

The Friends of Osterley Park

NEWSLETTER



Issue 140 Spring 2026 £1 (free to members)

Chairman's Report

Howard Simmons

Dear Friends

2026 brings a fresh year of exciting activities and visits for the Friends of Osterley Park. We do hope that you will renew your membership; subscriptions are due on 1 April. This newsletter contains details of our coach trips and local visits for Spring/early Summer. We would earnestly request you to make your bookings early; this is particularly important for the coach trips to ensure that we book the correct sized coach and please do provide all the requested information in one go.

The new eight-seater buggy finally arrived in December complete with side panels to protect passengers from the inclement weather! A very generous donation towards it was made by Christine Craik in memory of her late husband, Douglas, the Friends' Vice-Chair/Treasurer and a volunteer buggy driver at Osterley. Donations have been received from several National Trust support associations and the Friends have contributed a significant amount. The new buggy will be featured in the May newsletter when it has been dedicated.

The new Osterley and Runnymede portfolio took effect from 26 January 2026 following months of Trust structural changes. Osterley will have oversight of the Runnymede site with some staff working across both. There have been a number of staff changes (details are contained below in the News from Osterley) with some recruitment still underway including for a General Manager. In the meantime, the interim GM, Collette Hamilton, has been working closely with the Committee

Since the last newsletter, we've enjoyed another Christmas lunch at the Grasshoppers Club (many thanks to John Collis for organising this) and have started the 2026 coffee mornings.

We still have not recruited a new Newsletter Editor so Susan continues to fulfil this role but has called time. The newsletter will continue in its A4 format – much easier for busy people to put together. It is now crucial to find somebody; if you know of anybody suitable, please do let me know.

The AGM papers, which include a full round-up of 2025, are being sent out with this newsletter as a separate booklet.

As I write this, the Spring bulbs are beginning to poke their heads through in the formal gardens at Osterley. Do take the opportunity to follow the Long Walk round the Great Meadow; the bluebells will soon be up providing a wonderful blue haze.

Howard

Membership Report

Yvonne Dias

As at 31 January 2026 we had 185 members, comprising 136 single, 47 joint and 2 honorary members.

We were delighted to welcome the following 27 new members who joined in 2025/26: Angela Arratoon, Iris Clarke, Morag Elliott, Janet Gibson, Reeta Gupta, Cheryl Hughes, Edward Locke, Sheena Logan, Ewa McSperrin, Lucy Miller, Suchandra Mookerjee, Sutapa Rudra, Colette O'Sullivan, Brenda & Michael Perry, Emma Renton, Lynwen Roe, Angela & Dennis Rowe, Rita & Rakesh Sharma, Wendy Simpson, Olga Szokalska, Sandra Tait, Susan Wight, Carole Woodvine, and Beate Woolcombe-Adams.

It is with great sadness that we have said farewell to members: Romola Boorman, Patricia James (Secretary of the Friends of Osterley Park from 2004 to May 2023), Yvette Miller, Iris Alfalla Sebastian.

Renewals

Yvonne Dias

This is to remind you that annual subscriptions are due on 1 April 2026. There is no subscription increase for Friends this year; subscription rates for 2026 are Single: £10; Joint (two people at the same address): £16.

Should you wish to buy 100 Club shares or increase the number that you have, please add £12 for each share to your payment.

If you already pay by Standing Order then no action is required unless your contact details have changed, in which case please complete the attached renewals form and either email it to Yvonne Dias at friendsoop.membership@gmail.com or send it to **Ms Yvonne Dias, 84 Spring Grove Road, Hounslow TW3 4BW.**

How to pay

It would be much appreciated if you could pay by **Standing Order** wherever possible. Anyone with a current account can set up a Standing Order either online, over the phone, or in person at a branch of their bank. After giving the bank your instructions, your subscription will be paid by the bank on 1 April every year; you won't need to remember, and we won't need to remind you if you're late paying! You can cancel it at any time. A mandate form is attached for your convenience. If you're not sure how you paid last year, please contact me.

Our bank details:

Name of Payee: **Friends of Osterley**
Sort Code: **20-02-06**
Account Number: **70389315**
Your reference: **your surname/subs**

Alternatively, send us a **bank transfer** using the above details.

