

The Friends of Osterley Park

In
support
of the
National Trust



NEWSLETTER

Issue 116 Spring 2020 £1 (free to members)



William Dobson's self-portrait (circa 1645 - 1646) was featured in the Entrance Hall along with the recently rescued Carlo Dolci in Osterley's winter exhibition.



This spring has been overshadowed by the Coronavirus that has swept around the world. We had to take action and cancel all our activities until further notice. The National Trust had allowed its parks to remain open, but because of the large numbers visiting during the last few days they had to take the decision to close them for everyone's safety. Douglas Craik has very kindly been sending updates to those Friends with email addresses.

Welcome to our spring newsletter and thanks to Kim Mamtora for producing it. I am writing this on 22nd March and we can look back at quite a mild winter in London with very little frost. We did not, however, escape the continuous rain, although it was not as heavy as some parts of the country. There is a lovely quote from the Song of Solomon, "for the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers are springing up and the time of the singing of birds has come." Yes, spring is here. We have welcomed wonderful snowdrops and a host of colourful daffodils everywhere.

We had three Coffee Mornings since the beginning of January. We were pleased to have John Chu, the Curator of the 'Treasures of Osterley' exhibition give us an excellent insight into the lives of the banking family. In February, Margaret Friday gave us a wonderful talk on Greenwich and in March Gemma Hardy spoke on the major Renewable Energy Investment programme taking place at Osterley Park. Our diary for the rest of the year has been put on hold.

Please take care.

Best wishes,

John

Next group outings

Douglas Craik

We may be able to arrange a Coach Trip and London Walk for late July and would certainly hope to do so for September and early October. These will be advertised in the July Newsletter.

Holiday 2021

Douglas Craik

Basically this will depend on what we do in 2020, if Newcastle is cancelled for 2020 then we will do the same holiday in 2021, otherwise we'll be off to Lancaster.

Refund cheques

Douglas Craik

With the cancellation of all our summer programme due to Coronavirus, I have made refunds to all who had booked and paid. Some people have got two cheques in the same envelope, some two cheques in two envelopes, some two cheques with one by post and one with the April Newsletter, some one cheque in one envelope and some one cheque with the April Newsletter. This may seem chaotic but there is an explanation – it was chaos.

As we had low bookings and the April trip was imminent I prepared cheques to refund those booked on this, just before I posted these the government made its “stay at home” statement so we decided to cancel all outings in May and June, so a second cheque was added for those on the April trip. Then the March venue cancelled, but I had run out of cheques. So those not booked on the April trip or who had booked on the March visit either got their refund by post later (if they usually get their Newsletter by email) or with the April Newsletter.

I should say my difficulties were compounded by the fact that I had misread the government's advice and was self-insulating (rather than isolating) by wearing a duvet and hot-water bottles and washing my hands every 20 seconds (rather than for 20 seconds).

Coffee Mornings & AGM

Douglas Craik

National Trust is now not holding non-essential meetings on their properties and has closed properties and parks to the public.

Therefore the **April, May and June Coffee Mornings are cancelled.** The scheduled talks will be given later this or next year.

The **AGM is deferred** until later this year, date to be advised.

Group outings

Douglas Craik

Taking into account the government's health advice and that most of our members fall into the "vulnerable" category, we have reluctantly decided that our **March, April, May and June Coach Trips and London Walks are cancelled.**

Refunds will be with you already or in some cases with this Newsletter. The accelerating pace of changes means you may get your refunds in two or even three cheques at different times but they will reach you.

Holiday 2020

Douglas Craik

Due to the great uncertainty resulting from Coronavirus, I have been in touch with those who have already booked to try and work out a way forward. The decision on whether to go ahead will be made on the 1st of July but this late date means the cost per head will increase by £40 to £575 single or £420 twin/double due to higher cost of train tickets.

If you cancel before this then the £100 deposit will not be returned. If the holiday is cancelled then about £55 of deposit will be returned (some unrecoverable costs have been incurred). If you have not yet booked but are interested in doing so under the new terms, please let me know ASAP.

William Dobson's self-portrait was featured in the Entrance Hall along with the recently rescued Carlo Dolci in the winter exhibition.

William Dobson was the very first English artist to be the official painter to the King. The King was Charles I. We know this portrait was on display at Osterley in 1782 for it is listed as hanging in the Drawing Room along with the van Dyck self-portrait which was in an identical frame. We believe these were purchased by Francis Child in 1697. The van Dyck cost him £60 guineas and the Dobson just £20 guineas. They are listed as hanging on either side of the fireplace in the Osterley Drawing Room.

