ealing)
020 8566 1155



Friends of Osterley Park Autumn Reception

**Old Brewhouse, Osterley Park
Wednesday 21 October 2009
7 for 7.45pm**



**Speaker: Jeremy Dalton
new Head Warden at Osterley**



**Car Parking in the Stable-Yard
Please come early
Park Gates will be closed
from 7.30pm
until after the Reception**

***The Autumn Reception is a benefit of membership.
If you wish to attend — have you paid your fees?***



**from the Chairman Ian Conacher
Seventy Years Ago**

The most notable anniversaries this year were that of the invasion of Poland on 1st September 1939 by the German army, followed by the declaration of war against Germany by Britain and France on the following Sunday 3rd September. This had been expected for several years; among the events leading up to the war were the invasion of Abyssinia by Italy, and the civil war in Spain in 1936. Both of these actions were condemned by the League of Nations—but no action was taken. Fighting continued, with the use of air power to bomb tribesmen in Abyssinia and, with German aircraft, to destroy the city of Guernica in Spain. Then came the occupation of the Sudetenland—part of Czechoslovakia with many German speakers—and the annexation of Austria.

Britain had been preparing for war, and for air attacks in particular, for some time: conscription was introduced for young men; "Air Raid Wardens" were recruited; and night exercises were held for aircraft and searchlights—which kept me watching long after my bedtime.

In Britain, our family made a visit to Scotland, partly seeing relations in Glasgow and then going down the Clyde for a holiday in Dunoon. The shipyards were busy, not only with the liner

"Queen Elizabeth", but also with a number of large warships. The clouds of war may have been gathering but we had many a memorable cruise around the Clyde resorts and the sea lochs in the railway-owned paddle steamers.

At the end of our stay in Dunoon, my father returned to London, leaving my mother, my sister and myself in Glasgow, as we were expecting heavy air raids on the capital. After some weeks of the "Phoney War", we returned home in a slow and heavy laden train as



Photo: msmail (flickr)

(Continued on page 4)

passenger services had been severely cut.

Poland was overrun by the Germans in a matter of days; the British and French armies were facing the German army across the French built "Maginot Line" fortification. The first major action of the war was the Battle of the River Plate with the British cruisers Achilles, Ajax and Exeter against the German "pocket battleship" the Graf Spee—the latter was forced to take shelter in Montevideo harbour and subsequently scuttled. Not until the spring of 1940 did the German army invade Denmark and Norway and send their troops through Holland and Belgium, cutting through the Allied defences and surrounding many British troops at Dunkirk.

The Great Western Railway

2009 is also the 150th anniversary of the death of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the celebrated engineer of the Great Western Railway and many other lines stretching down into Devon and Cornwall. One of his last works was the Saltash Bridge (*see below*) across the River Tamar linking Plymouth with Penzance. The bridge was opened on 3rd May; Brunel, a very sick man, was wheeled across it on a trolley in June and died on 15th September.

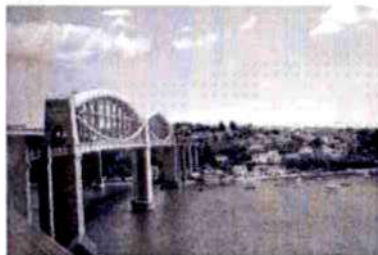


Photo: smallritual (flickr)

Also in 1859, the Great Western Railway branch line was opened from Southall to Brentford, diving under Windmill Lane at the point where it crossed the Grand Union Canal. The bridge structure was one of Brunel's last designs, and has become known

as the "Three Bridges". The branch principally carried goods and minerals to Brentford Dock for shipment down the Thames to the London docks. In later years, the branch carried domestic coal and goods for factories along the Great West Road. The dock is now a housing complex with a marina. 🏠

Lewis Orton

Ian Conacher

We are sorry to report the death of Lewis who, with his wife Lesley, were founder members of the "Friends" from our formation in 1991. I first met Lewis when our sons were members of 1st Osterley Scouts. We worked together on stalls at the Annual Bazaar until the onset of multiple sclerosis confined him to a wheelchair in the mid-eighties. He excelled in supporting the "Friends"; among his achievements were the construction of a table lectern (*see below*) for the use of speakers at our talks—now permanently stored at St Mary's Hall for community use— and a notice board in the garden of a house opposite the park gates for the display of "Friends" posters.

He also acted as "Cashier" for the Isleworth Probus Club, with a cheerful greeting for members paying for their meals.