Payment by **cheque** is a last resort. Please send the renewals form and your cheque payable to the "Friends of Osterley" (do not include "Park") to Yvonne at the above address. It would be helpful if you could also write on the back of the cheque what it is for e.g. subs/100 Club/donations.

You may also pay by **cash** at the next coffee morning.

Quarterly newsletters will be sent by email. Existing Friends receiving printed copies will continue to receive them. This costs the Friends about £7.50 per annum per addressee.

Data Protection: to reassure you that your contact data is only accessed by designated Committee members and is used to send you the newsletters and any other information regarding your attendance at a planned event.

Thank you for your continued support.

100 Club

Susan Parsons



The last draw of 2025 was made at the coffee morning on 27 November. The lucky winners were: Sheila Royal (£100), Christine Craik (£50), Christine Diwell (£50), Susan Porter (£50), Vik Sharma (£50) and David Huffer (£26). Very happily, four of the prize winners were present at the draw.

The 100 Club is a private lottery and shares can only be allocated to paid-up members of the Friends. Half of each £12 share is used by the Friends to fund projects which benefit Osterley; the remaining £6 goes into the prize fund. The next draw will take place at the AGM/coffee morning on Wednesday, 22 April.

We are grateful to those members who won 100 Club prizes in 2025 who agreed to be paid by bank transfer; it's quicker, saves postage and the need for you to visit the bank to deposit the cheque. To emphasise that once the payment is made, we delete your bank details: these are not kept on file. If you'd prefer to have a cheque, that's absolutely fine. We would however ask you to cash it as quickly as possible so that it clears our bank account without delay.

News from Osterley

Hannah Wiltshire

In January 2026 we officially became the Osterley and Runnymede property group, a change that will see several members of staff working across both properties. Our General Manager will manage both sites, with Lizzie Angus, Site Manager at Runnymede managing day-to-day business. Nicola Carr as our new Visitor Operations Manager and Rowan Thorp, Facilities Manager, will work to ensure that both sites are operating safely and welcoming visitors throughout the year. Jamie Preston will now be Lead Ranger at both sites, not just Runnymede, with an Area Ranger managing the Ranger team at Osterley. At Osterley specifically, Brenton Wallis, our Visitor Experience Officer, has now joined the House team to create the new Experiences Team, managed by Emma Jeffries as Visitor Experience Manager. Matt Butler, our Senior Community, Partnerships & Volunteering Manager will be supported by Kate Girdlestone as Community, Participation & Volunteering Assistant, and Jonathan Smith as Active Outdoors Assistant. Dennis Ahern is now Welcome Manager in the Visitor Operations Team, looking after the Welcome Team. Alice Shingardia is joining the Garden Team as full-time gardener.

This spring, join us for an enchanting journey inspired by Eric Carle's beloved and iconic children's book, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*TM. This charming trail brings to life the best-selling story of the tiny caterpillar who hatches from an egg and is very hungry, so he eats through a variety of fruits and snacks each day. The caterpillar then forms a chrysalis around himself and later emerges as a beautiful butterfly. Visitors can also discover the Little Larva in the House, finding out more about the pests that can threaten the collection. Both trails start from 6 February, with Little Larva ending on 22 February, and Hungry Caterpillar ending 4 March.

We'll be taking part in the National Trust Easter trail this year from 28 March to 12 April. This spring, a friendly bunch of animals have escaped from the Tapestry Room at Osterley House and are now running about in the gardens! Help us out by seeing if you can catch them and return them to the beautiful tapestries. Craft Cart will take place every Thursday during school holidays, with upcoming days: 2 and 9 April and 28 May.