Dobson was born in London in 1611. His father was also William Dobson and was a lawyer who had a house in St. Albans. His mother, Alice, was the daughter of Edward Barnes, a member of the Mercers' Livery Company and an important city person. They had eight children, four boys and four girls. William was probably the 4th child. His father helped Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor, complete his grand dwellings Verulam and Gorhambury near St. Albans. These were decorated with large paintings on the walls and doors by van Koeppen who may have been helped by William's father. The young William may well have seen these works of art.

At the age of 13 he began training with William Peake as a painter and art dealer in Holborn. When he had completed his seven-year apprenticeship in 1632 he went to work for Francis Cleyn, German painter, book illustrator and tapestry designer. Dobson gained access to the very fine collections held by the King possibly through his neighbour Abraham van der Doort who was Keeper of the King's Pictures. William painted his portrait and here we see him.



Dobson began copying paintings by Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese. At this time Charles I had the finest collection of paintings in Europe. Art historian, Andrew Graham-Dixon, says that if Oliver Cromwell had not sold off Charles I excellent art we would still have the best collection of art in Europe!

William's first wife, Elizabeth, died in 1634 and he married Judith Sander in December 1637. They lived in his house in St. Martin's Lane. His charming portrait of Judith shows her with a silk head covering and a low cut gown.

One account of how William Dobson came to the notice of the King is through Anthony van Dyck himself. He discovered Dobson when he noticed a picture by the young artist in a London shop window. When van Dyck died in December 1641, Dobson became Serjeant Painter to Charles I and Groom of the Privy Chamber.



Dobson's style was very unlike van Dyck who tended to flatter people's looks and pose them in elegant style emphasising their status. Dobson's portraits tend to be truer representations and show solid forceful characters painted using thick wedges of impasto and employing bright colours to enhance the sitter's presence. Germain Bazin says in *Baroque and Rococo Art*, "The rude strength Dobson gives to the people he paints contrasts with the aristocratic air of van Dyck's figures." He is citing the portrait of Endymion Porter in the National Gallery (left).

The English Civil War began and William and his wife moved to Oxford where the King had set up court in 1642. William hired a room in St. John the Baptist College which he used as his artists studio. It was one of the most expensive rooms in the college. The King commissioned him to paint his portrait plus many leading cavaliers. This portrait of Charles II when he was Prince of Wales aged about 12 is a fine baroque composition.



Other portraits by Dobson include Prince Rupert of the Rhine, with his dog, a white poodle named Boy who became a Cavalier symbol, Charles Lucas, John Byron and Prince Maurice and a very late picture of Inigo Jones. Jones, at least 70, looks wistful as if considering all the amazing buildings and rooms he had designed for James I and Anne and Charles I and Henrietta Maria. His whole world supported by the Stuart Kings is crumbling before his eyes. This portrait is now on display in Chiswick House in the Blue Room.

When the King's army began to fail and many of his cavalier sitters had been killed or could not afford to have portraits painted, William Dobson encountered difficulties. His painting style changed too as materials to make paint became difficult to acquire and his paintwork became thinner with the colour barely covering the grey background. The portraits also reflect this showing figures looking more ethereal and sad.



*Inigo Jones,
c. 1644*

As Oxford was falling to the Parliamentarians in 1646, Charles I was smuggled out on 27th April disguised as a servant. In May, Oxford was taken by the New Army.

Dobson and his wife returned to his house in London in July. He continued to seek sitters as a member of the Painter-Stainers' Guild but no one came forward. He died in poverty at the age

of just thirty-five on 28th October, 1646. He was buried in St. Martin-in-the-Fields. We do not know his resting place. His wife survived him and kept some of his Baroque paintings hidden to preserve them from the wrath of the strict Protestants. The beheading of St. John the Baptist was one of these.

John Aubrey called Dobson, "the most excellent painter that England hath yet bred."

Art critic, Waldemar Januszczak, in a television programme declared Dobson, "the lost genius of Baroque and the first truly dazzling English-born painter." Our own Judith Evans also made a recording in front of the Dobson self-portrait in the Drawing Room at Osterley. Ellis Waterhouse dubs him "the most distinguished purely British artist before Hogarth."

Have a look at our William Dobson self-portrait. We hope that its pair, the van Dyck self-portrait, will be loaned to us by the National Portrait Gallery when it closes for restoration this summer.

It would be delightful to see them hanging once again in the Drawing Room at Osterley as they did in 1782!



