

The Friends of Osterley Park

NEWSLETTER



Issue 130 Autumn 2023 £1 (free to members)



Osterley from the South East by Anthony Devis, about 1784

Dear Friends

We said a sad goodbye in July to John James. His funeral was well attended, described by one as the 'who's who of the tennis world'. His granddaughter gave a beautiful violin solo of Vaughan-Williams' The Lark Ascending as he left the church he had worshipped in for so many years; this was followed by an organ rendition of the 'Wimbledon music'. John was probably listening from the rafters and enjoying every minute.

Margaret Friday has been busy organising visits to the renovated Boston Manor House and several interesting walks in the City. Her next visits are to Orleans House and Gresham College. Friends tell me how much they appreciate these visits/walks. Planning is underway for 2024 visits when we also hope to re-introduce coach tours.

We've had some interesting talks at our coffee mornings, most recently Christine Diwell imparting her knowledge on Brentford, Chiswick and Isleworth and John Collis, standing in at the last minute, talking about the West Middlesex Police and regaling us with anecdotes about the highwaymen of Hounslow Heath. We have three more talks scheduled before the end of the year and a Christmas lunch. It does seem rather odd to be writing about Christmas on a bright sunny summer day! John Collis is taking over organising the coffee mornings from Peter Bush who has now 'retired' and become Vice-Chair stepping in for when I've been unable to attend.

I've enjoyed my visits to the house and walks in the gardens and park at Osterley. How nice to see visitors making the most of the good weather and enjoying the activities on offer, walking their dogs or having a picnic in the park.

We'd like to engage with the visitors to Osterley and encourage more to join the Friends. Susan and I had an initial chat with Chris Cleeve recently about how the Friends might support and work with the staff at Osterley in the future. This will be a discussion item at our next Committee meeting; all ideas welcome!

We do receive a lot of cheques and don't always know what they are for as some Friends don't enclose a booking form with them. In order that we get it right and you turn up for a visit/walk that we aren't expecting you for, please either use the form attached with the newsletter or write on a slip of paper or the back of the cheque exactly what and who it is for.

Our preference is for bank transfers direct to our account. If somebody else is making a payment on your behalf, could you please ensure they put your name in the reference. We have received an electronic £22 payment for subs and 100 Club under the name of E Young. We don't have a Friend of this name and really would like to know on whose behalf they are paying!

For example, if I wanted to attend the Gresham College visit I'd put as reference 'Parsons 16/10'. If more than one different visit 'Parsons Visits'. If I was purchasing a 100 Club share, I'd put 'Parsons 100 Club'. This really would help us.

Our account details with Barclays are:

Sort Code: 20-02-06

Account Number: 70389315

If you do change your contact details - email, address, telephone number, please tell Keith - keith.rookledge@icloud.com - so that we can keep our membership list up to date. It makes it much easier to contact you!

Your cooperation is very much appreciated. Thank you.

It's been a busy summer at Osterley, though the weather has certainly kept us on our toes! For families we have had the Summer of Play, a series of activities designed to get people playing in different ways. We encouraged people to get active with throwing games and improve their skills with balancing and target

games. We turned the Temple of Pan into a performance play space, with costumes and performance prompts, as well as storytelling from volunteers throughout the summer. On the Long Walk people can use nature as part of their play by having fun with sticks. For people who want to get even more active Cycle Hire is open, with Table Tennis and football goals on the Front Lawn. All this is on top of our normal weekly offer of ParkRun, ParkPlay, Junior ParkRun and kayaking.

In the House the Drawing Room chairs returned from the Royal Oak studio at Knole where they were being conserved. One sofa from the suite is left to conserve and the Drawing Room will be reset for visitors by end August. The white lacquer cabinet and armorial lacquer table will go back on display in the Child Suite in August.

We've now finished our programme of outdoor theatre for the year, with the Lord Chamberlain's Men bringing us Romeo & Juliet, Heartbreak Productions bringing us Bad Dad, and DOT Productions bringing us Alice in Wonderland for families and Persuasion for adults. This is a great source of income for us, and brings in different audiences who may not have visited the gardens before.

