

The Friends of Osterley Park NEWSLETTER



Issue 139 Winter 2025 £1 (free to members)



Self portrait of Angelica Kauffman

Chairman's Report

Howard Simmons

This summer/autumn has seen organisation wide changes to the National Trust's strategy for the next 10 years, with Osterley dedicated to *ending unequal access to nature, beauty and history*. The Sustainable Future Programme has joined Osterley with Runnymede in one portfolio, and there have been structural changes to departments with a number of staff joining from Runnymede, new roles created (principally in Community roles) and people moving on from Osterley (details included in *News from Osterley*).

Of greatest interest to the Friends is Chris Cleeve's departure in mid-November. After nearly 20 years at the Trust and 4½ years at Osterley, Chris has quietly been studying for a master's degree in law with barrister training and has taken up a role at the Ministry of Justice as a Pupil Barrister. We thank him for all his support and wish him luck in his new endeavours.

Collette Hamilton has been appointed as Interim General Manager from mid-November pending the appointment of a permanent GM for the new Osterley and Runnymede portfolio. She has worked for the Trust for a number of years including at Polesden Lacey, Knole and Surrey Landscapes and has considerable experience of whole property operations, visitor experience and facilities as well as working closely with house, gardens, ranger and commercial teams.

We've completed our summer programme of coach and local outings that have been very well received. We are planning our 2026 programme so your thoughts would be very welcome.

Coffee mornings are being planned with a mix of speakers from Osterley and from Friends and locals.

The newsletter will remain in this A4 format. It's not quite as pretty as the former A5 booklet but it does contain all the same information and is a lot easier for Susan to lay out in the continued absence of a Newsletter Editor.

I do hope that you have taken the opportunity to visit the Marigold Festival in the House. It's a collaboration with the local community. The entrance hall has to be seen to be believed with a wonderful Rangoli made from knitted and paper marigolds on the floor and light patterns reflected onto the Robert Adam ceiling. Do visit!

Many thanks to all the Friends for their support in 2025.

News from Osterley

Matt Butler/Hannah Wiltshire

The Marigold Festival is bringing brightness to the House this winter, an installation which celebrates South Asian culture in West London, created in partnership with local community groups. The Entrance Hall is decorated with a community-designed Rangoli pattern to mirror architect Robert Adam's floor design, and projected light brings the space to life. On 25 October our Diwali celebrations were supported by

the BAPS West London, with an Annakut food offering, and Aarti ceremonies during the day in the Entrance Hall. The installation is open Wednesday-Sunday, so do come in and have a look.

As part of our Marigold Festival this year, we're delighted to welcome Priya Velusami of Pri Pri for a fun and creative workshop where people can make their own upcycled fabric wreath. The wreaths are made using a beautiful selection of colourful sari offcuts. There'll be a "meet the maker" session on Sunday, 7 December, 11am - 1pm in the shop, where you can see Priya making a sari wreath. Pri Pri sari wreaths are available to purchase in the shop. All skill levels are welcome in the workshops, as Priya will talk you through the process step-by-step. If you or someone you know would like to attend, tickets can be booked via our website.

There will be a visit from HLO Musical Company one weekend in December for carols in the courtyard near the illuminated trees.

We will begin 2026 with a children's garden trail *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*[™] running from 31 January to 3 March. This will be an enchanting journey for families, inspired by Eric Carle's beloved children's book. Enhanced by illustrated trail markers, giant food posts, activities and games, children learn about the days of the week, counting, and the life cycle of a butterfly all within the gardens at Osterley.

The Sustainable Future Programme means there are some staff changes over the coming months, as well as some team members leaving for new opportunities. Ffion Thompson (Property Curator) and Vida Radulovic (Retail) have both taken voluntary redundancy, and we wish them all the best for the future. We are also saying goodbye to Jade Minkley (Conservation Assistant) who is going to the Imperial War Museum and Jasper Appleby-Sherring (Gardener) who is leaving us to go to Kew Gardens. Georgia Matthews (Visitor Experience & Operations Manager) is leaving to join the Hughenden team as Visitor Experience Manager.

We have been able to appoint several people to roles within the new property structure. Matt Buttler is now our Senior Community, Participation & Volunteering Manager. Rowan Thorp will be Facilities Manager for Osterley and Runnymede, and Judith O'Flynn is our Collections and House Manager. Grace Henderson is our new Commercial Manager, Brenton Wallis is our Visitor Experience Officer and Dennis Ahern is our Welcome Manager. Recruitment is still ongoing for several roles and so we expect to be in a period of transition for the next few months.

