

# The Friends of Osterley Park

## NEWSLETTER



Issue 138 Autumn 2025 £1 (free to members)

### Chairman's Report

Howard Simmons

I'm very pleased to advise that a new eight-seater buggy has now been ordered with delivery in the Autumn. This has been funded by donations from three National Trust support associations, a generous donation from Christine Craik, all matched by the Friends of Osterley Park. The Committee, with support from Osterley, has decided that the buggy should be named for Douglas Craik, the Friends' much loved and respected long-standing Treasurer/ Vice-Chair/ holiday organiser and a long-term volunteer buggy driver at Osterley. In the meantime, the six-seater buggy from Clandon is back in operation having undergone extensive maintenance.

You'll note that this newsletter is in a different format and is shorter than usual. We have been without a newsletter editor for 2½ years now with Susan shouldering the burden in addition to everything else she does; she can't continue to do this. If you know anybody who might be interested in taking on the role for the four editions a year, please ask them to contact me. The role can be carried out remotely and most of the content is written by others.

You might have read in the national press that the Trust is consulting on proposed staff changes. Following the 10-year strategy launch, it needs to make savings so is simplifying structures and merging portfolios. The Committee is making its views known about safeguarding Osterley against negative impact given it is a very significant Trust property within the M25 designated as a Treasure/Discovery House.

We've enjoyed several coach and local visits in recent months. If you are thinking about going on one of these, please book as soon as possible and provide all the information requested up-front in one go to avoid emails having to go back and forth. Committee members are all volunteers and give their time freely; please make it as easy as possible for them. We have to book a coach months in advance and can't increase its size when a few more people decide to book late.....

### News from Osterley

Matt Butler/Hannah Wiltshire

At this midpoint in the year it's a good chance to take stock of where we are. We're pleased to say this year our visitor numbers have exceeded last year by 38%. That's due to a really strong visitor programme, and the hard work of all staff and volunteers, providing great experiences for visitors. Our visitor satisfaction scores have increased too, which is great recognition for our focus on service and presentation standards across the property.

In the House, we're delighted that several paintings have returned from long-term conservation and are now on display. The *Copy of The Last Supper* by Frederico Barocci (1535-1612) was conserved at the Courtauld Institute of Art over the last three years and is now on display in the Child Suite on the top floor. We're also pleased to see the return of Costume Days this summer. We've had three already, with two more being held on 11 and 20 September.

From 11 October to 2 November we'll have the "We're going on a Ghost Hunt" trail based on the popular book. The bunnies are setting off on an adventure; join them to help find the ghosts hidden around the park and house.

Osterley's Marigold Festival will run from 22 October to 4 January 2026 as the cornerstone of our winter programming. Diwali is the five-day Festival of Lights celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and some Buddhists across the world. For some, it coincides with harvest and new year celebrations; it's a festival of new beginnings and the triumph of good over evil, and light over darkness. Marigolds are used to celebrate Diwali, with garlands adorning doorways and holiday tables. The Marigold Festival at Osterley is a celebration for everyone to enjoy and participate in, and we are involving local community groups to help us create it. This year, we will be focusing on exploring classical Indian music in the Yellow Breakfast Room, where music was traditionally played in Osterley House. The Marigold has a special place in Osterley's history, as the flower featured on the mid-17th century sign above Child & Co's London premises on Fleet Street and was woven into the style of Osterley House by Robert Adam in the 1770s.

We're pleased to welcome Nick Porter to the garden team as a part time gardener. Nick will be looking after Mrs Child's flower garden, and has been working hard edging and weeding the area. Clair Pead has joined the visitor welcome team in the kiosk, so do say hello if you're visiting Osterley.

While the weather seems to change from day to day, we hope you find a sunny moment to come out to Osterley. We look forward to welcoming you.