Our sincere condolences go to his wife Lesley who has headed a team of volunteer gardeners growing flowers for arrangements in the House since 1991. 🏠



Photo: John Stacey

60 years with the National Trust



Have you noticed the flower arrangements (*see left*) beneath the portrait of the 9th Earl of Jersey who gave Osterley to the National Trust? They celebrate 60 years of the House and Grounds belonging to the National Trust. Another landmark is that Lord Jersey opened the House to the public for the first time at Easter 1939 (although that anniversary has, perhaps, been overshadowed by the events of international significance that took place later that year). 🏠

from the Property

Staff Changes

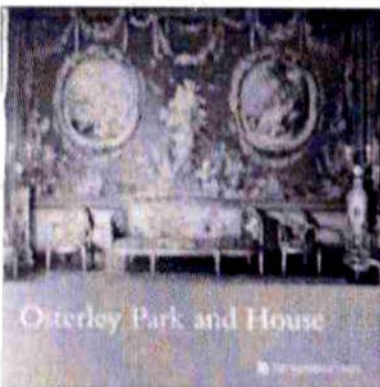
Justin Gorbald (Head Warden) has moved to Cumbria where he is working as a forestry consultant. Congratulations go to **Jeremy Dalton** (a Warden at Osterley for the past year) who has been appointed new Head Warden and has already taken up his post.

Caroline Sketchley (*see right*), who was Property Assistant at Osterley 2006-8, is a Volunteer Development Officer. She has been working on a project based mainly at Ham House looking at improving the support, recruitment and development of volunteers. She has now returned to Osterley until April 2010 to see how she can take volunteering forward here. Her areas of focus are: recruitment of diverse local volunteers; visitor welcome; and induction of new volunteers. 📖



©NTPL
Matthew Antrobus

Souvenir Guide Book



The new Guide Book on Osterley went on sale on 31 August 2009 for £4. There are lots of pictures and the rooms are described in the order of the current tour. There is also new information about the Stable Block and the Gardens, particularly the American Border, as well as more on "life below stairs" and the Second World War at Osterley. Unlike the previous

guide book, it does not give details about many individual items in the rooms. There is some mention of Robert Adam but less analysis about the architecture of the house. 📖

Mythical Creatures and Beasts

Osterley was in the Autumn 2009 "Thames & Solent News" under "London Voices are heard". They mentioned "a tactile compass" created "to track the mythical creatures and beasts featured in the house". The actual object (*see below*) is about the size of a tea plate but much thicker and made of very tactile wood. In the centre is a yellow marigold with a green leaf —this can be rotated so that the gap left by a missing petal reveals the name of a room. Around the edge are different creatures and the point of the leaf indicates some creatures which the user can search for in the room shown. In



the Long Gallery, for example, you had to find a satyr (in one of the lower paintings), a phoenix (a Chinese version on the vases either side of the marriage basket or its head on one of the junks), and a snail (on the bolsters on the settee by the Drawing Room). The children seem to enjoy holding and using the compasses very much. 📖

Conservation in Action Week

The period 28 October to 1 November will be your chance to see conservators, both National Trust and outside specialists, at work in Osterley. They will be doing work that needs to be done any way but in public so that visitors have a chance to see them at work and to ask questions. Last year, there was conservation work on the State Bed and some of the mirror frames in the State Rooms. 📖

New Opening Hours

In 2010 the House will be open from 12noon to 4.30pm (March to end Oct). This is in order to meet the requirement to have more consistent opening hours across the property and across the region. The shop will also be open slightly earlier next year, from 12noon instead of 12.30. 📖



Outside the House

On the estate, "preventive pruning" is taking place to remove tree branches which might be rotten or look dangerous before they fall and injure someone. Hardwood produced in this way is allowed to season and then makes good firewood. Bags of logs are on sale at the car park for £4. 🌲



Would you like to be able to buy a drink or a snack in Osterley Park 7 days a week? The NT is considering offering the Park Kiosk (see left) by the car park as a Catering concession on a 5 year business lease starting in

2010. The closing date for expressions of interest is 19 October 2009. We wait to see what happens next. 🌲

On 21 and 22 August, NT employees, volunteers, members of the public and expert entomologists took part in Osterley's first bioblitz—an attempt to identify as many different insect species as possible within the space of a few hours. Over 90 invertebrates



