

The Friends of Osterley Park

In
support
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National Trust



NEWSLETTER

Issue 122 Autumn 2021 £1 (free to members)



The Tapestry Room at Osterley Park



Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter.

To start, I must inform you that Kim Mamtora who has been the editor of our newsletter for some time now, has had to resign due to pressures of work in her full-time job. We offer her many thanks for being so creative in producing our newsletters, particularly our last one, with some marvellous illustrations.

Today we had our first Trustees Meeting since last September so you can imagine how much ground we had to cover. We are planning our programme for Members. Both Margaret Friday and Vik Sharma are planning trips around London and to venues around the country respectively. They are finding places are slowly beginning to open up to visitors and will be able to announce bookings starting in the new year. We are also planning our coffee mornings to start again with Monday 27 September in The Study Base, and future dates in our calendar at the end of this newsletter. As time is short, we will not have an Autumn Reception.

There have been some changes of staff at Osterley, in particular Neil Cole the General Manager, who has left after several years of service. Neil came many times to talk to us. He made many changes and moved Osterley House and Park forward during his time at the property. We will have a variety of speakers at our coffee mornings from staff members, Douglas and speakers from other sources. Douglas has been planning our 2022 holiday and has made arrangements to visit the picturesque old city of Lancaster. This part of North Lancashire has many places to visit.

I hope that we will see many of you back at Osterley soon. It has been a very difficult time for all of us, let us hope we are over the worst.

John

Coffee Mornings

10.30am for 11am until 12pm-ish
Friends £4, others £5
(£2.50 pays for coffee and biscuits)



Our monthly programme of Coffee Morning talks continues and all are welcome! It is a chance to catch up on the latest news from other Friends and Staff. Our programme is being finalised, but confirmed dates for our next six coffee mornings are as follows:

2021 (taking place at Study Base)

Monday 27 September
Tuesday 26 October
Monday 29 November

2022 (location TBC)

Monday 10 January
Tuesday 8 February
Monday 7 March

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. If you are willing to do a 30-45 minute talk on any relevant subject in 2021/22, please contact John James.

Membership update

Keith Rookledge

A big thank you for renewing your membership of the Friends. While we have not yet been able to make any decisions about providing funds for Osterley House due to Covid-19, we will no doubt be getting requests for financial help.

We now have 199 paid as Friends. Each year, we seem to lose about 20 people. If you know anyone who could be interested, please encourage them to join us. You are quite welcome to give them my phone number if they want it.

Finally, as Douglas has mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, the 100 Club could do with more participants swelling the rewards!



Burgh House

New End Square, NW3 1LT
21 October 2021
10.30am (£7)

A Queen Anne house built in brick by a rich man to show off his wealth. Sophie Richards, the house curator, will give us

a sit down talk and a guided tour of the house. Rudyard Kipling's daughter lived here in the 1930s and his last visit was to see her here in Hampstead. Our tour begins at **10.30am**. There are gardens still surrounding the house. The garden terrace is by Gertrude Jekyll. The local community saved this house from demolition and it re-opened, fully restored in 2006. A **£7** contribution is requested for this visit.

Coach Trips

Vik Sharma

As everyone knows, it's been pretty quiet on the coach trip front. Lockdown extension until 17 July left very little time to plan anything for late summer/early autumn. Most venues are now open, however, getting through to them due to an extraordinarily busy season compounded with a severe shortage of staff means phone calls go unanswered for hours on end. This means resorting to emails and online contact forms for even the most basic queries (with over 24 hours' response time).

A couple of places I managed to get through to continue to run with limited capacity and facilities (including parking spaces, which are being pre-booked weeks in advance). I guess it was to be expected with a last-minute scramble for a summer staycation in the UK.

Planning for Easter 2022 trips shall begin in earnest soon after Christmas. Take care, I look forward to planning our trips for next year!

Proposed parking restrictions in Jersey Road in the vicinity of the Park Main Gate

Mike Doran

Over the past few years, the Council has become concerned about complaints received from residents and users of Jersey road in the vicinity of the Osterley Park main gate entrance, opposite the Thornbury Road T-junction.

In good weather, and at weekends and Bank Holidays, parking along both sides of Jersey Road either side of the main gate entrance of the Park has led to vehicle grid-locks with police having to intervene (see photo), and to difficulties for nearby residents unable to exit their driveways into the road (see photo).

