

The Friends of Osterley Park

NEWSLETTER



Issue 133 Summer 2024 £1 (free to members)



Dear Friends



I do hope that you took the opportunity to visit Osterley at bluebell time this spring – you could see the blue haze from the House across the Great Meadow.

At the Friends' request, we have reinstated the coach trips. At the time of writing, the first two have run to Polesden Lacey and Hughenden Manor. After an initial slow start numbers are picking up. I've heard comments that prices have gone up, however anyone who drives will be well aware that petrol and diesel costs have increased and coach operators unfortunately have to pass these costs on. Please do treat the trips as a day out with friends without having to do the driving; they do represent good value for money !

The London outings are doing very well with numbers holding up, long may this continue. Spring started very well with a wonderful visit to Mercers Hall organised by Margaret Friday which was very much enjoyed by all who attended– see her report on page 7.

Sadly, we've seen the Ealing National Trust Association fall by the wayside due to lack of members coming forward to serve on their committee. We've seen our own numbers dwindle; we are all getting older and some of our members have lost their mobility so are no longer able to come to coffee mornings and on visits. If you have any friends or relations that you think might like to join the Friends, please pass on the word and remember you no longer need to be a member of the National Trust.

I hope that you all have a wonderful summer. We will be arranging further visits for the rest of the year which we will advertise in the newsletter and at coffee mornings. We will send out details by email as soon as they become available – an incentive to give us your email address!

Howard

Report on the AGM held on 24 April 2004

Susan Parsons

The minutes of the AGM held on 25 May 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting. The Chairman's report was presented and the examined accounts for the year ending 31 December 2023 were presented. The membership subscriptions for 2025 will remain as £10 for one person and £16 for two people at the same address.

The AGM elected:

- Howard Simmons as Chair
- Peter Bush as Vice-Chair
- Harsha Khatri as Hon Treasurer
- Susan Parsons as Hon Secretary
- John Collis, Yvonne Dias, Michael Doran, Margaret Friday, Margaret Lydamore and Vik Sharma as Committee members.

At the first Committee meeting following the AGM, the following roles were confirmed:

Chair – Howard Simmons

Vice-Chair – Peter Bush

Hon Treasurer – Harsha Khatri

Hon Secretary – Susan Parsons

Membership Secretary – Yvonne Dias

Visits (London) – Margaret Friday

Coach bookings – Margaret Lydamore

Coach trips – Vik Sharma

Coffee mornings – John Collis

Website/Community/Publicity – Mike Doran

Newsletter Editor - *vacant*

Summary of presentation to the Friends on 24 April 2024

2023 achievements:

- 53,706 visitors to the house and gardens (the paying part, not the park); not quite back to pre-Covid levels.
- £250,000 spent on buildings and maintenance including the north elevation of the stable block.
- £100,000 spent on conservation projects.
- Major community event hosted: the first Middlesex Pride.
- £15,000 raised largely through the second-hand bookshop.
- 100% turnover in the house staff (including staff promotions).
- £200,000 raised from filming.

Regarding staffing, Ffion George would return from maternity leave the following week; Lyndsey Feeney had taken up a head office role on the Treasure House project and Vida Radulovic was on a training secondment. Jenny, who had completed her garden apprenticeship at Osterley, was now at Ham.

2024 planning:

- 75,758 visitors targeted to the house and gardens.
- £400,000 to be spent on conservation, principally the south elevation of the house; scaffolding would be going up soon.
- £100,000 on internal conservation including the renewal of the Jersey Loan of 44 objects and the arrival of the Brinsley Ford collection.
- Two major community events: Middlesex Pride and an Eid family picnic.
- It was hoped to fund raise £23,000.

Osterley will be working with neighbouring communities on longer-term plans with the aim of improving connectivity (walking, cycling, public transport) principally with Hounslow and Ealing (it has plans for a new regional park along the River Brent). Currently, 84,500 people live within a 30 minute walk of the property and whilst access from the south and west is good, it is not so good from the north and east largely due to the barriers of the M4, the Grand Union Canal and the railway. Osterley will be talking to local organisations.

Chris thanked the Friends for their great support during the year.

