

The Friends of Osterley Park



NEWSLETTER

Issue 131 Winter 2023 £1 (free to members)



A Gathering of the Dilettanti around the Medici Venus

Dear Friends

As I write this the long warm summer has changed overnight with plummeting temperatures and it now feels very wintery. By the time you read this, the House will be well into its downstairs winter offering – see Hannah's piece on page 3.

I'm delighted to advise that Harsha Khatri has joined us as Hon Treasurer following an advertisement in the charity Website Reach; Harsha lives locally, is a visitor to the park with her family and is an accountant. Linda Foster (a long-standing Friend) has agreed to become the independent Examiner for our accounts. But we are still lacking a Newsletter Editor; Susan would be very pleased if somebody could come forward as she has been acting editor for the best part of the year!

Since the last newsletter we've held two coffee mornings: in September our walking encyclopaedia, Margaret Friday, regaled us about the scheming Nicholas Barbon and in October, Kate Simpson introduced the House team and talked about the conservation work they do with the Osterley collection – who would have guessed how many pests hide in the nooks and crannies of the fixtures and furniture!

Margaret has led two more visits: to the Orleans House Gallery in Twickenham, where some paintings by John Stacey of Richmond were presented to the gallery, and to Gresham College in the City. Planning is underway for 2024 visits when we also hope to re-introduce coach tours.

We'd welcome suggestions from Friends for items to be included in future newsletters and for future talks.

I'm looking forward to seeing many of you at the Friends' Christmas lunch being held on 12 December – details on page 10.

Howard

Use of Emails

We do send emails to Friends between newsletters when unforeseen circumstances mean having to cancel coffee mornings and other events so do need to be able to communicate quickly. Equally, we advise when places are still available on visits.

Would you give us your email address? It would be a great help and would only be used for The Friends of Osterley Park business.

Printing and posting the newsletter in its paper form costs about £7.50 per annum per addressee. We are aware that one of the reasons that people are reluctant to take it by email is they don't have a printer or find it difficult to print off the applications for visits. This needn't be a bar to having the newsletter by email. All you need to do is write all the details required in the visit application form in a letter and send that with your cheque. No need to print.

Longstanding members need not worry – you will continue to receive the newsletter in paper copy. But, if you feel able to take the Newsletter by email, please let our Membership Secretary, Keith Rookledge - keith.rookledge@icloud.com know.

Please note Susan's new email address – FriendsoOP@gmail.com - so that her emails don't end up in your Junk/Spam box.

News from Osterley

Hannah Wiltshire

The weather is now truly autumnal, with lots of changes that have made predicting how busy we're going to be a bit tricky. We saw a lot of visitors making good use of the Escape into Autumn vouchers in September and October; these allowed two adults and up to three children free entry to any NT property to 20 October. Lots of people used them to visit Osterley, especially on the last two weekends where we saw peaks of 700 visitors to the gardens and over 500 visitors to the house. This means we are currently just over our visitor target for the year, and we're hoping that our winter offer will help us continue the trend.

We've just finished October half-term, historically a very busy period for us. The weather didn't dampen the spirits of the families who came to take part in the Halloween trail and carve pumpkins. This year's trail was called *The Tale of the Monster Hunter* and led families through monster hunter training in the gardens, and then out to discover what was hiding on the Long Walk. Over 700 trails were sold across two weeks, with great feedback from the families that took part. Pumpkin carving was popular, though rain did slow us down. 277 pumpkins were carved across three days and it was great to see the creativity. Thanks to all the volunteers who braved the weather to help us put on this activity.

This winter we're exploring the lives of the Osterley servants in the basement with two different activities. Firstly, volunteer-led tours will take visitors through the Kitchen, Steward's Room, Mrs Bunce's Room, Beer and Wine Cellar and the Stillroom; spaces that aren't open as part of our summer season opening. Tours will run Wednesday to Sunday at 1100, 1200, 1315 and 1415 with each tour lasting 45 minutes. Tour tickets are free with admission and can be collected on the day from the Kiosk on a first-come first-served basis. Secondly, there will be an installation in the Jersey Galleries and Servants' Hall that will share information about the servants listed in the 1787 accounts, with activities for kids to try out. Tickets will be available from the Kiosk with entrance free-flow through the Family Entrance. This means we'll have an indoor family offer, and hopefully this will boost our visitor figures over winter.

We'll also see the return of our ever-popular wreath workshops, led by Andy and Hannah with the support of the Garden team. These will be bookable in advance through the Osterley website.

