

The Friends of Osterley Park



in support of

National
Trust

NEWSLETTER

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The Great Seal of Elizabeth I

Chairman's Report

John James



Dear Friends,

Writing this Chairman's foreword in December for our winter newsletter I could be wishing you a Happy Christmas, but you receive the newsletter after Christmas and in the New Year, so it is more appropriate to wish you all a Happy New Year! Let us hope 2022 will be safer for us all, but at the time of writing in early December we have a new strain of the virus arriving that will no doubt spread. We need to be vigilant in keeping ourselves and others safe, but we hope that our planned dates for 2022 will be fulfilled. These proposed dates all appear in the newsletter. We regularly have staff members coming to talk to us about their involvement at Osterley as well as visiting speakers. If you are interested in giving a talk do get in touch with me. Hopefully we will have an AGM following our April coffee morning. We have not had one since 2019. We are also planning to have an Autumn Reception for you all in September.

The House no doubt will have plans for exhibitions during the year following the "Year of Treasures at Osterley – Reflections". We were fortunate to have excellent talks for our first three coffee mornings. Lyndsey Feeny spoke at our first coffee morning in September, Christine Diwell was the speaker in October on West Middlesex Hospital "from pauper to patient", and Phil Bruss, Lead Ranger gave the talk in November. Chris Cleeve, the new General Manager, visited our coffee morning in November and introduced himself to the Friends. He has been Manager of Rainham Hall, Sutton House and 575 Wandsworth Road and comes to Osterley with a great deal of experience. He has been very impressed with the amount the Friends have involved themselves in supporting the House and Gardens. Douglas reported that the financial support we have given is approximately £140,000. We will support future activities as they arise. We continue to give support of plants and seeds for the gardens, the work of the costume makers and of course the buggy maintenance.

I do hope you enjoy this newsletter. My thanks to those who have contributed and our grateful thanks to Kim Mamtora for producing this newsletter for us.

With best wishes,

John James

It was an absolute pleasure to meet with the Friends of Osterley on Monday 27 September, for the second meeting at Osterley since the pandemic. To see so many familiar faces together again was really uplifting and gave me a little more hope for a welcome return to normal.

I spoke with the Friends about how the last few months have panned out, and especially what my own experiences have felt like since I returned from maternity leave again in the summer. The National Trust had to respond to a quickly escalating crisis as the Covid pandemic unfolded, which led to some extremely tough decisions and staffing redundancies in from of the 'Reset'. Osterley felt the burden of these decisions in all departments, and we've been learning how to move forwards with less staff and resource together. Since then, other staff have decided to take up new ventures and so we've been welcoming a new Lead Ranger, Phil Bruss, after Jeremy Dalton's departure in August and more recently promoted Tami Jovanovic to full time Collections Assistant after Amy McCaffrey left for a new career.

We've been very much following the instruction from above to 'keep things simple' and we've managed a fairly steady year to date with the house reopening successfully with timed entry to limit numbers, and we're still seeing how visitors are enjoying the garden and parkland as valuable local green space.

Over the winter we're delighted to be able to offer a small exhibition in the basement rooms, showcasing a collection of entries from the autumn programme of 'My Treasure of Osterley', a continuation of the success of 2019/20's 'Treasures of Osterley' exhibition. We have been gathering visitor, volunteer and staff favourites from the entire property to form this exhibition, and entries have been as broad as items from the house collection, to hidden staircases, vistas and sunsets across the lakes, and old oak trees. It will be a really personal, poignant collection of entries to see.

I really enjoyed hearing the Friends' feedback on some key points and it was heartening to update how access is really being looked into at the property to bring our base level standards up to where they should be, before we move on to bigger access challenges – an area which is so well supported by the Friends and for which we are very grateful for.

Going forwards, we are thrilled the Friends will be back with regular coffee mornings now and we look forward to spending some more time with you.

Happy New Year! I hope you all had an excellent Christmas and are looking forward to the New Year!

As you are aware, this is the last newsletter before the Friends of Osterley's new season in April. Your membership renewal will then be due and I know many of you send your form soon with your remittance.

With the 'new normal' way of living, dealing with cheques is more problematical. Firstly, I have to pay them in at the bank. I have no branch near me and in addition there are difficulties in accessing the nearest branch, which has limited opening hours. At the moment, we are not charged for paying in cheques, but many other banks have withdrawn this benefit from charities and do charge for each one paid in.