We also hosted the first in-person Middlesex Pride, which was founded to celebrate the diverse LGBTQIA+ people of Middlesex. The Pride team's aim is to make each and every community visible, creating a safe space where everyone can feel represented. The event was a relaxed, community-focused, family-friendly festival, which featured performances of dance, music and poetry, as well as giving people a chance to try yoga, get creative, and connect with nature. We had great fun, and we are looking forward to Middlesex Pride 2024.

Within the Osterley team, Lyndsey Feeney has left us to join the central team as a Project Manager in the Treasure House programme; we wish her all the best. Georgia Matthews is confirmed as our Visitor Operations & Experience Manager having covered the role in Lyndsey's absence. Matt Butler is our new Welcome Manager, with Elizabeth Down joining the Visitor Welcome team. In the House Ashlea Hutchinson has successfully been appointed as full-time Collection Assistant; with a part time Collections Assistant being recruited.

Looking forward, we're planning our Autumn and Winter offers, as well as 2024, so watch this space for updates.

Chris Cleeve mentioned the Treasure Houses at the AGM coffee morning and Judith O'Flynn gave us a presentation. These properties are considered to be particularly significant, internationally or to the UK, in terms of their collections, history and association with a significant figure. The 28 are as follows:

East Anglesey Abbey Blickling Ickworth Oxburgh Hall	North Cragside Dunham Massey Hill Top Nostell Priory
London & South East Chartwell Ham House Knole Osterley Park Petworth The Vyne	Northern Ireland Mount Stewart
Midlands Belton House Calke Abbey Hardwick Kedleston Hall Upton House Wightwick Manor	South West Dyrham Park Kingston Lacy Lacock Saltram Tyntesfield
	Wales Erddig Powis Castle

100 Club

Susan Parsons

A draw was made at the coffee morning on 24 August. The lucky winners were: Jan Ryan (£100), Joyce Bing (£30) and Margaret Prior (£20).

The 100 Club is a private lottery and shares can only be allocated to paid-up members of the Friends. Half of the £12 is used by the Friends to fund projects which benefit Osterley; the remaining £6 goes into the prize fund.

The next draw will be made at the Christmas lunch.

100 Club numbers for 2023/24

Name	No. 1	No. 2	No. 3	No. 4	Name	No. 1	No. 2	No. 3	No. 4
E Bamber	16				A Lynskey	58			
L Barlow	24				H Mackay	59	65		
S Bell	27				S McMichael	61	96		
O Bignell	29	82			S Mercer	79			
J Bing	26	45			P Moore	54	56		
R Boorman	25				S Morgan	57	62		
O Bray	30				J Mound	63			
J Buchanan	1				P Mulcaire	64			
P Bush	34	83			P Osmond	72			
M Cave	100				S Parsons	7	32		
J Childerhouse	73				R Paterson	66			
J Collis	35				S Porter	97			
C Craik	37				D Poulston	11			
P Daniel	38				M Prior	68			
J Derby	39				W Rix-Morton	78			
C Diwell	41	85			W Robertson	15			
D Evans	43	86			K Rookledge	91			
M Friday	49				S Royal	69			
A Gregg	50				J Ryan	31	44	46	
S Haisman	14	51	75	88	A Sebastian	70			
P Herod	10				V Sharma	52			
A Hoskins	28	95			J Shaw	40	48		
D Huffer	53	89			H Simmons	19	33	87	98
S Hunkin	17				S Singh	12			
M Innes	36				S Smith	9			
C Jackson	18				J Talbot	67			
P James	55	76	90		M Thorburn	20	23		
S Kendrick	84				A Tighe	74			
J Keohane	8				S Underwood	21			
J Kirk	42				G Webster	71			
P Lang	22				E Whitaker	81			
H Lilley	3				N White	77	99		

The painting on the cover of this newsletter is a copy of one of the pictures of Osterley made in oils by Anthony Devis soon after Robert Adam had completed the elegant columned exterior of the Child family party house. Devis also painted Mrs. Child's aviary and a view from the south side of the house showing animals and people in the park. Upton House in Warwickshire was also painted probably for Francis Child before his death in 1763 (*painting shown on back cover*). Robert then commissioned Devis to paint Osterley with its grand new appearance.