The Council has now decided to consult local residents on its proposal to restrict parking either side of the Park gate entrance along the north side of Jersey Road. This consultation will take place in early autumn this year.



2022 Holiday to Lancaster

Douglas Craik

Thursday 18th - Tuesday 23rd August; Bed & Breakfast.

Single room £570 per person; Double / twin £440 per person

After two forays into using Travelodges, one successful, one less so, I have reverted to our traditional use of University accommodation. There are two Universities in Lancaster: the University of Cumbria and the University of Lancaster. Only the latter offers breakfasts plus single, twin, and double rooms so I have opted for this. The Lancaster campus is a bit south of the city but there are several bus routes from the campus to the city with a pretty frequent service (for those who want to venture into town for the evening). Breakfast is in the Marketplace, a couple of minutes from our accommodation and dinner can also be there and on other sites on the campus.

Itinerary: note this may be changed a little as NT is still recovering from Covid constraints.



Thursday 18th: Train from Euston station, meet at 10:00am. Coach from Lancaster station to Sizergh Castle (NT). The Strickland family has lived at Sizergh for more than 750 years, and it remains their home today. Set in large, beautifully landscaped gardens and based on an impressive

14th century solar tower, Sizergh was extended in Tudor times. The romantic fortified mansion contains some of the finest Elizabethan carved overmantels in the country, as well as a collection of good English and French furniture and family portraits. Then on to Lancaster University.



Friday 19th: Public bus from campus at 9:30 to Lancaster Castle for a guided tour. Lancaster Castle is one of the most historically fascinating surviving buildings in the country. Its beginnings date back to Roman times when, from its commanding position on the hill overlooking the

town of Lancaster and the River Lune, it stood as a bastion against the marauding forces of the ancient Picts and Scots tribes. Owned by The Duchy of Lancaster (the Queen is the Duke of Lancaster), the castle has witnessed scenes of significant historical, cultural and political impact throughout the centuries. Until 2011 it was a fully functioning HM Prison and today it is a magnificent 'living' monument, offering a glimpse into England's often dark past through tours.

The rest of the day will be for individual visits but I expect that in practice several groups of like minded people will form up. For example, the following are within walking distance of the Castle or a short bus ride away. More details will be provided to those who book the holiday. Return to the University will be by public bus when it suits you, some may stay on to eat in Lancaster.



The Judges Lodgings Museum. This elegant, Grade 1 building was home to Thomas Covell, Keeper of Lancaster Castle and notorious witch hunter. Between 1776 and 1975 the house became an impressive residence for judges visiting the Assize Court at the Castle. Today there is something for everyone with

beautiful period rooms, gorgeous Gillows furniture, a Victorian schoolroom and the Museum of Childhood. (Next to the Castle, entry £2.)



Lancaster Priory Church. (Grade 1) occupies the site of the original pre-1430s structure. Some of the old stone belonging to the original Priory building has been used in the construction of this Medieval Church with long views out to Morecambe Bay. The carved choir stalls are of oak and, dating from 1340, are the third oldest in England. They are described as “about the most luxuriant canopies in the country”. The church is full of historical monuments.

(Next to the Castle.)



Lancaster Maritime Museum

occupies two historic buildings on St. Georges Quay, the city's main 18th century harbour. The former Custom House of 1764, contains displays on the history of the Port of

Lancaster and the local fishing industry, with a gallery for exhibitions. In the adjacent warehouse are displays on the Lancaster Canal and the ecology of Morecambe Bay. Several preserved vessels are also displayed. (About 1/2 mile from the Castle, but on a nearby bus route, entry £2.)



The City Museum is housed in Lancaster's former town hall, an elegant Georgian building constructed in 1781-3. The museum itself was founded in 1923 and its collections illustrate the history and archaeology of the city of Lancaster. It is also home to the King's Own Royal Regiment Museum. (About 350 yards from the Castle. Entry

is free.)