The House re-opens on Saturday, 28 February and then is open Wednesday to Sunday through to 1 November. We've got two new exhibits launching in the House. *LGBTQI+ Narratives at Osterley House* is a self-guided tour launching on 7 March, with *West London Queer*. It highlights objects of interest and narratives so they are accessible for our visitors as part of our everyday offer and includes collection highlights such as the Thomas Patch painting in the breakfast room, Entrance hall sculptures and inset paintings in the Library. Then from 22 May to 1 November we'll be featuring *Journeys: Wedding Shawls, Baghs and Phulkaris from the Karun Thakar Collection*. This exhibition explores global histories and living traditions. Intricately embroidered wedding shawls from Punjab will fill Robert Adam's neoclassical rooms with colour and craft. These textiles, made by young women in the undivided Punjab for ceremonial use, will bring new energy and cultural presence to a property with strong links to global craftsmanship, trade and Empire through the East India Company.

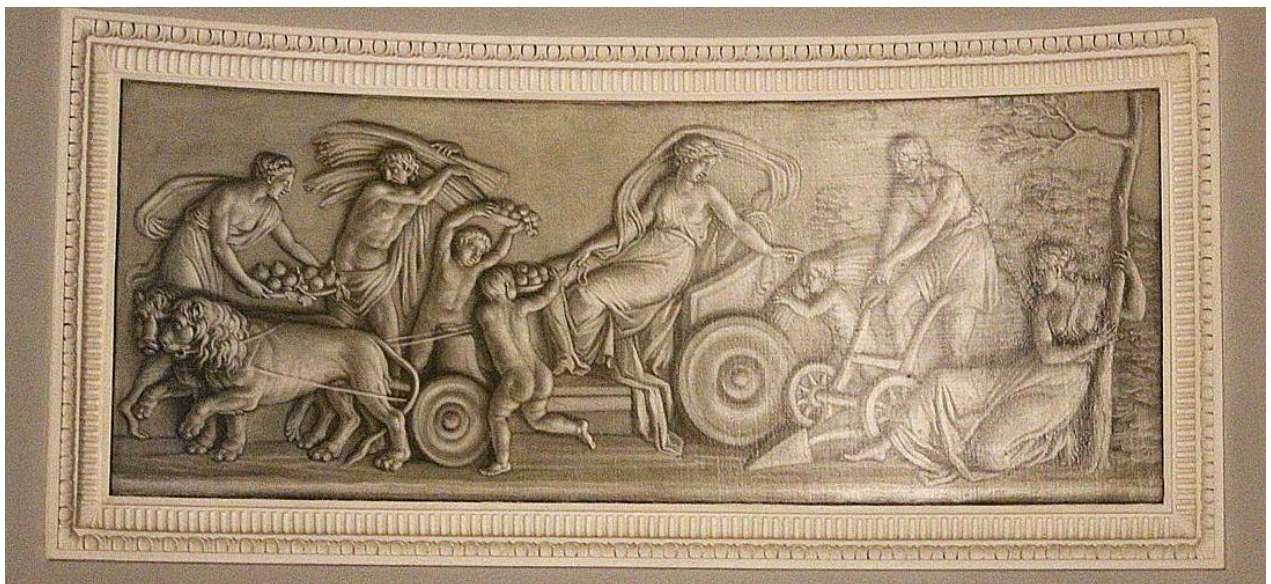
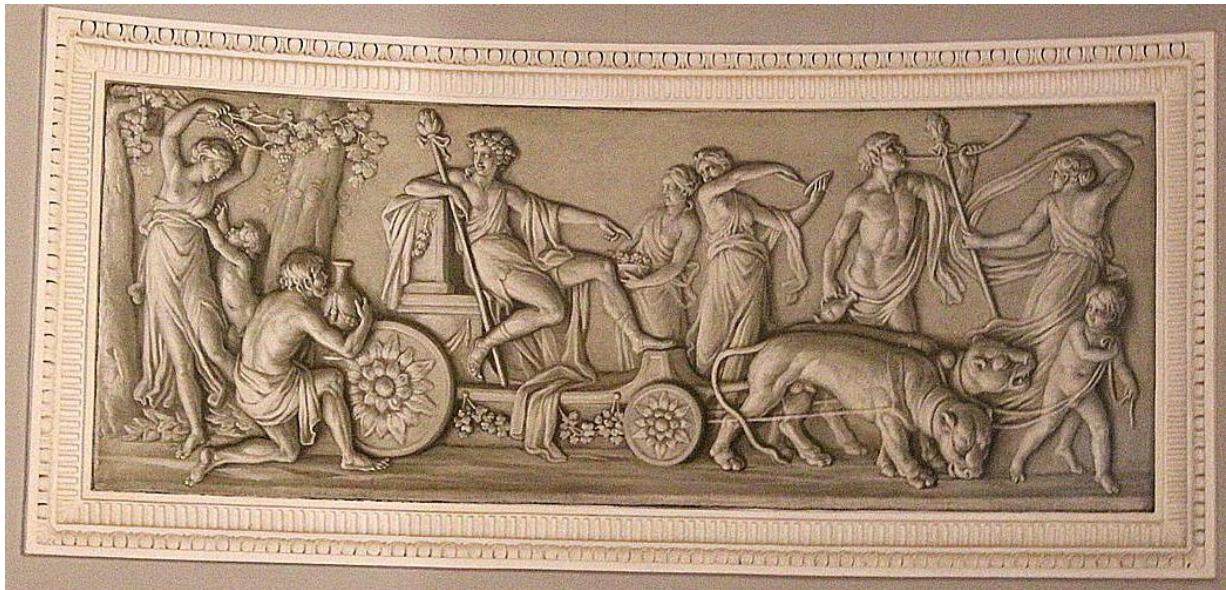
There has been a lot of change at the start of 2026, and we are still deciding what these new roles and team structures will mean for Osterley, but we have lots of exciting programmes coming up this year, with plenty of opportunities to welcome all visitors to Osterley and Runnymede. We're grateful for your support during this period of change, and hope you come to see some of the exciting things we have planned this year.