### **Francis Child III by Allan Ramsay**

**Margaret Friday**

This portrait of Francis Child III is by the noted Scots artist Allan Ramsay. Allan was born in Edinburgh in 1713. His father was a poet, artist and playwright who, with his friends including William Adam, set up in 1729 an apprenticeship system for students called the Academy of St. Luke designed to promote and advance the arts in Scotland. His son Allan was educated in philosophy and history along with the arts. His skill in drawing was evident and he studied under Hans Hysing in London before going to Europe from 1736-8. On his return, in 1739 he married and set up a studio in London but continued to paint important fellow Scots in Edinburgh, including Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1745. His first wife Anne Bayne died in 1743. He married Margaret Lindsay eloping with her in 1752 as her father Sir Alexander Lindsay did not wish her to marry a painter. Ramsay assured him that his only reason for marriage was "*my love for your daughter who, I am sensible, is entitled to much more than I can ever bestow*". Ramsay was able to prove he earned enough to support Margaret. She accompanied him when

he returned to Italy from 1754-7. During that time, they explored and he portrayed people taking the Grand Tour.



From the death of Sir Godfrey Kneller in 1723 until the rise of Sir Joshua Reynolds in the 1760's, Allan Ramsay was the chief portrait artist in Britain. Thus, the young Francis Child, who came of age in 1757, was portrayed by the illustrious Allan Ramsay in 1758. Ramsay was noted for his accuracy, providing vivacious yet intimate depictions. Today Francis Child III in his splendid blue velvet suit watches us from above the Drawing Room fireplace. We know that in earlier days he was in the Breakfast Room. The 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Jersey wore a copy of the blue velvet suit to the Georgian Ball held at Osterley in 1939. He was photographed with his then wife Virginia Cherrell in front of the Allan Ramsay portrait of his forebear Francis. Links with Scotland flourished, even after Francis' death in 1763 as Robert Adam decorated Osterley for

Robert Child. Allan Ramsay became chief artist to King George III in 1761. After that time, he painted many pictures of George III and Queen Charlotte as presents for Royal visitors and portraits for British embassies. In 1766 he painted his elderly friend David Hume, Scots philosopher and enlightenment historian. From 1770 when he dislocated his right shoulder, he too wrote on the enlightenment, but completed his final portrait of George III in 1782, the year his beloved wife died. For respite he travelled to Italy dying in August 1784 in Dover whilst returning to London. His friend Samuel Johnson said "*I love Ramsay. You will not find a man in whose conversation there is more instruction, more information and more elegance, than in Ramsay*". A fine tribute to a man known for his social charm and knowledge of the world.

### Booking by Email

Margaret Lydamore

Please read the following instructions carefully, and be sure to do exactly as you are asked, giving all the information requested. Otherwise the organisers are involved in a lot of unnecessary follow-up emails. Unless you tell us otherwise, we'll work on the basis that you are a National Trust member (or a volunteer). You do need to tell us if you have membership of one of the other associations whose property we might be visiting.

With coach trips in particular it is important that you book as early as possible so that we know what size coach is feasible for us. Our coach trips are costed with quite narrow margins, and we cannot afford to book a large coach if we are not going to fill it. For the same reason, we regret that we cannot give refunds – except in

occasional very exceptional circumstances – unless we have a waiting list. When booking you need to state your pickup point (Osterley Car Park or the bus stop opposite Osterley station) and give us your contact information including a mobile number in case we need to reach you on the day. This information is required whether you are emailing or using the forms.

While forms are attached, we would encourage you to book coach trips and local visits by email and make payments by bank transfer, thus saving postage costs. Please email Margaret Lydamore at [melyd@btinternet.com](mailto:melyd@btinternet.com) (for coach trips) or Yvonne Dias at [FriendsoOP.membership@gmail.com](mailto:FriendsoOP.membership@gmail.com) (for local visits), giving all the requested information, but wait for confirmation that you have a place before making a transfer. All trips and some visits have an upper limit.

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**

Payment by **cheque** is a last resort. They should be sent to either Margaret or Yvonne as appropriate – address on the attached forms.

Please note that an extra £2 is charged for non-members of the Friends of Osterley Park.

**Accessibility** - A gentle reminder that when you book outings for yourself or anyone else, please consider the nature of the venue and work out whether you can manage without assistance. Not all properties or places that we visit are fully accessible and many do not have lifts. The outing organisers cannot act as carers, so if you have any mobility or other health issues that mean you will require assistance, please bring someone with you to help.