The Grade 1 listed **Ashton Memorial** was commissioned by Lancaster industrialist Lord Ashton as a tribute to his late wife Jessy. It was completed in 1909. Externally, the dome is made of copper. The main construction material is Portland stone although the steps are made of Cornish granite. Around the dome are sculptures by Herbert Hampton representing Commerce, Science, Industry and Art. The interior of the dome has allegorical paintings of Commerce, Art and History. At around 150ft tall, it dominates the Lancaster skyline. The first floor outdoor viewing gallery provides superb views of the surrounding countryside and out across Morecambe Bay to the Lakeland fells and mountains. The memorial is in the very attractive Williamson Park, which features a butterfly house. The Ashton Memorial stands coincidentally close to the mathematical centre point of the United Kingdom. (Entry is free, about 10 minute walk and 10 minute bus ride from Castle. A 15 minute walk and 35 minute bus takes you to the University.)



Saturday 20th: Clitheroe Castle is perched above the town of Clitheroe where it has dominated the skyline for 800 years. With panoramic views across the Ribble Valley beyond the Castle walls, with a museum, gift shop and café. The museum tells the story of the town, the rich

heritage, industry, legends and folklore of local people.



Gawthorpe Hall's origins are in a pele tower, a strong fortification built by the Shuttleworths in the 14th century as a defence against invading Scots. The new Elizabethan house at Gawthorpe was dovetailed around the pele tower from plans drawn up by Richard Shuttleworth but carried out after his death by his brother the

Reverend Lawrence Shuttleworth. The foundation stone was laid on 26 August 1600. The hall has a collection of 17th and 18th century portraits on permanent loan from the National Portrait Gallery and is notable for its textiles, collected by the last resident family member Rachel Kay-Shuttleworth, about a fifth of which are on display. (NT)



**Sunday 21st:
Samlesbury Hall**
was built in 1325 by Gilbert de Southworth (b. 1270), and was the primary home of the Southworth family

until the early 17th century. Samlesbury Hall may have been built to replace an earlier building destroyed during a raid by the Scots, during The Great Raid of 1322 (Robert the Bruce). The hall has been many things in its past including a public house and a girls' boarding school, but since 1925, when it was saved from being demolished for its timber, it has been administered by a registered charitable trust. It has had various additions and “refurbishments” so it reflects the building styles and religious beliefs from the 14th century to the present day.

Then on to:-



Houghton Tower

Today's Tower might have been built in 1565 by Thomas Houghton, but he was far from the first; previous structures here date all the way back to 1109. The hilltop location, which made Houghton Tower strategically crucial for centuries, now

guarantees brilliant views to the Lakes, the Irish Sea and Wales, from the heart of the famous county which gives it so much of its identity. Kings, queens, artists and authors have all been regular visitors here, adding their stories and a national perspective to what's always been a unique, inspiring setting. If they'd kept a guestbook, you'd find the signatures, among others, of William III & Queen Mary, George V & Queen Mary, as well as Dickens and Shakespeare (and Cillian Murphy!)

Houghton Tower is the ancestral home of the de Houghtons, who still own this Grade I listed building, offering a link not just to the earliest builders of the Tower, but to William the Conqueror and Lady Godiva too.

Mon 22nd: Because of narrow roads and limited parking, we will use two mini/midi buses with one going alongside Lake Windermere to Wray Castle, then Beatrix Potter gallery, then Hilltop; and the other going the opposite way- they may meet in Hawkshead for lunch.



Beatrix Potter bought **Hill Top** in 1905 with the royalties from her first few books, written at her parents home in London, but inspired by her annual holiday visits to the Lake District. After Beatrix bought Hill Top she busied herself writing more books, and visiting her farm. In 1909 she bought another

farm opposite Hill Top, Castle Farm, which became her main Lakeland base. Beatrix wrote many of her famous children's stories in this little 17th century stone house. Characters such as Tom Kitten, Samuel Whiskers and Jemima Puddle-Duck were all created here, and the books contain many pictures based on the house and garden. There is a good example of a traditional cottage garden, containing mainly old-fashioned flowers. When she died in 1943, she left Hill Top to the National Trust with the proviso that it be kept exactly as she left it, complete with her furniture and china.



The **Beatrix Potter Gallery** in Hawkshead is one of the National Trust's more unusual properties in that it has an interesting link with Beatrix Potter herself. The 17th century building, which was once the office of her husband, local solicitor William Heelis, has remained largely unaltered since his day. The Gallery

houses an annually changing exhibition of a selection of Beatrix Potter's original drawings and illustrations. Hawkshead is an ancient (pedestrianised) village with several cafes and fascinating old buildings.