Cipriani – Trompe L'Oeil at Osterley

Margaret Friday

For this newsletter we view the work of Giovanni Battista Cipriani in our Entrance Hall. The displays over the mantelpieces, called "The Triumph of Bacchus" and "The Triumph of Ceres" appear to be carved but are, in fact, oil painted on paper using a technique called grisaille.

Giovanni Battista Cipriani was born in Florence in 1727. He studied drawing and painting with Ignatius Hugford who was of English descent. In 1750 he went to Rome to further his studies and met up with William Chambers, on the Grand Tour, and Joseph Wilton studying Roman sculpture. In August 1755 the three decided to come to England to further their careers.



photos taken by Dick Flute – a Friend and house volunteer

Cipriani began to teach drawing at St. Martin's Academy; he also became drawing master to Lord Tilney and the Duke of Richmond and worked with Chambers and Robert Adam on many interior design projects. In 1757 he did paintings for the Lord Mayor's golden coach and in 1762 helped Chambers by decorating the inside of the Golden Coronation Coach we saw when we visited The Royal Mews last year. He, with Angelica Kauffman and Nathaniel Dance, designed stage sets for Covent Garden Theatre and later refurbished it. He also did a ceiling painting at Buckingham House for Queen Charlotte and one in The Albany for Viscount Melbourne.

In his private life he married Ann Booker at St. Martin's in the Fields in 1759, and they had two sons. Cipriani lived in Hedge Lane near Covent Garden from 1770.

In 1768 he became a founder member of The Royal Academy of Art designing the grand Diploma granted to all elected to RA membership as their admission letter. It is still