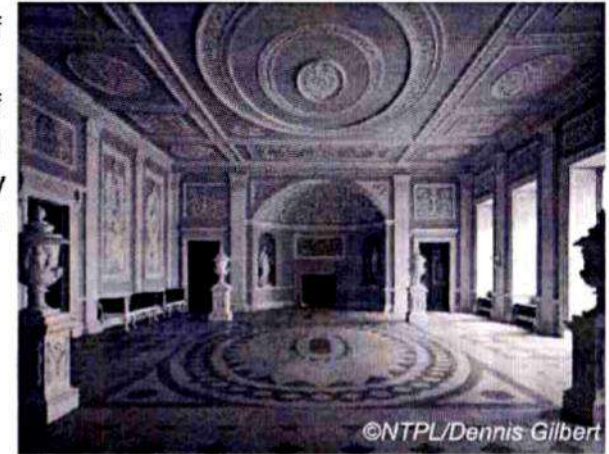
were identified, including 11 species of fly, 4 of grasshopper and cricket, 10 of butterfly and over 40 species of moth (16 of which had not previously been recorded at Osterley). 🌲

On a related theme, the oak processionary moth (see article in Summer 2009 newsletter, pages 7 to 9) continues to spread and this summer came closer to Osterley than ever before with a nest discovered near Syon Lane Tesco. None were found within the park (and generally the high risk period is now over). The NT staff, of course, continue to be extremely vigilant and have plans in place should it come to Osterley. 🌲

The Wedgwood Hall?

Wei Hei Kipling

Hounslow Chronicle of 31 July 2009, looking back at the archives of 30 July 1909, reported the fourth garden party given by the Countess of Jersey at Osterley. The guests were received on the Piazza from where they passed through the "Wedgewood Hall" to



the lawns. Lord Jersey's guide to the House of 1939 explains that the Wedgewood Hall is so-called "on account of the colour scheme and plaster decorations—the "Trophies of War" - which make the whole room strongly reminiscent of a Wedgwood vase".

Indeed, visitors have asked me if Adam knew Wedgwood, perhaps thinking that Adam copied the colour scheme from Wedgwood ... Well, The Dictionary of Wedgwood suggests that Wedgwood was experimenting with materials to produce jasper in 1771. Jasper was in limited production early in 1775. It also suggests that the colours



Wedgwood jasperware vase
©NTPL/Andreas von Einsiedel

"conformed closely with those used in interior decoration by the brothers Adam".

In contrast, as you know, the designs for the Entrance Hall were made in 1767 or 8. In fact, the style of picking out mouldings in white against a coloured wall were known before Adam, possibly a Rococo fashion. 🌲

London Visits

(Booking form enclosed)

2009 sees the 250th anniversary of the death of George Frideric Handel. To celebrate this composer, whose music may have been played by Sarah Anne Child, a visit to Handel House Museum (*see right*) has been arranged for Friday 6 November. The visit will include; a guided tour of

the early Georgian house, not far from Berkeley Square where the Childs bought a London town house in the 1760s; a solo harpsichord recital; followed by tea and biscuits. Cost: £15 (£12.50 to Handel House Museum and £2.50 to Friends).

Meeting arrangements: 1.40pm at Bond Street tube (West One Shopping Ground Level by Boots) to walk to Handel House Museum, 25 Brook Street, Mayfair for 2pm tour. Concert at 3pm and refreshments at 3.30pm

Rainham Hall (NT) was built in 1729 by Captain John Harle and was a showcase for the high-quality building materials which he sold. Although the Hall is sparsely furnished at present and awaiting conservation work, there is much to be seen including extensive paneling, an elegant carved staircase and original trompe l'oeil decoration. A visit to Rainham Hall on Friday 20 November will be a chance

to see this property out of normal opening hours (which are very restricted) prior to conservation and development. In addition there will be a tour of the local Norman church. Cost £7.50 (£2.50 Rainham Hall inc. NT members; £2.50 church donation; £2.50 Friends) Meeting arrangements and timings: 10.45am at Tower Hill tube (the exit that is also an entrance) to walk to Fenchurch Street Rail Station to catch 11.05am train to Rainham (Freedom passes can

Wei Hei Kipling



Photo: Dave Stubbs (flickr)

be used on this journey—please let me know beforehand if you need to buy a train ticket £6.50 return so that we can allow time for this). Walk to church for 11.40 early lunch (cost not included—typical cost jacket potatoes £3.75, sandwiches £1.60 to £2.75). 12.45pm tour of church; 2-3pm tour of Rainham Hall.



