

The Friends of Osterley Park



NEWSLETTER

Issue 134 Autumn 2024 £1 (free to members)



Sarah Child by George Romney

Dear Friends

As you will be aware, the Friends donate to materials for the costume makers at Osterley. The Committee visited the costume store last month and were delighted to see the garments they've made, frequently from recycled materials with button, braid, etc bought from all over the UK. The costumes, worn by volunteers, were seen to great advantage at the recent costume day at Osterley. I will be writing an article about this in the next newsletter.

We had an interesting talk from Judith and Jenny about the South Wing House Project. The state rooms have had their curtains taken down, carpets and furniture removed with large pieces including the state bed encased in protective boxes. The Yellow Taffeta bedroom will be opening soon now they've got rid of the pests. Talking of which, a question was asked about moths from which a lot of Friends appear to be suffering! If you can, give bagged clothing 2 x 48 hours in the freezer allowing the item to warm up in between. If not, Judith recommends Moth Stop spray from Lakeland.

Susan and I attended a meeting with other National Trust support associations from South East England at Petworth last month – other associations are also experiencing declining membership, difficulty in attracting people to serve on their committee and increasing coach costs. Many are having banking issues – not us, I'm pleased to report - we are ahead of the game with electronic banking; indeed since the beginning of 2024 we have only written seven cheques as opposed to making over 30 bank transfers. This saves us lots in stamps and you having to visit the bank to deposit them!

The Friends are lucky in having an excellent Committee but we really do need a Treasurer and Newsletter Editor – the latter can be done remotely. If you know anybody, please do let me know.

If you change your email address, please do let us know. We've had several instances lately of people wondering why they haven't received emails for a while! Please let Yvonne know soonest.

In response to Friends' requests, we've re-introduced coach trips and these are building in popularity. Friends might have seen the £55 cost for Blenheim Palace, thought that's a lot and not signed up but all who went felt it offered good value giving entrance to the extensive Palace, its Churchill exhibition, its formal and walled gardens and the wider park. Most of us enjoyed coffee and

cake and/or a good lunch in their cafes. The team spends a lot of time and trouble sourcing these coach trips and we need them to be financially viable. Our latest offering is Bateman's in East Sussex on 26 September – please do sign up as quickly as possible for this – details have been emailed and appear later in the newsletter.

We've had some excellent London visits organised by Margaret Friday this summer. Friends very much enjoy these and, unlike the coach trips, they can be booked closer to the visit.

Howard

News from Osterley

Hannah Wiltshire

It's been a busy time at Osterley, with lots of changes, from a new pick-up truck to new flushers in the toilets. Summer weather has brought visitors out to enjoy walks and ice cream in the sunshine, though with enough rain to keep us on our toes!

For the school summer holidays we joined the National Trust Summer of Play programme. We offered lots of different ways to play in the gardens, from throwing and catching, to an obstacle course, to storytelling. This national programme is sponsored by Starling Bank, part of a three year partnership that aims to improve young people's connection to nature, and provide financial support for our habitat conservation projects. We have also seen the return of Craft Cart, our volunteer team offering free craft activities on the Front Lawn every Thursday in the school holidays.

We've completed our programme of outdoor theatre and cinema this year, seeing five theatre performances and four nights of outdoor cinema (though one was cancelled due to high winds). These events have brought in around £5,000 of income to Osterley, and also brought us to the attention of different audiences. We're already putting together our programme of performances for next year. Thank you to all the volunteers who supported these events.

We also hosted two large-scale community events on the Front Lawn. In June we had the Osterley Eid Picnic, which welcomed over 3,000 people to enjoy food, shopping and activities. Then in July we hosted Middlesex Pride, where attendees could enjoy performances and find out more about local services. We brought a facsimile of one of the paintings from the Ford Collection to the event, and it was great to get everyone's reactions to the work. The amazing costume

volunteers also showed off the 18th century costumes for the visitors (information to follow in a future newsletter). A huge thank you to all the volunteers who joined us for these events; things of this scale require a huge amount of support to be a success.

The Ford Collection has been on display for over a month, and has been seeing a hugely positive reaction from visitors. People particularly enjoy being able to page through the digital display of the *Campi Phlegraei : observations on the volcanos of the two Sicilies, as they have been communicated to the Royal Society of London*. These works will be on display until the end of October, with a display of other works being planned for next year.

Work continues apace on the South Wing. They have cleaned the balustrade and the wall, repaired windows from the outside, and are starting to work on them from the inside. The most significant piece of work so far has been the removal of the pinecone from the south east turret. Investigation took place once the scaffolding was put up, and the decision was made to take it down for essential repair work. It will be sent to the workshop of the National Trust specialist craft team, Park Farm.

As if there wasn't enough going on in the House we're starting work on the Conservation Condition Report. This in-depth project will inform future conservation projects in the House, and is a key part of looking after the building in the long-term.