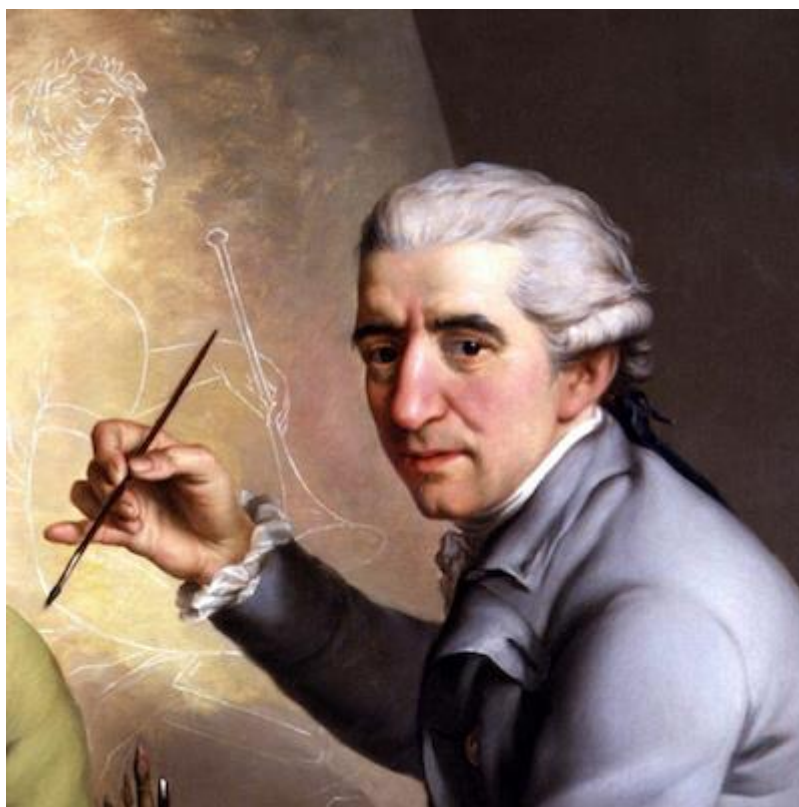
presented today. These were engraved by Francesco Bartolozzi, his Florentine friend. Cipriani then helped design the RA rooms in Somerset House, its first home and now part of The Courtauld Galleries. He taught the life drawing classes for The Royal Academy and was awarded a silver cup in recognition of all his assistance in its establishment.

Cipriani has been cited as a founding father of British neo-classical art. Whahoo Art say “Cipriani’s impact resonates through the elegant interiors of Georgian England. He wasn’t merely an artist, he was a cultural ambassador, skilfully weaving Italian artistry into the fabric of British identity. His legacy is one of refined beauty, intellectual depth and enduring influence.”

William Chambers, Joseph Wilton and Giovanni Cipriani were all founder members of The Royal Academy of Art and all worked at Osterley. Chambers designed the fireplace in the Eating Room and Joseph Wilton carved it in marble; he also carved the marble urns in the entrance hall. Cipriani was known for making such precise drawings of sculpted objects that they could be reproduced easily by a skilled sculptor. His design for a statue of George III for Somerset House was carved by John Bacon.

Cipriani died in Hammersmith in December 1785 and is buried at Dovehouse Green, Chelsea. Bartolozzi, his childhood friend, erected a touching monument.

We believe the grand entrance hall at Osterley was completed in 1767, so the beautiful grisaille trompe l’oeil portrayals of The Triumph of Bacchus and The Triumph of Ceres graced the hall but they continue to enchant and deceive as most visitors believe they are carved. Do admire the exceptional skill of Cipriani on your next visit to Osterley Park House – are they painted? Surely, they are carved. Really?



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 early 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 (for coach trips) or Yvonne Dias at 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: **name of trip or visit***

****Reference** - Most banks allow a maximum number of characters to be used for the reference – either 12 or 16. Our HSBC statements automatically show the name of the person the payment is being made from therefore you do not need to include your full name unless the account is in a different name from the one we know you by. Please mark clearly what the payment is for e.g. 'Carpenter', 'Quebec'. If booking for more than one coach trip/visit please use 'coach' and/or 'local'. This ensures that our Treasurer knows exactly which cost centre to allocate your payment to so that our accounts are accurate.*

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.

Wednesday, 13 May – Quebec House & Chartwell, Kent

Trip Cost (including coach & entry): NT Members: **£35** (please bring your membership card to avoid paying the full price on arrival). All others **£65** (£35 + £30 entrance fee for both properties). £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): 5.30-6 PM

We expect to arrive at Quebec House by 11 for a short guided tour and will leave at 1230 to drive to Chartwell where we will have timed entry to the house.



Quebec House:

Take a step back in history to the Georgian era and discover the family home of General James Wolfe. Uncover the reality of the Battle of Quebec, his most famous campaign, as well as explore life in the 1730s when the General was a child here. Discover a charming cottage garden and grab a new read in the second-hand bookshop.

Accessibility – Quebec House is largely accessible to those with mobility challenges, with step-free access to the ground floor with accessible toilets. Exhibition in the Coach House via stairs only.