Photo: arealondon (flickr)

2009 is also the 300th anniversary of the birth of Dr Samuel Johnson who famously said "when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford." In the hope that you are still want to enjoy London in December, a visit to Dr Johnson's House (*see left*), where he compiled the first comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language, has been arranged

for Monday 14 December. Please note that, because of the age of the house, there are many unavoidable steps. Cost: £6 (£3.50 to Dr Johnson's House; £2.50 to Friends). No refreshments at House.

Meeting arrangements: 2.30pm at Chancery Lane tube (south exit by Staple Inn Buildings) to walk to Dr Johnson's House, 17 Gough Square EC4A, for 3pm guided tour.

With the Child connection to the Goldsmiths Livery Company, it seems appropriate to join with one of the public guided tours of the Goldsmiths Hall (*see right*). Unfortunately the Hall that the Childs knew was demolished in the late 1820s so the Hall we will see is primarily by Philip Hardwick with



Photo: Matt from London (flickr)

later modifications, then restoration following bomb damage and major refurbishment completed in 1990. Our visit will be on Monday 11 January 2010. No refreshments. Cost £5 (donation to Friends). Meeting arrangements: 1.40pm at St Paul's tube (Exit 1 street level) to walk to Goldsmiths' Hall, Foster Lane for a guided tour at 2pm. 🚶



Photo: (flickr) Juliang's Pix

Friends of Osterley Park
a supporters' group for the National Trust

Christmas Concert



**June Hume
Jacqui Silverstone
and Guests**

**St. Mary's Church Millenium Hall
Osterley Road, Isleworth**

**Saturday 12 December 2009
7pm to 9pm (with interval)**



Tickets
(to include interval wine and mince pies)
£9 each for Friends of Osterley Park
£10 each for guests / public
in advance from **John James, Parkfield
Cottage, Osterley Road, Isleworth TW7 4PD**
(cheques payable to "Friends of Osterley
Park" - please send SAE for return of
tickets)
or limited availability at the door

from the 100 Club

Ron Piper

There has been no draw since the Summer Newsletter but, in the intervening period, late renewals and new members have increased shareholding by 20, giving a new total of 144 shares taken up, the same as last year.

The increase means that we can now offer over £200 in prize money at each of the three remaining draws with a top prize of £100 each time. You may therefore wish to try your luck and join, rejoin or increase your holding before the next draw with membership at £9 per share (three draws) for the



remainder of this competition. The next draw is scheduled to take place at the Friends Autumn Reception on Wednesday 21 October with the two remaining draws being held in December 2009 and February / March 2010 on dates to be announced.

If anyone does wish to join, rejoin or increase their holding before the next draw, please send your cheque for £9 by **10 October** made payable to "Friends of Osterley" to me: Ron Piper,

44 Killowen Avenue, Northolt UB5 4QT

with your name, address, telephone number, Friends membership number and an SAE for your membership card and the rules of the competition.

Please note that the 100 Club is a private lottery and so shares can only be allocated to paid up members of the "Friends".

Williams & Glyn

Wei Hei Kipling

You may have seen in the financial press rumours that the Royal Bank of Scotland is thinking of bringing back the name "Williams & Glyn" for regulatory reasons. W&G existed from 1971 to 1985 and was itself a merger of three London clearing banks including Glyn, Mills. This latter bank had bought Child & Co in 1924 and, so with the agreement of the Earl of Jersey, Glyn, Mills had been evacuated to Osterley during the Second World War.



The "Man who has lost his Head"
State Bedroom Commode, Osterley Park

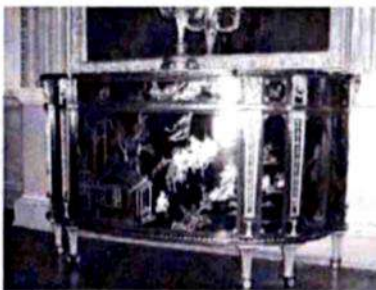
Photograph John Stacey
(see article on page 16)

Lacquer Furniture at Osterley

(see photographs on cover and page 14)

Margaret Friday

For this newsletter, John Stacey has shown us two examples of lacquered furniture.



The man who has lost his head (see page 14) appears on the commode in the State Bedroom. This commode (see left) is thought to have been supplied, along with the commode and the secretaire in the Etruscan dressing room, by Thomas Chippendale.