There are changes taking place in our staff team. The Facilities team has said goodbye to Caroline, who was looking after our compliance tasks while Jenny was studying. Having completed her studies, Jenny will be joining the National Trust consultancy team as an Assistant Building Surveyor. She will be working on some projects at Osterley, so we'll still be seeing her around the property as she transitions to her new role. We are pleased to welcome Gemma Daldin as the part-time gardener, working with Andy and Jasper to keep the gardens looking lovely. In the Visitor Experience team we've been joined by Dennis Ahern as House Welcome Manager, looking after visitor welcome in the House and managing the House Welcome and Room Guide volunteers.

There's lots of exciting and interesting things going on, and it's great to be able to welcome visitors to experience new ways to look at Osterley. We hope the good weather will continue for the rest of the summer, and everyone can enjoy this special place as we move into autumn.

George Romney Portraits of Robert and Sarah Child Margaret Friday

In this newsletter we are looking at the two fine portraits of Sarah and Robert Child painted by George Romney and now gracing the Drawing Room at Osterley. He was the chief rival, as portrait artist, to Sir Joshua Reynolds. Robert Child had an almost life-sized portrait of himself painted by Reynolds in 1772. These two three-quarter pendant portraits are designed to hang facing each other. The picture of Sarah (*on the front cover*) was done in 1781 and shows her wearing a white gown with a scarf over her hair. Robert displays a green velvet jacket with gold buttons; it was painted between March 1781 and March 1782.



The dates are significant because Romney first met and painted Emma Hart, later Lady Hamilton, in January 1782. Emma was painted in a white gown with a scarf over her hair – just as Sarah Child in her 1781 portrait. The portraits cost 20 guineas each. Romney used softer fabrics like muslin and cotton to adorn his ladies rather than the stiff silk brocades of Reynolds. Romney was said to be cantankerous while Reynolds was known for his bonhomie. Carver Romney made frames and violins as a hobby.

Romney was born in 1734 at Dalton-in-Furness. His father was a cabinet maker and removed his son from school aged 10 to follow in his footsteps. George was taught to carve but his interest in drawing and painting led to his father paying for an apprenticeship in 1755 to artist Christopher Steele of Kendal. In October 1756 he married Mary Abbott. After a year George left the apprenticeship and set out to earn his living as an artist. In 1762 he left his wife Mary and their two children in Kendal to move to London where the most prominent artists and their clients were. In 1763 he entered his painting “The Death of General Wolfe” (now lost) in the Society of Arts Exhibition and it won the 2nd prize of 50 guineas, but Joshua Reynolds was accused of having it reduced to 25 guineas, so the two men fell out and continued as rivals for the

rest of their days. In 1765 he won their 2nd prize again, but this time received all the money. In 1769 he exhibited a large painting of Sir George Warren and his family which was so admired that many commissioned him for his ability to create a fine likeness. By 1772 he was able to go on the Grand Tour with the miniaturist Ozias Humphrey. They set off in March and reached Rome by June. The pope allowed him to put up scaffolding so he could view Raphael's paintings more closely. They returned to England in 1775 and Romney purchased Francis Cotes' house in Cavendish Square. Cotes had painted Sarah Child and the Child's daughter Sarah Ann; both portraits are at Osterley.



When Sarah and Robert sat in 1781-2, they would have gone to Cavendish Square. The final portrait of Robert Child was finished in March 1782, Robert died on 28 July 1782. Romney completed hundreds of paintings and sketches of Emma, his muse and inspiration. He did not return to Kendal and his wife until 1799 when his ill health had made it difficult to paint. Mary cared for him until he died in 1802. He is remembered now for his many pictures of Emma, Lady Hamilton.

George Romney self portrait 1784. This unfinished sketch was given to his friend Haley

Please come and enjoy the fine portraits of Sarah and Robert hanging in the Drawing Room at Osterley.

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

Thursday, 26 September – Bateman's, East Sussex

Trip Cost (including coach & entry): NT Members: **£34** (please bring your membership card to avoid paying the full price on arrival). All Others: **£49** (£34 + £15). £1 extra for non-Friends.

Pick-up 1 (from Osterley Park car park): 9:10

Pick-up 2 (bus stop opposite Osterley Station): soon after 9.10

Return (to Osterley Park): 5-5:30 PM



Nestled in the serene Sussex countryside, Bateman's stands as a testament to literary heritage and historical preservation. This enchanting Jacobean house, built in 1634, is most famously known as the home of Rudyard Kipling, the celebrated British author and Nobel laureate. Managed by the National Trust since 1939, Bateman's offers visitors a unique glimpse into the life and times of

one of England's literary giants, while also preserving the architectural and natural beauty of the estate.

The house and its surrounding 33-acre estate reflect the typical grandeur and charm of the 17th century. The historical value of Bateman's extends beyond its architecture; it represents a significant period in English history marked by agricultural prosperity and the flourishing of the arts. The gardens at Bateman's are a quintessentially English paradise, designed by Kipling himself with the assistance of architect Charles Voysey. The estate also includes a working water mill, restored to full functionality by the National Trust.