Quite a few of you pay either by Standing Order or bank transfer and it would be nice if as many as possible could do this. It also makes tracking of your payment easier as well. Enclosed with this newsletter is a Standing Order form if you wish to go this way. Also, the details of our bank account are below if you wish to pay by transfer. It will be appreciated if you could do this. You can of course still pay by cheque. Should you wish to cancel the Standing Order, it is your responsibility to contact your bank.

Remember also if you want a membership card, please enclose a stamped and addressed envelope to mitigate the cost, 65p at the moment, but beware the Post Office may well put the price up in April!

If you want to continue subscribing to the 100 Club, please remember to add this to your remittance. Last year the membership of the 100 Club was down and not only do you stand a chance of winning, but you add to the money we can donate to the House!

So, we look forward to you enjoying all the benefits of continuing with the Friends.

Bank: Barclays
Sort Code: 20-02-06
Account: 70389315

At our coffee morning on 27 September, we had a “super draw” to catch up on the missed year of meetings.

Winners were: £100 D Craik (no fiddling, I wasn't there), L McKay and O Bagnall; £45 S Kendrick, D Huffer and D Evans.

The last draw of 2021 was at the November coffee morning and the winners were £100 R Patterson; £45 P Timms; and £15 to a private winner (at the end of each year any surplus is used as an additional small prize).

Subscriptions are £12 per number with half going to prize money and half to the House. We have lost quite a few subscriptions over the last couple of years so please consider adding one to your membership renewal (see previous page) and if you already have a subscription please renew it.

2022 Holiday: Lancaster Thursday 18 - Tuesday 23 August

Douglas Craik

Bookings for our holiday in August are starting to come in. I have over a dozen so far but we can take up to 38 people so if you would like to join us but have lost the form just give me a ring or drop me an email (see my contact information on the back cover of this newsletter). I have booked accommodation and a coach company. The train booking will be made in May so still plenty of time.



I am looking for ideas for 2023, I have had several but the only one with more than one “vote” is a return to Glasgow (not that I am biased but there is still lots to see in and around “Glaschu - Dear Green Place”) but perhaps there are other ideas.

The Vyne, Hampshire, on Wednesday 27 April 2022

Set in a scenic landscape, you can take some time out in sprawling gardens and woodlands. The ancient woodlands reveal traces of history if you know where to look. See if you can spot the remains of medieval fish ponds and a Second World War munitions storage site. For



a chance to see wetland wildlife, you can visit the purpose-built bird hide.

Inside the house, you can learn about William Wiggett Chute and his family who lived at The Vyne in the mid-19th Century. Take in historic gems including a pre-Reformation chapel, Tudor oak gallery with 16th-century wood carvings and neo-classical staircase hall. Or immerse yourself in the Victorian chapter of The Vyne's past by dressing up like Victorians in the Housekeeper's Room. For invigorating walks, you can hit the network of paths that run through Morgaston Woods. In spring, look out for a haze of bluebells in dappled sunlight. In autumn, you can stroll beneath a copper canopy and spot fungi flourishing beside the path. Overhead, squirrels sometimes dart about the branches and if you're really quiet you might glimpse a deer wandering among the trees.

Notes:

Please note that, given the current circumstances and evolving situation around Covid, this is a tentative booking. I will re-confirm all the details closer to time. We will need at least 20-22 members to sign-up, rules permitting, to make it a viable trip. Also note that besides additional Covid-driven costs, from extra cleaning and logistics to driver/staff shortages, rising fuel prices are putting upward pressure on coach costs. I will negotiate hard, but current costs per person are indicative only.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all.

The Antique Breadboard Museum Christine Diwell

At first this title and article might seem irrelevant to the Friends of Osterley Park but do read on. A while ago I was included in a visit to the Antique Breadboard Museum in Putney. Situated in the home of teacher, author and curator Madeleine Neave, it consists of a collection amassed over 30 years by her late mother an antique dealer. Madeleine is a delight and allows careful handling of the objects while the impressive collection includes boards commemorating royal occasions, family celebrations, trips around England and Europe and much more. Not only is a visit amazingly informative providing as it does a fascinating history of the craftsmen involved and research into the origin of the boards, the finale is the best possible, homemade jam and scones – presented on a board of the visitor's choice – with of course cream and not forgetting tea.