Devis was born in Preston, Lancashire in 1728 to Anthony Devis, carpenter and town councillor, and his second wife Anne Blackburne. His father's first wife Ellin Rauthmell had a son Arthur who became a portrait painter beginning by portraying people known to his mother and father as both were related to local nobles. Arthur was the founding member of the Devis family of painters as they became known.

When Anthony was 13 in 1742, the whole family moved to London so that Arthur and Anthony could pursue their artistic careers. The northern nobles spent the winter in London for the theatre, opera and musical entertainment as well as the splendid parties.

Initially we think Anthony studied under his half-brother Arthur, but their silversmith brother John also resided with them in Gloucester Street, Bloomsbury. Later they moved to Lambs Conduit Street, Bedford Row. We believe Arthur painted Anthony then. The unusual wooden frame was probably carved by their father (*painting shown on back cover*).

Anthony is described as an artist from this time when he began to paint stately homes, mostly in northern England. He travelled extensively to paint these houses and their parks. Each painting begins with a beautiful sketch often in pen and ink, pencil or charcoal.

Many of his drawings were highlighted with bright watercolours. The Devis drawings for the Osterley House paintings are now in the Toledo Museum of Art in Ohio, USA. Upton House still has his painting, but we do not know what has happened to the original Osterley landscapes of

the house or the aviary. His oil paintings were noted in a Christie's sale in 1947 as being of very high quality.

Anthony Devis exhibited at the Society of Free Artists in 1761 and 1763. The Society awarded him a 10 guinea prize for his large painting "Landscape on a Cool Morning." After The Royal Academy opened in 1768, he exhibited there in 1772 and 1781.

His other great contribution was via Josiah Wedgwood. We know that Devis was recommended as an artist to contribute pictures to be painted for Catherine the Great's commission of a dinner and dessert service for 50 people requiring 944 pieces decorated with 1,222 views of British country houses and castles. Wedgwood featured his creamware known as Queen's Ware after Queen Charlotte ordered it. Devis had painted many houses in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Durham, Wales and Scotland so he was the perfect artist to supply many pictures to Wedgwood for his ceramicists to paint onto the creamware.



The Green Frog Service, including the Pagoda at Kew, was made between 1773 and 1774 and is today on display in the Hermitage. We suspect that the Child family houses would not have appeared as Robert Child was, after all, in trade – so definitely not an aristocrat thus not suitable for Catherine the Great. By this time Anthony Devis is described as a gentleman artist as is his half-brother Arthur who was busy painting portraits of the aristocracy. Arthur married and had a son and grandson who became artists.

Anthony Devis had just begun to paint country houses and parks as they were being reformed. The Earl of Burlington and William Kent along with Alexander Pope had, to quote Horace Walpole, "jumped the fence and begun to create a natural garden." Up to this time formal gardens in France and Italy had been painted but very few in England. The painting

of the formal gardens at Ham House and those done for the Earl of Burlington by Peter Rysbrack at Chiswick House were exceptions. The English had preferred portraits to landscapes, but Anthony Devis was beginning to influence change here. By 1754 both Burlington and Kent had died but the natural garden had been taken up by Repton and later Capability Brown. Adam designed houses with grounds to complement the architecture of the house. The English natural garden, as portrayed by Devis, became famous across Europe. Constable's works along with other landscape artists, become prized in the late 18th and early 19th century. Some of Devis' works were attributed to Constable later in the 19th century.

In 1780 Anthony Devis purchased a house in Albury, Surrey, He continued to travel and to paint but made this his home. He also continued to make beautiful carvings, a skill his carpenter father had taught him when he was a lad.