In other exciting news, Osterley now owns a stair climber for wheelchair users to access the House via the main portico steps. This has already been used several times for visitors to the Marigold Festival, and we're currently training up more staff members so we can ensure this is a regular service on days when the House is open.

A Swan's Tale

One of the first things that visitors to Osterley notice when walking past the lakes is the birdlife, particularly counting the swans.....

Nicola Carr, Lead Ranger at Osterley, wrote this piece in April about one of the cygnets born in 2024.

On Garden Lake, you may have noticed the grown-up cygnet, which has not been looking happy recently. His mum is sitting on a new nest and his dad kept chasing him out of the water and would have become increasingly violent with him. He should have left home of his own accord by now! I therefore had him collected by a volunteer from the Swan Sanctuary on Wednesday and he was monitored overnight. The photo shows him being released from his little red swan 'straightjacket' and joining a flock on the river near Barnes where he will be happier and in due course find a mate.



The volunteer who came to rescue the cygnet got in touch with Nicola in October 2025 to say that it had been spotted – its unique leg ring number W49945 was recorded and the second photo shows the cygnet now all grown up.

This year there are still six cygnets at Osterley between the two lakes and they will start to fly the nest imminently. We're hoping we don't have to arrange for any of these to be collected, but we know who to call if needed!

Membership

Yvonne Dias

Do remember to let Yvonne Dias know if any of your contact details change, i.e. you move, change email address, or telephone no, so that we can keep our records up-to-date. You can email her on friendsoop.membership@gmail.com or telephone her on 07726 952743.



The second draw of the year was made at the coffee morning on 28 August. The lucky winners were: Patricia James (£100), John Buchanas (£50), Vik Sharma (£30) and Margaret Prior (£20).

The next draw is being made at the coffee morning on 27 November.

Angelica Kauffman at Osterley**Margaret Friday**

For this newsletter we view the life and talents of an exceptional 18th century woman who was the subject of the Royal Academy exhibition earlier this year – Angelica Kauffman. Angelica was born in 1741 in Switzerland to a Swiss mother and an Austrian father. Her mother Cleophea, a singer, taught Angelica to sing, play and speak French, German, Italian and English, but died in Milan when Angelica was 15. Thereafter Angelica travelled Europe with her artist father, Johann Joseph. They stayed in Rome where she began to sketch tourists on the Grand Tour. She painted her first self-portrait aged just 13. She was also a skilled pianist and vocalist later portraying herself aged 16 trying to decide whether to follow art or music. She chose art.



Whilst staying in Venice in 1766 she met Lady Wentworth who invited Angelica to come to England and stay with her in London. Angelica agreed, leaving her father in Venice, but he joined her the next year. As Lady Wentworth had guessed, Angelica became all the rage in London. Soon she was making portraits of famous people. David Garrick was portrayed before she arrived in England, but Angelica painted everyone from Sir Joshua Reynolds to Queen Charlotte and her children.

In February 1767, before her father had arrived, she met a man calling himself Count de Horn, who claimed to be Swedish and said he was expecting money from Sweden. He courted Angelica, convincing her she should tell nobody; he proposed, and they were married in February, but it was a Catholic ceremony, illegal and imprisonable at the time! Later they had a Protestant ceremony which took place in November. She continued to paint and did not move to his house. Later it was said he had a war wound and could not participate in sex. When her father arrived in London and became suspicious of this man, Angelica finally told him of their marriage. Johann Joseph was appalled as by this time it was becoming apparent

that this was not Count de Horn with vast sums of money, but an ex-servant of the Count who travelled Europe using many different names. It was later revealed that he had a wife in Germany so could not legally marry Angelica. By this time the Count had begun to demand money – Angelica bailed him out several times with cash for his creditors as he claimed he was still waiting for money from Sweden. He demanded to be paid £500 and he would go away forever. As this was a great deal of money Angelica refused. She was paid about £40 for painting a portrait. He finally agreed to leave England for £300. Once he had gone the marriage was annulled. Because Angelica had kept the whole affair so secret it did not reflect on her artistic ambitions. By this time, she was a friend of Queen Charlotte who would have rejected anyone involved in scandal. De Horn seems to have followed many of the deceits used by current on-line fraudulent romancers - pretend to be somebody else and ask that no-one else be told of the romance but keep asking for money!