Imagine the surprise and delight when Madeleine introduced the collection by showing her oldest breadboard carved especially for Sarah Sophia Child of Osterley in 1848 – see the photos. This example seems to have led to a fashionable trend. By way of background, the humble breadboard, or at least certain of them, can be traced back to one of the foremost Victorian carvers, inspired by Grinling Gibbons and exhibitor at the Great Exhibition of 1851, William Gibbs Rogers. Mr Rogers created many admirable sculptures, was patronised by the great and good, including Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, but he also craved breadboards. Possibly this was to tied him over during leaner periods. It is by no means definite that he was the first to do this but he appears to be the first in print and it was he who produced three original designs, including Middleton, for the Countess of Jersey.



In this newsletter we look at the current exhibition featuring treasures selected by volunteers, visitors and staff at Osterley. Everyone is still being invited to select a treasure by filling up a card in the Osterley Shop or when visiting the house or cafe. The National Trust published a book called *125 Treasures from the Collections of the National Trust*. It celebrates the 125 year history of the National Trust, edited by Tarnya Cooper who is their Curation and Conservation Director. Osterley's item was the Carlo Dolci painting of St. Agatha which we featured in our winter 2019 newsletter. She was purchased by Robert Child, the younger son of Sir Francis, who went on a grand tour, was painted by Dahl in front of the Coliseum in 1712. Carlo Dolci was famed as the best artist in Florence so would have been at the top of a Robert Child acquisition list for he collected paintings and sculpture which were displayed in the Lincoln's Inn residence. The painting of Agatha's face is so fine that no hint of it being a painting is revealed. When Lincoln's Inn was sold his nephew, Robert Child II, moved Agatha to the Breakfast Room at Osterley and re-named her St. Veronica. This may have been because this Robert Child, son of Samuel and Agatha Child, did not like the agonies of St. Agatha associated with his clever mother who managed Child's Bank for the years between the death of her husband and her son Francis coming of age. Robert also had a wife and young daughter. The painting was sold off but re-acquired by the house with the assistance of Jim Tickle's bequest in 2018 as it was listed in the 1782 Inventory as hanging in the Breakfast Room.

Our next object, chosen by member Jeff Shaw is the catalogue of books in the Osterley library called *Catalogus librorum in bibliotheca Osterleensi* 1771 begun by Dr. Winchester and completed by Eton and Kings College, Cambridge classical scholar Dr. Morell for Robert Child. The hand-written alphabetical list of texts in the library is also shown. The fine library of Bryan Fairfax had been purchased complete by his brother Francis in 1756. The original 2,000 books were described by Eileen Harris as "Osterley's most distinguished asset" in her guidebook to Osterley, 1994. People visited Osterley to view the books displayed in the splendid Robert Adam library of 1766. The extended collection which contained 11 Caxton's was sold in 1885 by the 7th Earl of Jersey. It took 8 days to sell off the library earning £13,000 which went to repair the roof and restore the house.

The library was filled for many years with books loaned from the Athenaeum Club and St. Paul's Boys School. When their value became apparent they requested their returned. This took place over a number of years. In 2011 the shelves were filled with books from the Norris Collection which was given to Ham House but their library could not accommodate all of the books so they now grace shelves in the Osterley library.



The Meissen Dessert Service made in the 1730s in the Chinese style was an early effort at porcelain made in Germany. It came to Osterley via the Jersey family when Sarah Sophia married the 5th Earl of Jersey in 1804. The plate being shown is part of a collection of 21 pieces each showing people in brightly coloured Chinese attire. By the 19th century they became less used as the people appear to be Chinese but the buildings



show that the artist had never visited China as they all look northern European. Dinner guests began to laugh at the pictures on the plates but unusually these were kept making them even more valuable and interesting as a view into European perceptions of the world in the past. This treasure was chosen by Jenny-Louise Kirk, a volunteer.

A Sevres Porcelain tea service was selected by visitor Sandra Wiltshire. This blue celeste, heavenly blue set was decorated by Charles Bateux-Aine in 1785 when tea was still a refined and expensive drink taken by the ladies in the Drawing Room whilst the men remained in the Eating Room with their Port and Cigars.