These European pieces of furniture were constructed from folding screens imported from China. The furniture was probably designed by Robert Adam and made by Chippendale although Chippendale had himself designed similar pieces for Harewood House.

But why go to the effort of importing Chinese lacquered screens simply to remake them? The second photograph (on the cover) gives us a clue. The Pembroke table in the Etruscan dressing room is an example of a European attempt to produce lacquered furniture. The japanner in ordinary to King George III and the Prince Regent was Henry Clay and yet his best efforts do not even come close to the exquisite look of real oriental lacquer.

Lacquer was first developed in China in the 7th century B.C. The resin used to produce Lac came from the Lac tree which was tapped in summer and produced a syrupy grey juice. The tree had to be at least ten years old. Wood coated with this substance became watertight, heat resistant and impervious to insect and worm attack. Silk hats and leather shoes could also be made water resistant using lacquer.

Lacquering furniture was traditionally a long process. After the wood was primed, a layer of lacquer was applied and then dried at temperatures between 70 and 80°F in the dark humid atmosphere of a trench in the earth called a shadow house. Lac remained tacky

if not dried in these dark, moist conditions. Treated in this manner, the lac hardened to a tough skin in a day but it might be left to dry for up to a year, then another coat of lacquer applied and the wood polished again. This process could be repeated up to 30 times. The last polishing was done by the shang kung, the expert who completed the years of work to give the wood its final beautiful glowing surface so desired by lovers of lacquered furniture in 18th Century Europe and around the world. Finally the piece went to the hua kung or painter who decorated the lacquered surfaces often with scenes of people in gardens filled with ornamental buildings and bridges designed for admiring the plants and flowers.

The large folding screen in the south corridor is a fine example of a still complete Chinese lacquered screen from which European style

furniture could be made. Sometimes, of course, the original designs did not quite fit with the new piece of furniture and this is how our man came to lose his head!

..how our man came to
lose his head!

Europe had been trying to copy the beautiful Chinese lacquer since the Renaissance. This imitation lacquer was developed because of the great expense involved in importing lacquered furniture from China and Japan. The process was known as japanning and involved coating the wood with a mixture of glue and plaster, called gesso, to give it a hard surface. A layer of black or coloured varnish called shellac was then applied with a brush. The varnish, also known as Hind.lakh or resin lac, was made from the gummy deposits left on trees by an insect called Tachardia Lacca. This substance was used by European craftsmen from the 16th century onward to make lacquer-ware. John Stalker and George Parker published a "Treatise of Japanning and varnishing" in 1688 while vernis Martin was patented in Paris by the Martin brothers in 1730. Decorations in the oriental style were often painted on the japanned surface.

The properties of shellac were different from the lacquer made from

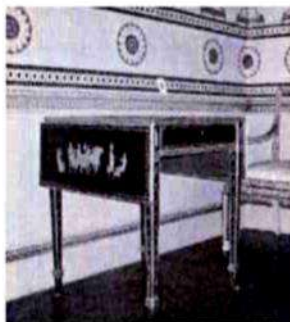
(Continued on page 18)

Lacquer Furniture

(Continued from page 17)

the juice of the lac tree. Henry Clay, maker of the Pembroke table (see below) in the Etruscan dressing room, was a skilled craftsman but the shellac technique could not produce furniture with the beautiful glow of genuine lacquer. The design on his Pembroke table is

taken from a Greek vase presented to The British Museum by Sir William Hamilton and illustrated by Baron d'Hancarville in "Vases". The vase showed a scene from the garden of the Hesperides so the table displays a classical Greek scene executed in black and gold using shellac. It was skilfully made but cannot compare with the ex-



quisite lacquered secretaire and the commodes made for the state bedroom and the Etruscan dressing room.

In addition to the items already mentioned, there are other pieces of lacquered furniture at Osterley. In the south corridor, as well as the folding screen, you will find chairs with lacquered backs made in China in the 1720s for Francis Child the Younger when he was a director of the East India Company. These Chinese pieces were made for his house in Lincoln's Inn Fields as was the dinner service with the striking powder blue borders which can be seen upstairs in Mr. Child's dressing room.

Mrs. Child's dressing room contains a 17th century Japanese lacquer cabinet, one of the few examples of Japanese lacquer in the house. Next door in Mr and Mrs Child's bedroom there is a Chinese lacquer chest of drawers. When Horace Walpole visited these family rooms he declared that they were "full of pictures, gold filigree, china and japan... So is all the house".