Wray Castle (NT) is not a real castle but a private house built in the Gothic Revival Style in 1840. It was built for Dr James Dawson, a retired Liverpool surgeon. The house was built using his wife's inheritance from a gin fortune. Apparently she took one look at the house when it was finished, and refused to live in it. Wray Castle is

an elaborate building. James Dawson could essentially build whatever he wanted, from a portcullis to turrets which don't have any access to them, as well as arrow slits and even mock ruins in the grounds – James ordered the lot.



Tuesday 23rd: We will pack up and go to **Leighton Hall** for a private tour. The house was built for George Towneley in 1759–61 in Georgian style to a design by John Hird, and the woods

replanted and park laid out in 1763. In 1822, the property came into the possession of Richard Gillow who Gothicized the façade in 1822–25 using local white limestone. In 1870 his son, Richard Thomas Gillow, added a three-storey wing containing a billiard room below, and guest rooms above. Richard Gillow Reynolds is the current owner.

We will then return to Lancaster station for our homeward trip arriving at Euston about 16:35.

Tapestry Room Stories in the Gobelins

Margaret Friday

The Tapestry Room at Osterley (*see front cover image*) is said to have been created by Robert Adam for Robert Child. Gobelin Tapestries were the best and in 1772 this set expressing The Four Elements and called the Loves of the Gods was ordered through Jacques Neilson, the Scot in charge of the Gobelin factory just outside Paris at the time. The first set were designed by Francois Boucher for Madame de Pompadour's brother. Until her death, no other copies of this tapestry design were permitted. By the time these tapestries arrived at Osterley, four other Adam houses had sets on display in their rooms. We know the Osterley tapestries were delivered by a special long cart which brought them from the Thames at Brentford. Agneta York was staying at Osterley in July 1776 and she wrote to a friend, "The tapestries arrived this morning and we are hoping to get a look at them."

The carefully made-to-measure panels featuring stories from Greco-Roman myths show Earth, Air and Fire in roundels surrounded by images of fruit, flowers and animals. Water is represented by the large mirror with decorations emphasising the floral theme of the room. As Earth, we see Pomona and Vertumnus. Pomona is the Italian goddess of gardens, fruit trees and orchards.

To keep others out, she fenced herself in but Vertumnus, Etruscan god of the changing seasons, fell in love with her. He used various disguises to try and get into the orchard but failed as a vineyard worker, a soldier and a fisherman. Finally he disguised himself as an old lady and was admitted by Pomona. He lavishly praised her very fine fruit trees and recommended Vertumnus in marriage as a tree that supports the vine - Pomona rejects this idea so Vertumnus throws off his disguise. Pomona is entranced by his beauty and falls completely in love with him. This story has been pictured in country villas across Europe including the Villa Medici and Versailles, so Osterley is in good company.



Aurora is the rosy figured goddess of the dawn. Wearing saffron robes she rides in a chariot before Apollo to greet the new day. Her sons are the fresh morning breezes which blow on her approach. Aurora has many affairs with mortals - in our picture she is rousing Cephalus the hunter - but she is in love and neglects her duties so the sun god's chariot lies idle. Italian Baroque artists portray her scattering petals from the sky.

In the next scene, Vulcan represents fire and Venus is the goddess of beauty and love. Vulcan as the god of fire makes beautiful and useful things in metal for the gods and also for men at the gods' request. Vulcan made a fine suit of armour for Jupiter who gave Vulcan the reward of being granted whatever he wished. Vulcan wanted to marry Minerva but she refused so he married Venus instead. Venus is constantly unfaithful for Vulcan had given her a magic belt with the power to create ardent love in all those who see her wearing it, thus many men are captivated.

Vulcan fashions an invisible net to capture Venus and her lover Mars. Vulcan displays the couple caught in an embrace in the net to the other gods. They are amused and Mercury offers to exchange places with Mars.

Our picture is thought to be Venus asking Vulcan to make a suit of armour for her son. Many of Venus' attributes abound in the rooms on tapestries at Osterley - roses, myrtle, doves, and golden apples. The Graces attend her but most important is her son Cupid, with his bow and sheaf of arrows.