We've got through another Easter, and though the weather seemed determined to throw all four seasons at us, we still welcomed over 6,000 visitors to the House and Gardens. We sold over 1,500 Easter trails with many more people enjoying the activities, including some adults! We had great feedback on the trail, with one family calling them the best games ever. A huge thank you to Danny who worked hard to build the games to amazing quality, and everyone who helped me with painting, repainting and varnishing everything to help it stand up to the weather. Finally, thank you to everyone who volunteered during the Easter period, helping us make it a success despite the challenges of weather and power cuts!

This May and June we'll celebrate some of the world's most outstanding people on our new trail, using artworks from the bestselling Little People, BIG DREAMS® picture-book series. As people visit the house and wander around the grounds, they can delve into the lives of some extraordinary people including architects, artists, and scientists to name a few. We'll also have animal encounters in May half-term hosted by Zoolab, which can be booked via our website. In the summer holidays we'll have Summer of Play, with lots of self-led play activities in the gardens for families to enjoy.

We not far from our season of Outdoor Theatre and Cinema. We have lots of exciting performances for our visitors to enjoy this year:

- 9 June - *Hamlet* presented by The Lord Chamberlain's Men
- 30 June - *Much Ado About Nothing* presented by Moving Parts Theatre Co
- 30 July – family show *Angela Sprocket's Pockets* presented by Folksy
- 3 August - *Treasure Island* for families and *An Ideal Husband* for adults presented by DOT productions

Finally, we have four days of outdoor cinema from 8-11 August. Adventure Cinema will be showing *Pretty Woman*, *The Greatest Showman Sing-a-Long*, *Mama Mia!* and *Back to the Future*. Outdoor theatre and cinema bring valuable income to the property as well as welcoming different audiences.

[Events at Osterley Park and House \(nationaltrust.org.uk\)](https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

We're delighted to welcome back Ffion, our Property Curator, who has returned from maternity leave. We have Omer as a new member of the Welcome Team in the Kiosk, and recruitment is underway for another team member. We also have Ilaria as a new team member in the shop.

This summer we'll be doing major conservation on the South Wing of the House, as part of our cycle of conservation. Though the bulk of the work is external the internal rooms must be protected, and so access to these spaces will be very different from normal. The work includes repairs to the roof, conservation cleaning to the balustrade on the roof, cleaning the whole wall, repointing the mortar, replacing bricks, repairing windows including the internal window chords, and finally painting the windows. Inside everything will be wrapped and packed to protect it in situ, with interpretation to explain the work that is taking place, including a video of the Tapestry Room being conserved. The whole of the south side of the House will be scaffolded (with protection for the wisteria in place) so that whole side of the House will be fenced off for the duration. The project will last until January 2025, with the external work completing in December 2024.

We're also delighted to be able to display artworks this summer from the Brinsley Ford collection which arrived at Osterley this year and features beautiful artworks on the theme of the Grand Tour. Different works from this collection will be displayed over the coming years for visitors to enjoy. [See Margaret Friday's piece in the Winter 2023 newsletter]

Membership Renewals

Yvonne Dias

Membership stands at 171, sadly we have lost a few Friends due to ill health or moving away, however we did gain three new members. It's wonderful that 84% of you have renewed your membership, and equally wonderful that 64% of you paid by Standing Order. So a big thank you for your support for another year.

For those of you who may have forgotten to renew your membership or need to pay for an event or purchase 100 Club shares, you can still do so via a bank transfer or cheque. Please remember to:

- include your surname in the bank reference and clearly mark what it is for e.g. subs, 100 Club, visit. Email Yvonne Dias at friendsoop.membership@gmail.com to advise you have done this.
- make sure cheques are made payable to the 'Friends of Osterley' (do not include 'Park'), include details of what the payment is for and send to Yvonne Dias, 84 Spring Grove Road, Hounslow TW3 4BW

Friends of Osterley have their account with Barclays Bank:

Sort Code: 20-02-06

Account Number: 70389315

Using email for newsletter distribution and to notify you of any last-minute changes or cancellations is quick, easy and free so please help us by providing us with your email address. The cost of postage has risen phenomenally, so taking the newsletter by email really does save the Friends money.

Lastly, all your details are kept in strictest confidence and are used solely by the Friends of Osterley Park Committee for the purpose of keeping you informed of our activities and are not shared with any other member or organisation without your consent.

100 Club

Susan Parsons

The first draw of the year was made at the AGM on 24 April. The lucky winners were: Noreen White (£100), Margaret Prior (£30) and Pat Moore/Paul Rumsey (£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 coffee morning on 29 August.