When you next visit Osterley seek out the two examples featured in this newsletter. You may be surprised at how many items from China there are in the house. Indeed Agneta Yorke commented when she visited in the 18th century that with "the profusion of rich China and Japan she could almost fancy she was in Pekin" 🏠

Friends' Tour of the North East 2009

Jim Tickle

Photos: John Stacey



Now that our annual holiday is over, I'm pleased to say it seems that everyone had a good time. Here are a few quotes from 'Thank You' letters I've received since our return from Newcastle,:

'I really enjoyed the holiday so much that it would be difficult for me to pick out the highlight of the break to Newcastle'

Olive Marke

'... a superb holiday. I cannot remember a more varied programme with so many gems visited. Each site was unique and very enjoyable, each in its own particular way'.

Patricia Barrett

'The highlight was Alnwick, but nowhere disappointed. The accommodation was first class, too. I had no idea Newcastle was so near such lovely countryside and clean itself.'

Hazel Collisson, (joined us from her home in Lincolnshire)

So much for the frequent image of the grimy, industrial north! And we saw very little evidence of any graffiti wherever we went.

I was particularly gratified to receive a very complimentary note

(Continued on page 20)

from dear Doris Sherwood, herself an experienced London Blue Guide and tour organiser. She wrote,

'My brother Jim and I again had a wonderful holiday with you and your many admirers. Despite inclement weather ... through rain and shine we enjoyed interesting, stimulating and gorgeous sights ...'

And my final selection from the post-bag comes from Margaret Harriess, a 'first-timer' on our annual break:

'The choice and balance of all the locations visited made for a great variety of interest. I enjoyed everything enormously, and although you may have had some anxious moments, I thought everything seemed to go very smoothly. By which I mean, I couldn't see the feet paddling furiously beneath the waterline!'

Let me assure you, Margaret, there were several times when my feet were paddling very furiously. But now here's a brief resume of the holiday.



On Bank Holiday Monday, 31st August, we left Osterley with Graeme, our regular driver. Our first visit was to Brodsworth Hall (see left), one of English Heritage's principal properties in Yorkshire. Owned by the Thellusson family for several generations, it is a

remarkable example of a 1860s Victorian country house that has sadly suffered neglect. Leaking roofs and the horrendous cost of maintenance forced the later members of the family to retreat from some of the upper rooms, leaving many in a state of faded grandeur. But much of the original opulence remains and English Heritage decided not to attempt restoration in favour of conservation. Undoubtedly the most sumptuous room at Brodsworth is the Drawing Room with its colourful ceiling, scagliola columns, marble fireplaces, gilded mirrors, crimson silk damask wall covering and two fabulous Venetian glass chandeliers.

Tuesday was meant to be more relaxing and, after a leisurely start, we strolled in the park and gardens of the nearby NT property of Gibside, designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, where wildlife such as red kites can be seen. No stately mansion here, but much of interest in the delightful Palladian chapel, a charming example of symmetry with curved pews for the estate workers, a gated pew for the Bowes family and a remarkable three-tier pulpit.

The afternoon for many of us turned out to be far from 'relaxing' when we moved on to the North of England Open Air Museum at Beamish to experience aspects of life from the 19th and early 20th centuries. Hopping on and off old-fashioned trams (see right)



and early motorbuses, we visited the shops and houses of the dentist, music teacher and solicitor in the Edwardian town, while the livery stables housed an interesting and varied collection of carts and carriages and a very docile horse (see below)! More animals were to be seen at the 1913 vintage Home Farm. In the colliery village school, present-day children were trying to cope with addition and subtraction using pounds, shillings and pence! Wives were engaged in bread baking and crafts such as rag rug making in the terrace of miners' cottages, whilst in one of the well-tended little back gardens, a miner proudly gave a visitor a bunch of his freshly grown rhubarb. In the colliery itself the braver visitors could don a



safety helmet and venture down a real drift mine, but they would need to clean up before joining the congregation in the old Methodist Chapel or nipping back to the Sun Inn to sample real Great British ale.

(Continued on page 20)



On Wednesday we spent a wonderfully sunny morning in the gardens of Alnwick Castle, recently created at vast expense by the Duchess of Northumberland. The Grand Cascade (see left) is the centrepiece - a long, high, double stone staircase which

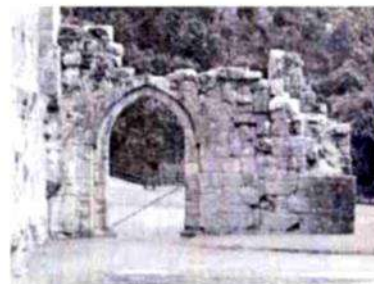
encloses a huge cascade of water whose fountains produce four changing displays on the hour and half hour. Below and to the right is the Serpent Garden where a winding path leads one through an amazing variety of ingenious water features (see below), - a delight for children who risked a soaking by playing tig through sudden surprise jets.