He was locally known as the Mushroom Man, some claim because he



Studio on Albury Hill

carried an umbrella – an item not known in the area, but others point to Devis' art studio constructed on Albury Hill with a domed roof which made it look like a mushroom. He was a favourite with the local children as he always carried gingerbread in his pockets so every child he met was rewarded with a piece.

Devis never married but he left his house to his brother Arthur's daughter - his niece Ellin. More than 1,000 drawings and sketches were found in his studio, and these were acquired by his friend John Thrower. Anthony Devis died in 1816 aged 88 and was buried next to Old Albury Church. For many years his work was forgotten but a book on his family was researched by Sydney Pavriere in the late 1930s and published in a limited edition of 500 in 1950 called "The Devis Family of Painters". In 1993 there was an exhibition of his work at the Harris Art Gallery in

Preston, Lancashire called “Anthony Devis a *picturesque traveller*.” Locating his paintings is difficult as many are still owned by the families who commissioned them although the house itself may not have survived. The Child family must have enjoyed seeing Anthony Devis feature their party house in the park. Today we are still able to enjoy the beautiful Osterley house and park Anthony Devis featured in his paintings even though we do not know what has become of the originals - perhaps they will be found. At present copies are better than no pictures at all. When next in the Long Gallery do look at the paintings of Osterley “after Anthony Devis”.

Snippets from the past

Susan Parsons

Wartime Memories of Osterley

Eunice Smith, nee Reed, worked as a Land Girl at Osterley in the latter years of the war, and has provided these notes. They appeared in the September 2005 newsletter.

I thought I would put pen to paper before my memory goes completely, and while there are still some people around who will remember the names I mention.

During the war, I served in the Women’s Land Army. On the death of my brother in 1944, I was given a “compassionate posting” to enable me to live at home and look after my father – we lived in Penwerris Avenue. At that time, Osterley Park was allocated three Land Girls, and I was fortunate enough to become one of them.

I was employed by Mr Little, Lord Jersey’s Agent (or Estate Manager). I worked under Mr Batten, the foreman, who lived in Bothy Cottage, most recently occupied by Linda and Kevin Mills.

We worked in pairs, and my partner was Bill Pottifer, who lived in the bungalow which is now the farm shop. Mr Perkins was the gamekeeper, who rode around on a bike with a gun and a dog. He and Mrs Perkins lived in the Lodge at the Thornbury Road entrance. We also worked with Italian prisoners of war, who wore brown uniforms.

The other Land Girls were billeted with Lily, who lived in the “Bothy” over the top of the stables, which was entered by the stone staircase to the right of the present Tea Room; we all had breakfast and other meals there. Lily used to call us her “Land Gels” and lived there until a few years ago, when she moved into sheltered accommodation in Hounslow.

We did a variety of jobs on the Estate. In the walled garden, we grew vegetables for the Earl of Jersey, including asparagus and artichokes. There were greenhouses for tomatoes, and peaches, nectarines, and figs growing round the walls. The Earl of Jersey, with Virginia Cherril, would collect these each weekend for the House; any balance was sold to local people. The other walled garden beyond the temple we called “Dartmoor” and in there grew soft fruits of all kinds, with beautiful plum trees, and especially black gages.

Although we normally worked outside in all weathers, if it was really bad we washed flower pots in the potting shed, which I believe is still in the walled garden. We used to drive a small open lorry, which we called “Aggie” which had to be started with a starting handle (this caused a few dislocated thumbs until we learnt better!). In this we collected leaf mould from the “Indian Clump” beyond the old car park, and manure from the cow and pig sheds. We also took all the rubbish to the dump – a massive hole opposite the main lake; this was eventually filled in, and became a bird sanctuary. It is now on the path from the new car park to the east meadow.

We learned how to wield an axe and used a two-handled saw to fell some large trees. We cleared out the lily ponds on the lawn in front of the House, cut all the hedges by hand – and there were many of them! We dug out the walled garden by hand, and also Mr Little’s garden in Jersey Road, backing on to the Park.