Cupid and Psyche are depicted above the fireplace. Psyche is a girl of such beauty as to rival Venus. Venus asks Cupid to make Psyche fall in love with a fool, however Cupid himself falls in love with her and takes her to his enchanted castle providing Psyche with everything she asks for but she is not allowed to see him. Cupid only comes to her at night. Psyche's jealous sisters encourage her to try and get a look at her lover. She is shown with an oil lamp in her hand trying to get a glimpse of Cupid. The scalding oil falls on his wing and he vanishes in anger. Psyche searches for

Cupid and suffers many trials. Eventually Cupid begs Jupiter to take pity on Psyche. The gods decide to offer Psyche the nectar of the gods - which will make her immortal. Cupid and Psyche celebrate in a great wedding feast and Psyche gives birth to a daughter called Pleasure.

Raphael's frescoes of this great love story decorate the Villa Farnese in Rome. The source of this love story is The Golden Ass by Apuleius.

The final picture of Cupid in the tapestry shows him using a magnifying glass to warm an arrow. The opposite wall shows his warmed arrow successfully piercing a human heart creating another pair of lovers.



Horace Walpole described this room as the “the most superb and beautiful that can be imagined.”

As Horace was the critic and stylist of his age and often made derogatory remarks about places he visited, this is a real tribute.

Another theme sees each of the Osterley State rooms as gardens of love. The Tapestry room is called the French Garden of Love; the State bedroom, all in shades of green, is the English Garden; and the Etruscan Room is the Italian Garden of Love and would have been filled with real flowers rather than flowers depicted in the tapestry, including the chair seats by Tessier.

The chair seats have the young shepherds and shepherdesses flirting with each other around the room when placed so they are facing one another. The chair seats only have flowers on them as in the eighteenth century it was quite all right to lean on someone but one should never sit on them - so only flowers on chair seats!

Enjoy the myriad of flowers, fruits, birds and animals in our tapestries and then make for the gardens to find many examples of the beauties you have seen here flowering in Mrs. Child's garden.



Our first draw for the 21/22 membership year will be at our first coffee morning on 27 September.

We will have two £100 and two £35 prizes to catch up after lockdown. This is less than previous years because a number of members renewed their membership but not their 100 Club subscriptions (on the positive side, this increases the chance of a prize for the rest of us subscribers).

I would still welcome more subscribers, the normal £12 per number is reduced to £6 for the last two draws up to 31 March. Please let me know if you'd like to subscribe.

Diary: Friends events and excursions

2021	
Mon 27 Sept	Coffee Morning in Study Base, 10.30am for 11am
Thurs 21 Oct	London Visit: Burgh House, meet at Burgh House at 10.30am
Tues 26 Oct	Coffee Morning in Study Base, 10.30am for 11am
Mon 29 Nov	Coffee Morning in Study Base, 10.30am for 11am
2022	
Mon 10 Jan	Coffee Morning , 10.30am for 11am (venue TBC)
Tues 8 Feb	Coffee Morning , 10.30am for 11am (venue TBC)
Mon 7 Mar	Coffee Morning , 10.30am for 11am (venue TBC)
May (date TBC)	AGM (deferred from 2021)
Thurs 18 Aug-	Holiday: Lancaster
Tues 23 Aug	

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

Chairman

John James 020 8232 8683
john.james15@blueyonder.co.uk
 Parkfield Cottage, Osterley Road,
 Isleworth, TW7 4PF

Treasurer & 100 Club

Douglas Craik 020 8977 6449
friendsofosterleypark@gmail.com
 118 Fairfax Road, Teddington,
 TW11 9BS

Membership Secretary

Keith Rookledge 020 8866 7017
 2 West Avenue, Pinner, HA5 5BY

Coach Trips & Bookings for London Visits

Vik Sharma 07876 498 107
vik.sharma@yahoo.co.uk
 50 Montrose Avenue,
 Twickenham, TW2 6HB

London Visits

Margaret Friday 020 8991 0593
margaretfriday@talktalk.net

Website Editor

Mike Doran
mikedoran47@outlook.com

Newsletter Editor

Kim Mamtora
editor.foop@gmail.com

Committee Member

Susan Parsons

Committee Member

Patricia James

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 January 2022. Any contributions to the Newsletter Editor (editor.foop@gmail.com) by **19 December 2021**.

The Editor may edit contributions as necessary.