In 1768 Angelica became a founder member of The Royal Academy of Arts and is displayed in Zoffany's group portrait of founders as a portrait on the wall along with Mary Moser, a flower painter. It was thought improper to put women in a painting containing nude males posing. The paintings she did for the ceiling of the original building in Somerset House now grace the entrance hall of the Burlington House Royal Academy.

The guidebooks at Osterley over the years have credited her with painting the pictures of important women; Minerva, Britannia, Aspasia and Sappho in the library, reflecting her favourite theme. In the Etruscan Room we have Hector saying farewell to Andromache, another popular historical subject for her, and Aglaia being enslaved by Love (photo below) in the ceiling of the State Bedroom. We do know that the inlaid panels in the commodes in the Drawing Room are copied from Angelica's paintings of Cupid and Venus and Diana with hounds (photo below). These have been carved separately and attached to the inside of the cabinets. They may have been carved by Christopher Fuhrlogh, who like Angelica had a Swiss parent, although Fuhrlogh was born in Sweden.



One of a pair of commodes by Robert Adam

Towards the end of her stay in Britain Angelica was being courted by Antonio Zucchi, a Venetian who had worked with Robert Adam for many years and was another founder member of the Royal Academy. The thought now is that they inspired each other so either could have painted or suggested the subjects they painted. Zucchi was also a friend of Angelica's father. Angelica lived in Golden Square, Bloomsbury. Zucchi owned two London houses - one in Soho where he lived with his engraver brother, the other, a house in St. John Street, Adelphi, which he let out at £90 a year. Antonia and Angelica married in London on 10 July 1781 when she was 39 and he was 55. Their Deed of Trust and Marriage Settlement said Zucchi would not oversee Angelica's earnings; these were hers alone. This unusual scheme was probably a result of Angelica's first marriage. After their marriage they returned to Venice in 1782. Angelica's father obviously approved of the wedding and knew that his daughter would be cared for by his sensible friend Antonio on his death. Johann Joseph died in Venice in 1782. Antonio and Angelica moved to Rome where both continued to paint. Zucchi died in 1795; Angelica dwelt in Rome until her demise in 1807.

Her good friend, the sculptor of The Three Graces, Canova arranged her funeral calling her the "female Raphael of the Arts."



Angelica executed 800 oil paintings, 13 frescos and 400 drawings that we know of, in her lifetime.

One of these, Portrait of Captain Thomas Read hangs at Osterley.

During her 15 years in England, Angelica's "*work was everywhere: in portraits and historical scenes, engravings and etchings, on painted furniture and porcelain, teapots, fans, snuff boxes, commodes and every other accompaniment to civilised Georgian life*" said Angelica Goodden, author of *Miss Angel, the Art and World of Angelica Kauffman*. Other National Trust Houses decorated by her include Saltram, Nostell Priory, and Attingham Park. Come and enjoy the many works by her or inspired by her at Osterley.

Save the Dates – Local Visits/Coach trips in 2026

Planning has started. Do advise us if there anywhere you'd particularly like to visit bearing in mind that it must be large enough to accommodate a group.

Local visits

- Tuesday, 14 April – Carpenters Hall
- Wednesday, 20 May – Little Holland House, Carshalton Beaches

Coach trips

- Quebec House and Chartwell – May
- Eltham Palace – June

Coffee Mornings

John Collis

10.30 for 11.00 in the Study Base at Osterley Park.

Friends £4, Others £5

£3.00 pays for the coffee, tea and biscuits (this has recently gone up from £2.70 but the Committee has decided not to increase the price)

The coffee morning dates for 2026 are:

- **Thursday, 29 January** - Katie Hintcliffe, Boston Manor
- **Tuesday, 3 March**
- **Wednesday, 22 April + AGM**
- **Thursday, 28 May**
- **Tuesday, 23 June**
- **Wednesday, 29 July**
- **Thursday, 27 August**
- **Tuesday, 29 September**
- **Wednesday, 28 October**
- **Thursday, 26 November**

Osterley Book Group

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 9 December at 2pm to talk about Ian Mortimer's *The Time Traveller's Guide to Regency Britain*. A look at Regency Britain, a time of exuberance, thrills, frills and unchecked bad behaviour

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

Your Committee

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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 in early March 2026.