## **Coach Trips**

**Vik Sharma**

### **Wednesday, 10 September – Audley End, Saffron Walden (limited spaces available)**

**Trip Cost** (including coach & entry): English Heritage Members or Art Fund card holders: **£30** (please bring your membership card to avoid paying the full price on arrival). All others **£45.50** (£30 + £15.50\*). £2 extra for non-Friends. **Please advise at time of booking whether or not you have an English Heritage/Art Fund card.**

**Pick-up 1** (from Osterley Park car park): 8.45 – **please note the earlier departure time**

**Pick-up 2** (bus stop opposite Osterley Station): soon after 8.45

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

\* This must be paid at the time of booking to take advantage of the group price



Step back in time at Audley End House, one of England's grandest country estates, nestled in the picturesque Essex countryside near Saffron Walden. Originally a Benedictine monastery, the site was transformed in the early 17th century into a royal palace in all but name - so opulent that Charles II used it as a base for his court. Though later scaled down, the house still dazzles with its richly decorated interiors, fine art collection, and atmospheric Victorian service wing, offering a vivid glimpse into the upstairs-downstairs life of a bygone era.

The gardens are no less impressive. Designed by Capability Brown and restored to their 18th-century glory, they include sweeping lawns, a serpentine lake, and a working organic walled kitchen garden. Stroll through shaded woodland paths or visit the historic stable yard with its resident horses.

Whether you're drawn by the grandeur of its past or the charm of its present, Audley End offers an immersive, inspiring experience.

**Café & Gift Shop** - visitors can recharge in the café, which serves hearty lunches, light bites, and delicious cakes, many made with produce from the estate garden. The gift shop is well-stocked with books, treats, and unique gifts.

**Accessibility** - the main house has a lift for wheelchair users, and most of the grounds have step-free routes. Accessible toilets are also available.

**Website:** <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/audley-end-house-and-gardens/>

## Thursday, 2 October – Petworth House, West Sussex

**Trip Cost** (including coach & entry): NT Members: **£30** (please bring your membership card to avoid paying the full price on arrival). All others **£47.50** (£30 + £17.50). £2 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



Set in the heart of West Sussex, Petworth House is a Baroque mansion of epic scale and elegance, steeped in over 800 years of history. Once the seat of the powerful Percy family, it was later transformed into a cultural haven by the 3rd Earl of Egremont - an avid patron of the arts. Today, Petworth boasts one of the National Trust's most impressive art collections, including masterpieces by Turner, Van Dyck, Reynolds, and Gainsborough. Its gilded state rooms, opulent interiors, and atmospheric servant spaces invite visitors into a world of aristocratic grandeur and creative legacy.

The surrounding 700-acre parkland, sculpted by Capability Brown, is as much a work of art as the house itself. Roam among ancient trees, herds of fallow deer, and serene lakes, with sweeping views of the South Downs. Closer to the house, the formal gardens feature colourful borders, tranquil walks, and hidden corners that make every visit unique.

Whether you come for the art, the history, or the sheer beauty of the landscape, Petworth promises an unforgettable escape into England's cultural and natural heritage.

**Café & Gift Shop** - the on-site café serves a selection of locally sourced meals, light snacks, and homemade cakes. The gift shop offers tasteful souvenirs, books, and artisan-made homewares.

**Accessibility** is a priority, with step-free access to much of the house, mobility parking, an accessible toilet, and an electric shuttle for easier travel between the car park and house (subject to availability of volunteers).

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

## Local Visits

Margaret Friday

**Please book as soon as possible so that we can reserve the correct number of places as these have to be paid for in advance.**

### **Monday, 15 September – Royal Mews – 1.45 for 2pm – cost £17.50**

Today we visit the Royal Mews where we meet two of the beautiful horses used to draw the magnificent carriages displayed here along with the fine cars used to move the Royals and important guests around London. Photography is allowed inside and out so feel free to photograph yourself in front of the Gold Coach or splendid Bentley.