This painting by William Dobson reveals Oxford's role in the English Civil War. Two army leaders (left) with Prince Rupert, right.

Membership update

Keith Rookledge

April is the start of the membership year for FOOP. As you probably will have seen, your renewal form was included with January's newsletter. If you pay by Direct Debit this will be taken in April.

I have received around 50 payments so far. Please can I ask those of you who pay directly to ensure this is done.

I try to respond to requests as soon as practical, but do remember I sometimes go on holiday so there could be a delay!

Banking cheques presents issues with the steady closure of banks. Generally I pay in once a month so there will be some delay in your cheque clearing.



Lastly, postal costs. In March, postage costs increased once more. Some people use the First Class postal service, but I find there is little difference in delivery time when using the Second Class service, so save those pennies by sticking to Second Class!

100 Club

Douglas Craik

The last draw of the 20/19-20 was held at the coffee morning on 4th March. The lucky winners were £100 Norah Kelly and £50 Joyce Bing.

The next draw will be at the next coffee morning (July or later) and include all members who have renewed their 100 Club subscription by then, including additional numbers for those who have paid for extra numbers with their 2020/21 membership renewal.

If you have already renewed membership (due by 1/4/20) and want to add more 100 Club subscriptions just send me a cheque (£12 per number).

E-mail addresses

Douglas Craik

If you have an e-mail address and have NOT been receiving a series of update emails from me regarding changes to outings it would be helpful if you could email me at friendsofosterleypark@gmail.com. (This information will be held in a computer record but only used by committee members of the Friends, not the National Trust).

This will allow me to keep you updated on developments (it will not change how you get your newsletter but see below...)

July printed newsletter

Douglas Craik

We would like to reduce our costs during the Coronavirus situation... If you normally get your Newsletter by post or hand delivery, would you be willing to change to getting it by e-mail for July as we will be avoiding hand delivery?

We would revert to print thereafter (unless you decided to stay on the e-mail method). If so, please drop me an e-mail at friendsofosterleypark@gmail.com

Coffee Mornings at the Brewhouse

Our Coffee Morning talks are a chance to catch up on the latest news from other Friends and Staff.

About half of our talks are updates on the property from members of staff and the others on subjects that will hopefully be of interest.



Our programme will continue later this year. Please see our July newsletter for more information. If you'd like to do a 30-45 minute talk on any relevant subject in 2020/21 please contact John James.

Diary: Friends Events and Excursions

Please note: due to the Coronavirus, all of our events and excursions have been cancelled until at least July 2020. We will review the situation in early July and advise of rescheduled and new events in the July newsletter.

April	CANCELLED Coffee Morning
April	CANCELLED Coach Trip
May	CANCELLED Coffee Morning
May	CANCELLED London Visit
May	DEFERRED AGM (new date TBA)
May	CANCELLED Coach Trip
June	CANCELLED Coffee Morning
June	CANCELLED Coach Trip
June	CANCELLED London Visit
July	Coffee Morning: To be confirmed in July newsletter
July	Coach Trip: TBA
July	London Visit: TBA
Aug	No Coach Trip or London Visit because of Holiday
Mon 10 th Aug - Sat 15 th Aug	Holiday to be confirmed
Mon 24 th Aug	Coffee Morning: TBA - Friend
Sep	Coach Trip: TBA
Sep	London Visit: TBA
Wed 9 th Sep	Autumn Reception: 16:30 for 17:00 Brewhouse
Fri 25 th Sep	Coffee Morning: Robin Ridsdale - F&B and Retail Manager
Oct	Coach Trip: TBA
Oct	London Visit: TBA
Wed 7 th Oct	Coffee Morning: TBA - Friend
Wed 11 th Nov	Coffee Morning: Jeremy Dalton
Fri 4 th Dec	Coffee Morning: TBA - Friend

Issue	Published in	Contents
Winter	January	Membership renewal, first three Coach Trips and first three London Visits
Spring	April	AGM papers, membership cards
Summer	July	Next three Coach Trips, next three London Visits
Autumn	October	Next Summer Holiday booking

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The 'Friends' website gives you all of the current news, meetings, events, publications, and membership information relating to the work of the Friends of Osterley Park in supporting Osterley House and Park. www.e-voice.org.uk/friendsofosterleypark

Next Newsletter

To be published in July 2020. Any contributions to the Newsletter Editor (editor.foop@gmail.com) by **14th June 2020**.

The Editor may edit contributions as necessary.