Chartwell:

Chartwell, near Westerham in Kent, was the beloved family home of Sir Winston Churchill and offers an intimate glimpse into his private life. Bought in 1922 and restored to his taste, the house is filled with original furniture, books, paintings and personal mementos, including rooms such as his study and library. The gardens are a major draw, with terraces overlooking the Weald, colourful borders, orchards, a kitchen garden, and the famous lakes with golden carp. Churchill's nearby studio displays his artwork, rounding out a visit that blends history, home and landscape.

Café & Shop – Light lunches, one pot meals, cakes and bakes along with hot and cold drinks. Ice-cream in summer.

Accessibility – Chartwell is on a hillside location with steps with narrow corridors throughout the house. Garden partly accessible, steep slopes and steps in places. Café, shop and toilets are accessible.

Websites:

Quebec House: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/kent/quebec-house>

Chartwell: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/kent/chartwell>

Thursday, 11 June – Eltham Palace, Greenwich

Trip Cost (including coach & entry): English Heritage Members or Art Fund card holders: **£35** (please bring your membership card to avoid paying the full price on arrival). All others: **£49** (£35 + £14*). £2 extra for non-Friends. **Please advise at time of booking whether or not you have an English Heritage/Art Fund card. This is not a National Trust property.**

Pick-up 1 (from Osterley Park car park): 9.15

Pick-up 2 (*bus stop outside Osterley Station – not the usual bus stop opposite the station*): 9.20

Return (to Osterley Park): 5.30-6 PM

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



Eltham Palace, in Eltham within the Royal Borough of Greenwich, is one of London's most unusual historic houses: a dramatic pairing of a late-medieval royal Great Hall with a glamorous 1930s Art Deco mansion. The site was an important royal residence from the 14th to 16th centuries, and the surviving Great Hall—built for Edward IV in the 1470s—still impresses with its vast scale and hammerbeam roof, evoking the pageantry of England's courtly past.

After centuries of decline, the estate was transformed when wealthy philanthropists Stephen and Virginia Courtauld took a long lease in 1933 and created a cutting-edge home beside the medieval hall, celebrated for its sleek interiors and period details (including the striking entrance hall and Virginia's famous gold bathroom). Today, English Heritage manages the house and gardens, inviting visitors to move from medieval grandeur to Jazz Age sophistication, then out into landscaped grounds that complete the "palace-meets-modernist" experience.

Café & Gift Shop - visitors can recharge in the café, offering hot and cold food, drinks, and cream or afternoon tea. The gift shop, located in the visitor centre, offers gifts, souvenirs, and books.

Accessibility - Eltham Palace has step-free access to many areas, with a ramp at the entrance, wheelchairs to borrow, accessible toilets, plus drop-off and disabled bays by the Visitor Centre. From there it's about a 150m lightly gravelled path to the house, and the moat bridge/turning circle is cobbled—so allow extra time. Some key spaces (the basement, Great Hall dais and Minstrel's Gallery) are stairs-only. There is a lift inside, but English Heritage currently reports it's out of service, so upper floors may only be reached by stairs (a virtual tour is available).

Website: <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/eltham-palace-and-gardens/>

Please save the following dates for future coach trips– details will be included in the next newsletter: **Tuesday 14 July, Thursday, 10 September and Wednesday, 7 October.**

Local Visits

Margaret Friday

Tuesday, 14 April – Carpenters Hall – 11.30 – cost £9.50

1 Throgmorton Avenue, London EC2N 2JJ. The closest tube station is Liverpool Street.

The Carpenters Livery Company has had a direct link with the skills of making beautiful and useful things in wood since 1477 when they were granted a Royal Charter. Their first hall of 1429 was by London Wall but this, their 3rd building, opened in 1960. The Company continues to promote the craft of carpentry, and 27 different woods can be seen in the hall today. Since Osterley contains some of the finest furniture ever made a visit to the Carpenters Hall seems a good choice. The hall is accessible throughout.