We would like to pay future prizes by bank transfer – its quicker, saves postage and the need for you to visit the bank to deposit the cheque. But in this day of scams, we quite understand why you might prefer a cheque! If you agreed to a bank transfer, we will ask for your bank details; these will not be kept on file.

Mercers' Hall Visit

Margaret Friday

The Friends enjoyed an excellent visit to the Mercers' Hall in April when we saw the portrait of Sir Thomas Gresham (front cover). This portrait of Thomas was done before his marriage to Ann Read in 1544; he was 26 and had studied under his uncle John to become a Merchant Adventurer. His uncle and his father Richard were both Mercers and Lord Mayors of London. This fine portrait was once believed to be by Holbein, but it is not signed. It is said to be the first full-length portrait of anyone in England who was not a royal.

Many important people over the centuries have been Mercers, the oldest guild in the city. They include Richard Whittington, Thomas a Becket, Geoffrey Chaucer and Thomas More. The early mercers were traders in cloth of many kinds.

The present Mercers' Hall is on the site of earlier halls in Ironmonger Lane next to the Cheap being the medieval name for market. It was burnt down during the Great Fire of London in 1666 and rebuilt. A direct hit on the hall during the Blitz in 1941 completely demolished it but fortunately the best stained-glass windows and many of the precious silver and crystal items had been removed for safe keeping and were put back in the modern building following its 1950s reconstruction. Some items like the large chandelier were only discovered in a box in 2003 and put back together to hang in splendour in the Assembly Room.

Our last visit was just after an extensive refit taking place in 2018. We did not see the Gresham portrait then because it was still hanging in the National Portrait Gallery where it had been on view for all to see whilst the Mercers' Hall was closed to visitors. It was a delight to see him at home with other notable members of the Mercers during our visit.

Sèvres and Fine Porcelain at Osterley

Margaret Friday

Osterley has a small but exquisite selection of tea, coffee, chocolate, and milk drinking vessels. The earliest are from the Chateau de Vincennes where this soft porcelain was first made in 1738, before being adopted by Madame de Pompadour who persuaded the works to move to Sèvres, closer to Versailles, in 1757. In 1759 King Louis XV purchased the Sèvres works.



Soft paste porcelain (called porcelain de France) continued to be produced until 1769 when the ingredients required to make hard paste (porcelain Royale) were found in France, Osterley's Vincennes sets were made in 1753 and are a mug made of soft paste and a milk cup with 2 handles.

These may have been purchased by Agatha Child, widow of Samuel, who oversaw Child's Bank at the time. She lived at Osterley along with her two sons Francis III and Robert II.

We believe that Francis III purchased the beautiful lapis and gold Sèvres Déjeuner set you can see here.



These Breakfast sets included a porcelain tray to hold cups, milk jug, sugar basin and pots for either tea, coffee or chocolate – different pots for each and different cups depending on what was being enjoyed. This set contains no tea, coffee or chocolate pots as it is thought the owner already had these in silver.



By 1765 the local Chelsea set of tea and coffee cups made in blue and decorated with people playing musical instruments was in use.

In 1772 more fine Sèvres porcelain Royale pieces were purchased by Robert and Sarah from Thomas Morgan of Arlington Street. They are all decorated with either blossoms or birds. This fine set is on display in the cabinet between the Entrance Hall and the Eating Room. Look further along the shelf and you will see an identical set but much smaller. Sarah Ann was born in August 1764, so would have been 8 at the time. What a lovely present for a little girl but it looks just like the large set.



Two Sèvres teapots were purchased in the 1770s one with flowers and another with birds.

Several trembleuse were also acquired. This is a cup with a deep saucer which prevents the cup from being tipped over easily. This is the 1774 example. In March 1790 the widow Sarah purchased more Sèvres at Christie's auction. These were being sold by French refugees escaping the Revolution and selling their prized porcelain to support themselves.



The Child family spent a huge amount on food for entertaining. In 1781 the bill for just tea, coffee, chocolate and sugar came to £230 which is about £17,000 today! The finest and the best were on offer to family and guests at Osterley, the party house. Only the best tea, coffee and chocolate - the drinks of the day - were served at Osterley in the finest porcelain from Sèvres adorned with Mrs Child's favourite birds or flowers.

Next time you are at Osterley examine the contents of the cases adjacent to the entrance hall where you can see fine Sèvres and Chelsea pieces on display.