Rudyard Kipling purchased Bateman's in 1902 and lived there with his family until his death in 1936. The house provided a tranquil retreat for Kipling, where he found inspiration for many of his works. Kipling's influence permeates every corner of Bateman's. The rooms are filled with personal artifacts, manuscripts, and memorabilia, offering a tangible connection to his life and work. The study, with its original furnishings, remains as it was during Kipling's time, allowing visitors to envision the author at his writing desk, crafting some of his most famous works, including "If—" and "The Jungle Book".

Accessibility - The first floor of the house is accessed by stairs (with a handrail). Partly accessible grounds, some uneven paths.

Cafe & Shopping - The Mulberry Tea-room offers plenty of food and drink to tempt you. Browse the shelves in the Oast House shop for the perfect gift or souvenir of your visit. Second hand bookshop.

Website: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/sussex/batemans>

London Visits

Margaret Friday

The visit to 2 Willow Road is limited to 12 people so bookings for Friends will be taken in the order in which they are received. Please email Yvonne Dias at FriendsOP.membership@gmail.com **before** making a bank transfer or sending a cheque to ensure you have a place.

Thursday, 19 September – 2 Willow Road, Hampstead NW3 1TH – Cost £5

The house was built by Ernő Goldfinger, Hungarian architect who studied in Vienna and Paris and came to London. 2 Willow Road was his own home,

finished in 1939. Goldfinger is known for his tower blocks Balfron and Trellick, both now listed, as well as his Penguin House for London Zoo. All the furniture in this house was designed by him. Goldfinger and his wife Ursula loved to hold weekly cocktail parties so the walls in this small house could be moved to create space for large groups. Ursula was an artist and her studio with a raised area is part of the house design. It is filled with modern art: Henry Moore, Brigit Riley, Max Ernst and Marcel Duchamps amongst others as Ernő knew most of the top European artists of the day. Many came and stayed in the downstairs flat which replaced the original large kitchen with resident cook since live-in servants were not fashionable after the war. The miniscule kitchen was where Ursula prepared all the food for dinners and celebrations as well as the traditional Sunday lunch. The nursery on the top floor was made for the children and their nursemaid.

Accessibility - Level access to the film viewing room and small hallway only. Spiral staircase to the main, first and second floors above. **If you are not confident of your climbing ability this may not be the best visit for you.**

2 Willow Road is ¼ mile from Hampstead Heath (main line). From the station, cross the road, using the zebra crossing, and walk up South End Road passing a coffee shop called the Watch. Further up the road you will find a tree, a bench with a sign just before it indicating Willow Road. Follow the road veering left. Just ahead you will see the Freemason's Arms, 32 Downshire Hill NW3 1NT.

Our guided tour visit is booked for 2 pm but we can meet in the Freemason's Arms from 12.30 for a drink and snack and walk to 2 Willow Road together.

Alternatively, you could go to Hampstead station on the Northern Line and walk the half mile to 2 Willow Road from there.

As we are the last tour of the day you are welcome to stay and look around after the tour has finished.

Wednesday, 23 October – Bank of England Museum – cost £5

Today we visit the Bank of England Museum in the City of London. The fascinating exhibition takes about an hour to view so I suggest arriving about 2.15. There is airport style security to put your bags through. There is nowhere to leave things, so you must carry your belongings with you. Just before 3.30 we will gather in the Rotunda and be taken to the lecture theatre where our speaker will reveal the story of the Bank of England. This is particularly

interesting to us as Child's Bank was established before the Bank of England. The talk, with slides, takes an hour and our speaker will welcome questions afterwards.

Accessibility – there are three small sets of steps within the Museum.

I suggest we meet in Browns pub and eating house at 1pm at 8-10 Old Jewry, London EC2R 8DN, for a bite to eat beforehand. Take the Guildhall exit from Bank Station. Brown's is in the old London headquarters building of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia. It offers a selection of reasonably priced dishes, £19.95 for 2 courses or £23.95 for 3. After we have dined, we can walk to The Bank of England Museum.

Alternatively, meet at the Museum (Bartholomew Lane EC2R 8AH). Take the Threadneedle Street exit from Bank station.

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

Christmas Lunch

John Collis

The Friends have now held two very enjoyable Christmas lunches at the Grasshoppers Club in Syon Lane so we are repeating it this year. We will be holding the lunch on **Thursday, 12 December** at 12:30.

At the time of going to press, we do not have the menu or price but expect it to be similar to last year's. There will be vegetarian options. Details will be emailed to the Friends as soon as available.

Osterley Book Group

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 15 October at 2pm to talk about Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* – the classic story of the Dashwood sisters and their widowed mother who are in financially reduced circumstances.

New members welcome. Please contact Wendy Sim for details – wendyansim@hotmail.com

Coffee Mornings

John Collis

**10.30 for 11.00 in the Study Base at Osterley Park.
Friends £4, Others £5**

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

Tuesday, 24 September – Nicola Carr, Area Ranger

Wednesday, 30 October – Michael Peacock – Brentford and the canal system

Thursday, 28 November – Rosie Fyles, Head Gardener, Chiswick House

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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 November 2024.