The Child family had a large collection of fine china at Osterley and the Berkeley Square town house. The Sevres was supported and inspired by Madame de Pompadour, mistress to Louis XV king of France. A new book, just published by Dame Rosalind Savill is called *Everyday Rococo: Madame de Pompadour and Sevres*. The book reveals that Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson brought flowers indoors, most portraits show real flowers on her gowns and in her hair. Her other love was exotic birds and many pieces made by the Sevres factory for her depict birds from her fine menagerie, a pair of golden pheasants and her beautiful white cockatoo amongst them. Sarah Child shared these loves of fresh flowers and birds. Madame died in 1764 and many of her Sevres pieces were sold by her brother the Marquis de Marigny. Many items found their way to Britain, even Horace Walpole made sketches. There is a picture in the Mobil guidebook to Osterley, 1985, showing the Gobelins Tapestry room with a matching Sevres porcelain tea service. Perhaps the Sevres that matched the Osterley tapestries were, like the tapestries, commissioned by Madame de Pompadour. Copies of the "Loves of the Gods" tapestries, made for her brother, were not permitted until after her death. It is entirely likely that Sarah Child would wish to have the Sevres tea service, made to match the tapestries, as both are adorned with her beloved flowers and birds.



The next splendid treasure is Sarah Anne's violin, bows and the leather case thought to be used by Sarah Anne when as a child she was learning to play. We know that her tutor was Gabriel Piozzi who in 1784 married the widow, Hester Thrale famous for her writings about Dr. Johnson. Sarah Anne eloped in 1782 and later had her harpsichord sent to her new

home. Piozzi was a prized teacher who said that Sarah Anne was his most skilled pupil. He published pieces for the violin, piano-forte and the harpsichord and some (now lost) were dedicated to Sarah Anne. On Sarah Anne's death in 1793, the Earl of Westmoreland asked if the family could keep the fine Kirkmann harpsichord in her memory. Her parents had it made as a 16th birthday present. It was returned to Osterley after 1985. Chosen by visitor Mary George.



Osterley collection assistant Amy McCaffrey selected the blue john urn made from Derbyshire feldspar by Matthew Boulton as her treasure. Blue john is an English translation of the French term *bleu jeune*, or blue yellow the colours of their feldspar. In 1768 Matthew Boulton, Birmingham entrepreneur, maker of the lamps and door furniture at Osterley, tried to lease all of the blue john supplies in England. He failed but was invited by Queen

Charlotte to Buckingham House in March 1770, to make blue john and ormolu replacements for all the ceramic pieces, candle stands and perfume burners. The following month Pall Mall was jammed by carriages as the first sale of Boulton's wares at Christies. In 1772 Robert Child visited an exhibition of Matthew Boulton's works in London and purchased winged blue john vases, double branched candle stands and candle vases costing £29/8/- a great deal of money at the time - remember the scullery maid received £7 a year for her work! Matthew Boulton always insisted that the items he made should be useful as well as beautiful, a treasure designed to please the eye. Matthew Boulton went on to help James Watt produce the steam train engine. Many of these pieces were returned to the house by the 10th Earl of Jersey in the last decade.

Judith O'Flynn, Senior Collections and House Officer chose the Great Seal of Queen Elizabeth I - wax with vellum streamers (*see newsletter front cover image*) saying, "this precious piece of Tudor history has long been one of the collection items brought out to impress new staff and I was no exception when I started in 2008. I remain fascinated by the striking wax portrayal of one of England's most famous queens. It engages all the reasons I love history and working in heritage; it provokes interest, imagination and engages people with history on a wider scale." Judith's magnificent choice links Thomas Gresham, financial advisor and ambassador to Queen Elizabeth I with her visits to Osterley. As the seal is not usually on display this gives you a chance to see a rare and special item.

A Tachi sword made for a Samurai 15th-16th century with a 19th century sheath decorated with dragons and clouds using mother of pearl. Part of the dress sword collection in the Strong Room. Chosen by Ben Thomson. So how is it that Osterley has this rare and beautiful sword? We believe it was given to Victor George 7th Earl of Jersey.



He was made governor on New South Wales by Queen Victoria and travelled there with his family in 1890 but returned early in 1893 visiting Samoa, China, Japan and India. He stayed in Japan for one month and his wife Margaret tells us that they met the Emperor and his wives. This was a gift from the Emperor to a representative of Queen Victoria. The sheath was made for the old sword making it a beautiful gift celebrating the history of Japan.