The whole of the field by the “hole in the wall” was given over to the mangel-worzels; corn grown on the Estate was threshed in February, when hired equipment was available.

A herd of black cattle were kept on the Great Meadow, behind the House; there were also a pair of cows kept in the field near the Lodge on Osterley Lane, to provide milk for the House. One of my tasks was to milk these by hand – no machines in those days! As a result, I strained my back and was invalided out of the Land Army.

Christmas Lunch

Peter Bush

The Friends held a very enjoyable Christmas lunch last December at the Grasshoppers Club in Syon Lane so we are repeating it this year. We will be holding the lunch on **Tuesday, 12 December** at 12:30. There is plenty of car parking but no convenient public transport. We will try to match up those with space to give a lift in their car with those who need a lift.

2 courses - main and dessert – at £26.50 - must be pre-ordered by booking form (*attached*) to John Collis. Payment details are on the form.

Menu

Main course:

Roast turkey with traditional trimmings

Roast beef & Yorkshire pudding

Jewelled nut roast

Desserts:

Christmas pudding & brandy sauce

Baked vanilla cheesecake and raspberry compote

Mince Pie & Coffee

There will be a complementary glass of mulled wine.

London Visits

Margaret Friday

Thursday, 28 September – Orleans House Gallery, Orleans Road, Twickenham TW1 3BL. Meet at 2 pm.

Our visit today is to view the excellent collection of local paintings held by Richmond and Wandsworth Councils. We will have a chance to view paintings of the area including Osterley in the gallery and hope to view pictures not usually on display in the storage areas. The National

Lottery helped restore the Octagon and the Stable Block now houses an excellent cafe. We plan to present some paintings by John Stacey to the collection; he painted and exhibited for many years and we feel his paintings of the Thames should be available for all to see.

The visit is free but numbers are limited. It's first come first served by application to Margaret Friday at margaretfriday@talktalk.net or 07930 697748.

Monday, 16 October – Gresham College. Cost £15 including tea, coffee and biscuits

Meet at 1pm at the entrance to Barnard's Inn Hall, High Holborn, London EC1N 2HH. Exit Chancery Lane station in front of the black and white buildings opposite the large red brick Prudential building. You will find the entrance to Barnard's Inn Hall between Furnival Street and Fetter Lane. We will have a tour of the building seeing portraits of Gresham and his wife and items he owned connected with the college established in 1597 and offering free lectures in English to extend the range of knowledge of seven subjects in England. Lecturers lived in Gresham's town house which became Gresham College until it burned down in the Great Fire of London. The free Gresham lectures continue today in person or online.

Please book the Gresham College visit with Keith Rookledge either by email - keith.rookledge@icloud.com - or by using the attached form. Payment can be made as follows:

- By Bank Transfer to Friends of Osterley: Sort Code: 20-02-06
Account Number: 70389315
- By cheque payable to "Friends of Osterley" posted to Keith Rookledge (address on back of Newsletter). Do not include "Park".
- By cash at a coffee morning or the event (as long as you have booked)

The coffee mornings for Autumn 2023 are as follows, all at 10:30 for 11:00 in the Study Base at Osterley Park.

Tuesday, 26 September - Margaret Friday – Nicholas Barbon

Nicholas Barbon owned Osterley from 1684 until his death in 1698. He became a property developer following the Great Fire of London and proved to be unscrupulous when his houses subsequently collapsed. He established the first insurance for houses. Barbon made substantial changes to Osterley House.

Wednesday, 25 October – Kate Simpson

Kate will introduce the House team and talk about what conservation, presentation and collection management means on a day-to-day basis such as: cleaning (very carefully), pest control, monitoring humidity and light control. She will talk about upcoming conservation projects.

Thursday, 23 November – Ed Harris – Hounslow Heath encampment of James II

James II rallied his troops on Hounslow Heath two years running in June 1686 and the summer of 1687. On the first occasion he was still reasonably popular but by the following year his troops were openly hostile.

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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 December 2023.



*Upton House from the South,
circa 1784*



ANTHONY DEVIS,