We've had some new staff join the team. Maka Mutamiri is our new Communications & Marketing Officer, working a day and a half a week to support our marketing strategy. Rowan Thorp is taking on the role of Business Services Co-Ordinator, replacing Nicola Carr who is our new Area Ranger. Jade Minkley has joined the House Team as a Collections Assistant, and Gemma Daldin is our new part-time Gardener.

A huge thank you to all the volunteers who support our work and help us look after Osterley through busy periods. We really want to keep our visitor figures high as our offer changes, so please do share what we're doing this winter. It's a great opportunity to see spaces that are not usually open, and to look at the lives of the people who worked hard to keep Osterley looking impressive in the past.



A bumper 100 Club draw will be made at the Christmas lunch on 12 December.

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

Shares can be acquired from Susan Parsons using the attached form or by emailing Susan at FriendsoP.sp@gmail.com If you'd like to be included in the 12 December draw the deadline is **5 December** for Susan to receive your form and payment.

This amazing collection of paintings has been on loan to the National Trust for some years and is coming to Osterley permanently.

Sir Richard Brinsley Ford (1908-1999) began collecting paintings after inheriting those acquired by his great-great grandfather and his father. He continued to supplement this collection via a gift from his grandmother. He was intensely involved in the art world supporting the Burlington Magazine and becoming a trustee of the National Gallery. As chairman of the Art Fund he saved more than 200 works of art from going abroad.

He also served on the National Trust committee which decided where paintings would hang in their houses and what colour the walls in the rooms showing paintings should be. In the *Picture Hanging Committee* (below) by Alex Cobbe, he is the second man from the left on the sofa. The scene at Kingston Lacy shows the committee watching a craftsman

apply different shades to the walls of the hanging room to see which is most appropriate. Here at Osterley, Robert Adam had described the colour of the Long Gallery as “pea green” but no one knew what colour that was. Some may remember that when the Victoria and Albert Museum handed Osterley back to the National Trust in 1990 the Long Gallery walls were a sickly shade of yellow-green. By the time the Eileen Harris guidebook was published in 1994 they were the rich blue-green of today. I suspect that Brinsley Ford and his committee may have visited Osterley.



The Picture Hanging Committee

In his final years he was chair of the Walpole Society. He composed a list of all the British and Irish Grand Tourists (men who had made the Grand Tour) from 1701 to 1800. Our Robert Child (1674-1721) is included. This list was published in 1998. In 1984 he was knighted for his services to art. He died in 1999 but his son Augustine felt, like his father, that the collection should be enjoyed by as many people as possible, and thus loaned it to the National Trust as a travelling collection. For the past five years it has been at Basildon Park in Berkshire. The Ford family and the NT have decided that it will no longer be a travelling collection but is to come to Osterley this November on permanent loan. This will allow us to show more closely the sort of paintings that were once on display at Osterley before their loss in a fire on the Isle of Jersey in 1951.

Our cover picture is by Thomas Patch who painted *A Gathering of the Dilettanti around the Medici Venus* in the 1760s including himself climbing Venus's plinth to measure her. The portrayal of the young macaronis socialising amongst the fine marbles reflected the feelings of the Dilettanti perfectly as their motto was "to look at serious subjects in a playful manner". To be admitted to the Dilettanti one must have been on at least one Grand Tour. When Brinsley Ford acquired this painting it had been cut and made into four pictures. He had it put back together so that today we view the true picture of grand tourists in the 18th century. Sir Richard Brinsley Ford loved showing visitors around his London house in Wyndham Place with paintings hung floor to ceiling in each room. Paintings by Busini along with Challe's sketches were displayed in Lady Ford's Roman-themed sitting room.

Other works include *The Byres Family* by Polish artist Franciszak Smugliewicz who painted this Scots Jacobite family in Rome. Brinsley Ford acquired the picture in 1984 and was able to confirm the artist. From next spring we will be able to enjoy more than 50 of them at Osterley.



The Byres Family

Finally we shall see the Robert Adam design for a Ballroom Pavilion built at the Oaks in Surrey for Lord Stanley to celebrate a Fete Champetre on 9 June 1774. It is filled with party goers in elegant dress - just the sort of event the Childs would have hosted at Osterley at the time.



From next Spring we will be able to enjoy these and other pictures from the Brinsley Ford Collection at Osterley.

John Stacey

Peter Bush

Having successfully raised funds to reroof the Judi Dench Playhouse, Questors Theatre in Ealing is now raising money for the refurbishment of the interior of the Playhouse and is inviting donations. A seat is being purchased in memory of John Stacey from his friends at Osterley Park.