Booking by Email

Whilst forms are attached, we would encourage you to book coach trips or London visits by email with payment online, saving postage costs. We really would appreciate you emailing Margaret Lydamore at melyd@btinternet.com (coach trips) or Yvonne Dias at FriendsOP.membership@gmail.com (London visits) **before doing a bank transfer or sending a cheque to ensure that there is space** – some trips/visits have an upper limit.

With coach trips it's important that people book as early as possible so we know what size coach to book. We also need to know where you want to be picked up (Osterley Park car park or the bus stop opposite Osterley station).

When making payment, please specify which trip/visit it is for. Bank transfers:

Name of Payee: **Friends of Osterley**
Sort Code: **20-02-06**
Account Number: **70389315**
Your reference: **your name/trip or visit**

Cheques should be sent to either Margaret or Yvonne as appropriate – address on the attached forms. Please give us the other information (contact details including mobile number) whether you are emailing us or using the forms.

Coach Trips

Vik Sharma

Friday, 21 June - Mottisfont Abbey, Hampshire

Trip Cost (including coach & entry): NT Members: **£32** (Please bring your membership card to avoid paying the full price on arrival); all Others: **£52**.

Pick-up 1 (from Osterley Park car park): 09.15

Pick-up 2 (bus stop opposite Osterley Station): 09.20

Return (to Osterley Park): 5-5.30 PM



Mottisfont Abbey in Hampshire is a Grade 1 listed building hidden deep in the English countryside dating back to 1201 with a medieval priory at its heart. Maud Russell made Mottisfont her home in the 1930s bringing artists here to relax and create works inspired by Mottisfont's past, including a *trompe l'oeil* drawing room painted by Rex Whistler. These artistic traditions continue today with a permanent 20th century art collection.

Mottisfont is home to the National Collection of pre-1900 old fashioned roses; the renowned walled gardens were designed by Graham Stuart Thomas to house his stunning collection of old-fashioned roses. This year, Mottisfont is celebrating 50 years since the collection was brought here for everyone to enjoy, and the garden team are preparing it to face the climate challenges of the future. You can find out more about their work when we visit. The roses will be in full bloom in June providing a vibrant and fragrant experience.

In addition to its historical and horticultural significance, Mottisfont offers a variety of scenic walking trails along the River Test and a chalk stream famous for its clear waters.

Website: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/hampshire/mottisfont>

Food & Refreshments - Old Kitchen Café open daily, serving hot and cold food. Additional facilities are available during busy periods.

Accessibility – there is a courtesy shuttle bus between the car park, the house and the rose garden subject to a driver being available. The ground floor of the house is fully accessible.

Wednesday, 10 July – Blenheim Palace, Woodstock

Trip Cost (including coach & entry): Friends **£55** (please note that individual entrance costs over £35 !); Guests **£56**.

Pick-up 1 (*from Osterley Park car park*): 09.10

Pick-up 2 (*bus stop opposite Osterley Station*): 09.15

Return (*to Osterley Park*): 5-5.30 PM



Blenheim Palace is a monumental country house in Woodstock, stretching across more than 2,000 acres of Oxfordshire countryside. The palace is notable as the birthplace and ancestral home of Sir Winston Churchill. It is the principal residence of the Dukes of Marlborough, and the only non-royal, non-episcopal country house in England to hold the title of palace. The palace, one of England's largest houses, was built between 1705 and 1722, and designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987. Designed in the rare, and short-lived, English Baroque style, architectural appreciation of the palace is as divided

today as it was in the 1720s. It is unique in its combined use as a family home, mausoleum and national monument.

Website: <https://www.blenheimpalace.com/>

Food, Refreshments & Shopping - There are a range of tempting cafés and restaurants that you can enjoy. Whether you're after comfort food or a sophisticated afternoon tea, there's something to tickle everyone's fancy. Take some time to browse their large gift shop, where you'll find treasures from renowned British companies as well as Blenheim Palace souvenirs.

Accessibility – Level entrance from the main entrance to many areas of the palace including the Churchill exhibition.

London Visits

Margaret Friday

Friday, 28 June - Fenton House, Hampstead – Cost £5

Fenton House is a 17th century merchant's house in Hampstead bequeathed to the National Trust in 1952. Downstairs are the dining room containing Handel's harpsichord; the Chinese room with a very rare mirror painting on glass; and the Porcelain room with some fine Sèvres and Chelsea pieces. The upstairs rooms contain fine musical instruments. The volunteer room guides will be delighted to tell you stories of the house and those who lived here.