Beyond the Serpent Garden is a Rose Garden containing over 3000 rose bushes. But on the opposite side is a site more dangerous than the thorns of the roses. It is the Poison Garden, full of poisonous plants. As we were guided around the locked and securely fenced



enclosure, we were warned not to touch anything, and were shocked to realise how many of these deadly plants grow in our own gardens. Several of the Friends purchased the handbook of poisonous plants to reassure themselves when they got home! We also climbed up into one of the world's largest tree houses, - more like a tree hotel with high turrets, walkways, bouncy rope bridges, stunning views and even a restaurant and two snack bars!

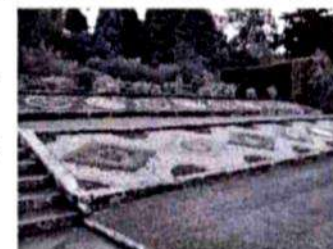
In the afternoon we went to Chillingham Castle where nearby the famous wild, white Chillingham cattle roam free from contact with humans. Since the 13th century the castle has been owned by the same family. It was hard to drag some of our members from the museum room—its intriguing jumble of curiosities included snow shoes and sledges used in a family member's assault on Everest.



On Thursday morning, the weather deteriorated quickly and we arrived at Brinkburn Priory (EH) in a torrential downpour that continued for virtually the rest of the day. The priory (see left) lies tucked away in woodland in a loop of the River Croquet and was ap-

proached down a rather wet and by now slippery lane which, both coming and going, must have caused some concern for Jack Bignell on his mobility buggy. Founded in the 1130s as a community of Augustinian canons, the priory's earliest surviving buildings date from the late 12th century, but it was one of the first monasteries to be closed at the dissolution in 1536. Afterwards it was used for a while as the parish church, whilst parts of the monastic buildings were adapted to form the adjacent, now abandoned Manor House. There is little original furniture in the priory apart from some modern chairs imported for occasional concerts. While we were there, a solo trumpet player entertained us with an impromptu performance - he explained that he often came to practise at the priory because of the fabulous acoustics due to the lofty height of the nave.

In the afternoon, we braved the weather and drove to Cragside (NT) - set precariously on the edge of a rocky crag overlooking a fast-flowing stream, the Debdon Burn. It was built in 1864 by the wealthy industrialist, Sir William Armstrong,



whose Company produced all manner of equipment and machines including the hydraulic system used to raise London's Tower Bridge. Cragside itself is crammed with ingenious gadgets and was the first house in the world to be lit by hydroelectricity. The gardens (see above) and the vast estate of Cragside are on an equally grand Victorian scale as the house itself, but with the poor weather, many of us retired to the warmth and comfort of the tea-rooms.

The North East

(Continued from page 23)

Our first destination on Friday morning was, Belsay Hall (EH built 1807-17). The owner, Sir Charles Monck, was obsessed with Greek architecture and insisted that all the details inside and out were derived from the Classical buildings seen on his honeymoon in Athens. Apart from a few statues, the house is now virtually unfurnished. The most impressive feature is the two storey high Pillar Hall (*see right*), designed more as a Roman atrium or reception room giving



access to different parts of the house. On the ground floor a phalanx of Ionic columns support the balcony above, whilst the same number of Doric columns reach up to the roof lights. The beautifully crafted brass balustrades, incorporating brass lampstands, were designed by Sir Charles' sister Isabella after seeing the new staircase in London's Northumberland House.



Our final property in Northumberland was Wallington (NT) (*see left*), a magnificent mansion dating from 1688, with fine interiors and collections. Not unlike Belsay, but much more sumptuously furnished, is the large Central Hall designed to look like an Italian

palazzo or courtyard. Originally open to the sky, a glazed roof was added in 1853. In contrast, one feature of Wallington that captured the interest of many visitors was the diverse collection of dolls' houses in the Servants Hall. The most remarkable was the huge 'Hammond House', which produces in miniature a Victorian country house down to the towels and cutlery. It even had running water in the scullery and pantry, and electric lighting throughout.