After our tour those who wish may join us at 1pm for lunch at The Phoenix pub, 25 Throgmorton Street, EC2N 2AN, a short walk away. Small plates are from £9 rising to £20; vegetarian dishes available. Please let Yvonne know if you plan to join us at the pub when you book.

Wednesday, 20 May – Little Holland House – 2pm – cost £9.50

40 Beeches Avenue, Carshalton, SM5 3LW. The house is a short walk from Carshalton Beeches mainline train station.

Little Holland House was designed and built by Frank and Florence Dickinson in honour of George Frederick Watts, the artist who had a house in Kensington with the same name. They began to build the house on their engagement and did not marry until it was completed in 1904. The arts and crafts ideals of William Morris were followed as Frank and Florence learned how to make furniture, craft metalwork, upholster and make curtains. Everything you see here is designed and made by them. They lived in this house and garden until they died in 1961. The house is usually open one Sunday a month so this volunteer led tour is just for us!

The ground floor is accessible; upstairs is by stairs only (with video available for those remaining on the ground floor).

As the visit is at 2 pm Margaret has booked space at the Beeches Café, 50 Banstead Road, SM5 3NW from 12 noon. It is a well-liked café with reasonable prices. Please let Yvonne know if you are joining us for lunch.

Please save the following dates – details will be included in the next newsletter:

- **Tuesday, 16 June – train trip to Colchester**
- **Wednesday, 8 July – Lauderdale House, Highgate**
- **Tuesday, 11 August – walk Temple to St Martin’s in the Fields**

Coffee Mornings

John Collis

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

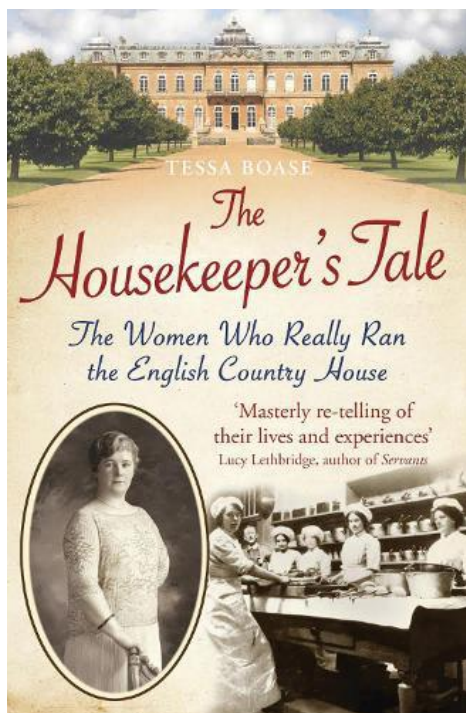
The coffee morning dates for Spring/early Summer are as follows:

Tuesday, 3 March – Andy Eddy, Head Gardener at Osterley will talk about what's happened in the garden in the past year and plans for the new community orchard.

Wednesday, 22 April – AGM + Collette Hamilton, Interim General Manager at Osterley, will talk about the recent changes in the Trust and what it means for Osterley.

Thursday, 28 May – Howard Simmons will talk about local historic links with the Americas

Osterley Book Group



The next meeting will be held on **Tuesday 14 April** at 2pm to talk about the story of the invisible women who ran the English country house. Working as a housekeeper was one of the most prestigious jobs a nineteenth and early twentieth century woman could want.

New members welcome. Please contact Wendy Sim for details: Wendyanssim@hotmail.com

Your Committee

Chairman Howard Simmons howard.simmons50@icloud.com	Vice Chairman Peter Bush prbush@virginmedia.com
Hon Treasurer Sophie O'Donnell sophie@oldclots.org.uk	Hon Secretary, 100 Club Susan Parsons FriendsoOP.sp@gmail.com
Membership Secretary Yvonne Dias FriendsoOP.membership@gmail.com	Coach Trips Vik Sharma vik.sharma@yahoo.co.uk
Local Visits Margaret Friday Margaretfriday145@gmail.com	Coach bookings Margaret Lydamore melyd@btinternet.com
Coffee Mornings John Collis collis329@hotmail.com	Website Editor Mike Doran mikedoran47@outlook.com
Newsletter Editor <i>Vacant</i>	

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 late May 2026