The horticultural gem of a garden is looked after by head gardener Rhianon. She will be working in the gardens and will be delighted to answer any questions – she will be looking out for you. The rose gardens should be particularly splendid; there are also an orchard, terraces and a kitchen garden to enjoy.

Accessibility - the ground floor is fully accessible; upstairs can only be reached by a two-flight staircase. The toilet is upstairs and there are steps between levels in the garden.

Fenton House is a 300m walk from Hampstead tube station (Northern line). From the station cross the road and walk up Holly Hill. At the top you will see the grand gated entrance to Fenton. Walk up the steps and through the front garden; the side entrance to the house is round the right hand corner (the front door is locked).

Meet at the house at 1.45 pm so we can attend the short talk at 2 pm in the dining room. Alternatively, meet **Margaret from 12.30 at the Holly Bush pub** (22 Hollymount, London NW3 6SG) on the way if you fancy a bite or a drink beforehand and we can all go to Fenton House together.

Tuesday, 23 July – Walk from Hammersmith to Putney – Cost £5

Phil Frickers will lead a walk along the Thames towpath looking at sites along the way and the use of the river itself, now and in the past. We will finish at St Mary's Church, famous for the Putney Parliamentary debates, where Phil will compare the local boy, Thomas Cromwell, with Sir Thomas Gresham, well known to all at Osterley.

Meeting point at 1pm at the bench dedicated to Chick Knight on the towpath on the north bank of the Thames, about 50m downstream from Hammersmith Bridge. From Hammersmith tube/bus station take the south (Talgarth Road) exit, cross under the flyover, leave the Hammersmith Apollo to your left, and walk down Queen Caroline Street to the river.

Alternatively, **from 11.45 Phil will be at the Truth café**, 36-38 Fulham Palace Road (on the eastern side of the Hammersmith Apollo) if you'd like to join him for a late breakfast/early lunch (at your own cost).

The length of the walk is about 1.7 miles and there are benches along the way. The closest tube station to the finishing point is either Putney Bridge or East Putney or there are buses.

Thursday, 8 August – Train visit to Rochester, Kent – Cost £22

Guide Stephen will meet us at the station off the 1010 train from Victoria (arriving at 1053) and give us an introductory talk. We have arranged a tour of Eastgate House, an Elizabethan house opening specially for us, near the station. Refreshments (not included) are available in the Cathedral's café in the crypt or there are many other places in the High Street. At 2pm we will visit the sensational Restoration House with beautiful rooms and spectacular gardens. It is privately owned, and locals acclaim it as the gem of Rochester. Charles II stayed here when he returned to England in 1660 prior to his coronation. Following this visit our guide will take us to the Castle once owned by the Child family and tell us about the exterior, one of the best-preserved Norman Castles

in Europe. We know Samuel Child and his wife Agatha visited as did their son, Robert Child II.

You will then be free to explore the rest of Rochester. Attractions include the Cathedral (admission free), the Castle which has steep steps to the keep (about £6, English Heritage free), Huguenot Museum (about £5, Art Pass 50% discount) and the Guildhall Museum (admission free).

Tickets for the 1010 train from Victoria start from £9.55 return (with Senior Railcard and Freedom pass). Please purchase your own ticket.

This tour has been organised by Margaret Friday and Margaret Prior. It should be a lovely day out with more freedom than a usual single house visit.

Cost: £22 includes our guide and entrance to Eastgate and Restoration Houses (the latter includes a 40-page colour book of the house and garden).

Not included: train ticket, entrance fees to other attractions.

Please note there are separate booking forms for Coach Trips and London Visits

Coffee Mornings

John Collis

10.30 for 11.00 in the Study Base at Osterley Park.

Friends £4, Others £5

£2.70 pays for the coffee, tea and biscuits (this has recently gone up from £2.50 but the Committee has decided not to increase the price).

Thursday, 30 May – Christine Diwell – The history of Isleworth in 20 objects

Tuesday, 25 June – Nicola Carr, Area Ranger

Wednesday, 31 July – Michael Peacock – the history of Brentford

Thursday, 29 August – Margaret Friday – the Brinsley Ford Collection

Tuesday, 24 September – Hannah Wiltshire - Business Services, Events and Welcoming Everyone

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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 Back copies of the newsletter are available on the website.

Next newsletter: to be published at end August 2024.