Victoria Station is closest or you can take a longer walk from Green Park. If you would like to lunch beforehand (please tell Yvonne when you book), meet at 12 noon at The English Rose Tea Rooms, 4 Lower Grosvenor Place SW1W 0EJ. Otherwise meet at 1.45 at the entrance to the Royal Mews, Buckingham Palace Road.

### **Tuesday, 14 October - Somerset House – cost £12**

This famous building replaced Somerset Palace, the home of kings and queens for centuries. When the old palace went, George III asked William Chambers to design a grand building to serve as offices for collecting taxes, running the Navy etc. It was the first home of the Royal Academy from 1764. The Courtauld Art Collection is now here.

Whilst there are tours available to the public, very few of us avail ourselves of them. We've booked 10 spaces on the historical tour at 12 noon and 10 spaces on the 2pm tour. There are stairs and uneven floors in some places.

Please come to the Seamans' Hall in the South Wing 15 minutes before your tour starts. The closest tube stations are Temple or Covent Garden.

## Christmas Lunch

John Collis

The Friends have now held three 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 **Tuesday, 9 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.

3 courses – starter, main and dessert – at £32 - must be pre-ordered by booking form (*attached*) to John Collis or email [collis329@hotmail.com](mailto:collis329@hotmail.com) **The deadline for booking is Tuesday, 25 November.** Grasshoppers is very amenable but cannot cope with late bookings. Non-members of Friends of Osterley Park are welcome but we ask for an additional £2.

### Menu

#### Starter:

Roast butternut squash soup (V)  
Duck & orange pate

#### Main course:

Roast turkey with traditional trimmings  
Baked salmon fillet & parsley sauce  
Vegan Wellington (V)

#### Desserts:

Chocolate Christmas tree (V)  
Baked vanilla cheesecake and raspberry compot (V)

Mince Pie & Coffee

There will be a complementary glass of mulled wine.

## Coffee Mornings

John Collis

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

**Thursday, 28 August** – Christine Diwell – Isleworth through the ages

**Tuesday, 30 September** – Bessie White will talk about her great grandfather, Arthur Toulmin Smith, who was an engineer in 19<sup>th</sup> century Russia

**Wednesday, 29 October** – James Marshall – 100 years of the Great West Road

**Thursday, 27 November** – Nicola Carr, Area Ranger

## Osterley Book Group

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 14 October at 2pm to talk about Anthony Trollope's *The Warden*, the first of well-loved *Chronicles of Barsetshire*. About a scandal around the financial affairs of a Church-run almshouse for elderly men.

New members welcome. Please contact Wendy Sim for details – [wendyannsim@hotmail.com](mailto:wendyannsim@hotmail.com)

## Your Committee

Chairman <b>Howard Simmons</b> <a href="mailto:howard.simmons50@icloud.com">howard.simmons50@icloud.com</a>	Vice Chairman <b>Peter Bush</b> <a href="mailto:prbush@virginmedia.com">prbush@virginmedia.com</a>
Hon Treasurer <b>Sophie O'Donnell</b> <a href="mailto:sophie@oldclots.org.uk">sophie@oldclots.org.uk</a>	Hon Secretary, 100 Club <b>Susan Parsons</b> <a href="mailto:FriendsoOP.sp@gmail.com">FriendsoOP.sp@gmail.com</a>
Membership Secretary <b>Yvonne Dias</b> <a href="mailto:FriendsoOP.membership@gmail.com">FriendsoOP.membership@gmail.com</a>	Coach Trips <b>Vik Sharma</b> <a href="mailto:vik.sharma@yahoo.co.uk">vik.sharma@yahoo.co.uk</a>
Local Visits <b>Margaret Friday</b> <a href="mailto:Margaretfriiday145@gmail.com">Margaretfriiday145@gmail.com</a>	Coach bookings <b>Margaret Lydamore</b> <a href="mailto:melyd@btinternet.com">melyd@btinternet.com</a>
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[The Friends website](http://www.e-voice.org.uk/friendsofosterleypark) 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 at end November 2025.