Laura Brooks, a former volunteer at Osterley, now Collections Assistant at Hatchlands Park selected the Crewel work bolster embroidered in silk and wool found on the extra long sofas at each end of the Long Gallery. Laura cleaned these cushions but in doing so “fell in love with the embroidery particularly the snails, I enjoyed pointing them out to countless children who came around the house”. The embroidery is in 17th century style but was made by Margaret, Countess of Jersey and her many lady friends when they visited Osterley in the summer of 1898-9. The floral decoration on the south end sofa reflects the Child family with the sun shining down on a marigold and the family motto ‘And so my Soul’ which was on the sign outside Child's Bank. The north end sofa bears the Jersey family crest and motto.

Ffion George, Property Curator, made her choice from the extensive coin collections at Osterley. As the Child's were bankers it was not unusual that they should collect coins. Robert Child had a coin cupboard designed by Robert Adam to show off his collection. The 9th Earl gave about 1,000 coins to Osterley and the Friends purchased Victorian display cabinets for the Strong Room. When the coins arrived we had no idea of their worth. The British Museum came and looked and told us we had an excellent collection of interesting pieces. This selection dates from Athens (490-430BC) to an Elizabeth II sovereign of 1979. As there are so many I have chosen only four – the King John (1199-1216) Norman coin from the Magna Carta King, a Scottish half-testoon of Mary Queen of Scots (1542-1587) a crown from the commonwealth with a profile of Oliver Cromwell and a crowned shield on the reverse, and finally a sixpence from the reign of William and Mary, 1693 when Francis Child, a leading member of the Goldsmith's Company, would have taken part in the annual testing of coins at the Ceremony of the Pyx verifying the quality of the currency.



Our last piece selected by Lisa Oxborough, Collections and House Officer, is a book illustrating Mrs. Child's menagerie of birds at Osterley. Visitors from 1772 on expressed their delight when birds followed them around the park or displayed their beautiful feathers. The skill was to increase their numbers. The menagerie, designed by Robert Adam contained bedrooms for those who wished to stay overnight to be present for the dawn chorus. There was a lake for water birds. The story is that Sarah knew the artist, William Hayes, who had a large family and was struggling to support them. She commissioned him to make drawings of all the birds in her collection for a book.

The book shows 97 different species of the rare and curious birds once resident at Osterley. The pictures in the book were hand-coloured and it is said William Hayes asked his older children to help watercolour the birds which they saw when visiting the menagerie with their father. The book *Portraits of Rare and Curious Birds and their descriptions from the Menagerie at Osterley Park* by William Hayes was published in 1794 but it gives us an exquisite view of Mrs Child's love of birds said by Horace Walpole to be from a thousand islands not yet discovered by Joseph Banks. Both Banks and Walpole were close neighbours of the Child's at Osterley. This fine book is one of the few in the original library here at Osterley – I did see one for sale some years ago at £800.



Pictures of larger objects like the Drawing Room Ceiling and the State Bed surround the rooms.

Now you have seen and read about some of the Treasures chosen by others it is your turn to visit the exhibition and nominate your Treasure – there are nomination forms in the exhibition, in the Osterley shop and the café – remember the display is called **MY TREASURE!**

Diary: Friends events and excursions

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| 2022 | |
| Mon 10 Jan | Coffee Morning: Douglas Craik – Online snippets on Osterley. 10.30am for 11am at Study Base* |
| Tues 8 Feb | Coffee Morning: Andy Eddy, Head Gardener. 10.30am for 11am at Study Base |
| Mon 7 Mar | Coffee Morning: Douglas Craik – Kilts and Tartan. 10.30am for 11am at Study Base* |
| Tues 26 April | Coffee Morning: TBA – staff member. 10.30am for 11am at Study Base AGM (deferred from 2021) at Study Base |
| Weds 27 April | Coach Trip: The Vyne, Hampshire |
| Tues 17 May | Coffee Morning: TBA – staff member. 10.30am for 11am at Study Base |
| Tues 14 June | Coffee Morning: speaker TBA. 10.30am for 11am at Study Base |
| Tues 26 July | Coffee Morning: TBA – staff member. 10.30am for 11am at Study Base |
| Thurs 18 Aug- Tues 23 Aug | Holiday: Lancaster |

***Please note:** if there is a ban on indoor meetings with more than 30 people on 10 January, our ‘Online snippets of Osterley’ talk will take place in March and ‘Kilts and Tartan’ will move to May.

| 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 April 2022. Any contributions to the Newsletter Editor (editor.foop@gmail.com) by **28 February 2022**.

The Editor may edit contributions as necessary.