After the usual excellent evening meal in the university, the rain fi-

nally cleared and we were treated to a farewell tour of the centre of Newcastle by our driver, Graeme, with former driver Barrie, himself a 'geordie', as our expert guide. The highlight was the opportunity to walk across the new Millenium Bridge, or Winking Eye as the locals call it, and to see the unique way in which it was raised to allow vessels to pass beneath it.

On our return journey on Saturday, we stopped in Yorkshire to pay a return visit to 17th century Bolsover Castle (EH) (*see right*), built by Charles Cavendish, the son of Bess of Hardwick by her second husband, and Charles's son William. The Terrace



Range and Little Castle create an impressive feature on the skyline viewed from the M1 motorway. The terrace is now merely a dramatic roofless shell but the Little Castle is a pure delight and, despite a lack of actual furniture, the wall decoration and paintings, amazing fireplaces and brightly decorated plasterwork ceilings are fascinating. So, too, were the pair of guides who really brought the palace to life with their anecdotes and repartee! They spoke of the grand reception of King Charles I when he was royally entertained here in 1634. They explained how the series of paintings of the labours of Hercules evoked thoughts of both good and evil in man, and how this was emphasised in the two side rooms, Heaven and Elysium. Leading off the main bedroom and depending on the occupant's mood, he could choose either Heaven, where the decoration portrayed godliness and piety, or Elysium, where the pleasures of love and unbridled delights were represented by Venus and Bacchus celebrating life with the Gods.

We arrived back at Osterley in the early evening after what I hope had been an enjoyable, if rather strenuous tour of the North East. At Newcastle University's Henderson Hall, we had been met with real northern friendliness, very comfortable accommodation and excellent catering. I'm really missing those full English breakfasts!



Donations to Osterley



Excluding contributions for the new buggy, for the year 2009 up to 20 August, £640.76 has been given by "Friends" to the National Trust at Osterley. Over the last few months, there have simply been our regular donations for plants and seeds and other materials for the volunteer flower arrangers; and maintenance of the battery vehicles. The Committee also agreed, at the meeting in August, to meet requests for assistance from the National Trust at Osterley for about £1,900 to cover the costs of a replacement mower and three costumes. Other requests are under discussion with the National Trust. 🏡



from the Editor

This is a bumper edition—4 extra pages—and there were other items I could have included if I had had space. Well, that is the job of the Editor—to decide what needs to be included and what can be left out.

The size of this edition is a symptom of how much is going on, both at Osterley Park itself and within the Friends.

We look forward to hearing from the new Head Warden, Jeremy Dalton, at our Autumn Reception. With a lot of focus on new interpretation and work in the House and Gardens, it will be interesting to hear about the estate as a whole.

Our other full page advert is for the Christmas Concert where we welcome June Hume, Jacqui Silverstone and guests for what should be an enjoyable and entertaining evening. Please do book in advance to help with catering arrangements.

There is a good report on Jim's coach tour to the North East with photographs by John Stacey and information on four London Visits over the coming months.

We hope that you will take advantage of the opportunities provided by membership of Friends and look forward to seeing you over the coming months. 🏡

from the Diary

"Friends" Events and Excursions

Mon 5 Oct	Excursion: Dyrham Park (NT) & City of Bath
Weds 21 Oct	"Friends" Autumn Reception Brewhouse, Osterley (see inside front cover)
Fri 6 Nov	London Visit: Handel House Museum
Fri 20 Nov	London Visit: Rainham Hall and Church
Sat 12 Dec	Christmas Concert, St Mary's Millennium Hall (see page 12)
Mon 14 Dec	London Visit: Dr Johnson's House
Mon 11 Jan 2010	London Visit: Goldsmiths' Hall

For details of London Visits – see pages 10 to 11

Osterley Park House – a selection

28 Oct to 1 Nov	Conservation in Action Week (see page 7)
until 1 Nov	House and Garden Normal summer opening times
4 Nov to 20 Dec	Tearoom and Shop Open 12 to 4 Wednesdays to Sundays
Weekends 5,6,12,13,19,20 Dec	House open 12.30 to 3.30 (last entry 3pm) - Opulent 18th century Christmas on principal floor - Wartime Christmas on ground floor
Sundays 6,13, 20 Dec	Christmas Carols in the Stableyard (2pm and 3pm)



Next newsletter due to be published in December 2009.

Any contributions to the Editor by **1 December**.

The Editor may change or reduce contributions if necessary.