John, a very long standing Friend who served on the Committee for many years and who took many of the photos that have appeared in the

Friends' newsletters, died in summer 2022. John volunteered at Osterley for over 20 years.

If you would like to contribute to this seat please contact Peter Bush at prbush@virginmedia.com We are still short of a few pounds and contributions would be gratefully received.

Christmas Lunch

The Friends' Christmas lunch is being held at the Grasshoppers Club in Syon Lane on **Tuesday, 12 December** at 1230. 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.

Late applications: please phone 07778 401804 or email collis329@hotmail.com

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.

The coffee mornings for Spring 2024 are as follows, all at 1030 for 1100 in the Study Base at Osterley Park.

Wednesday, 31 January - Tony Louki - Chiswick House

Thursday, 14 March – Matt Butler - Welcome Manager at Osterley will talk about his role at the house.

The remaining 2024 dates for your diary are as follows:

- Wednesday, 24 April
- Thursday, 30 May
- Tuesday, 25 June
- Wednesday, 31 July
- Thursday, 29 August
- Tuesday, 24 September
- Wednesday, 30 October
- Thursday, 28 November

London Visits

Margaret Friday

Advance notice of a visit to the Mercer's Hall to be held on **Friday, 19 April 2024**. Details will be given in the next newsletter.

Osterley Book Group

New members are welcome to join. The next meeting is on **Tuesday, 12 December** at 1400 in the Stables Café when *Sylvia Pankhurst: Natural Born Rebel* (a biography of the artist, suffragette, pioneering campaigner) by Rachel Holmes will be discussed. Please contact Wendy Sim for details – wendyasim@btinternet.com

Chairman

Howard Simmons

howard.simmons@icloud.com

Hon Secretary, 100 Club

Acting Newsletter Editor

Susan Parsons

FriendsoOP.sp@gmail.com

Vice Chairman

Peter Bush

prbush@virginmedia.com

Treasurer

Harsha Khatri

Membership Secretary

Keith Rookledge

07768 596681

keith.rookledge@icloud.com

2 West Avenue, Pinner, HA5 5BY

Coach Trips

Vik Sharma

vik.sharma@yahoo.co.uk

London Visits

Margaret Friday

07930 697748

margaretfriday@talktalk.net

Coffee Mornings

John Collis

collis329@hotmail.com

Website Editor

Mike Doran

mikedoran47@outlook.com

Committee member

Margaret Lydamore

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**](http://www.e-voice.org.uk/friendsofosterleypark) Back copies of the newsletter are available on the website.

Next newsletter: to be published in March 2024.

Friends of Osterley Park - Christmas Lunch Tuesday, 12 December 2023 at the Grasshoppers Club

Send to: John Collis, 329 Jersey Road, Isleworth TW7 5PJ or email
collis329@hotmail.com

Payment:

1. Bank Transfer to Friends of Osterley: Sort Code: 20-02-06, Account Number: 70389315, reference: your name + lunch 12/12
2. By cheque payable to "Friends of Osterley" with the form to John. Do not include "Park".

Non-members of Friends of Osterley Park are welcome but we ask for an additional £1. Bookings cannot be refunded unless there is a waiting list. Substitutes can be made.

Date	Cost	No of places	Total cost
12 December	£26.50		

Would you like a lift from home to/from the Grasshoppers?	Yes / No
Would you like a lift from Osterley Park underground?	Yes / No
Can you give a lift to someone, if so how many could you take? You will be matched to anyone wanting a lift near you	Yes / No

Name:.....Mobile number:.....

Email:.....

Please choose your food below – mark ✓ - main and dessert

MAIN COURSE	1 st person	2 nd person
Roast turkey with traditional trimmings		
Roast beef & Yorkshire pudding		
Jewelled nut roast		
DESSERTS		
Christmas pudding & brandy sauce		
Baked vanilla cheesecake & raspberry compote		

Friends of Osterley Park

Friends' 100 Club

If you would like to join or increase the number of your shares in the Friends' 100 Club, please complete the following.

I wish to purchase _____ shares @ £12 each in the Friends' 100 Club

Name

Address.....

.....

Tel number

Email

Please send this form to Susan Parsons, 34 Erlesmere Gardens, Ealing W13 9TY or email FriendsoP.sp@gmail.com

To pay

- Cheque to "Friends of Osterley" (do not include "Park"). Send to Susan Parsons.
- Bank transfer to Friends of Osterley, sort code 20-02-06, account no 70389315. Please put your name and '100 Club' as the reference.

To ensure that any new shares are included in the 12 December draw, please return this with payment to Susan by 5 December.