The Duc D'Aumale at Orleans House

While Louis Philippe gave his name to the house, it was his fifth son, Henri, Duc d'Aumale, who truly made it his home. Leaving France in 1848, Henri purchased Orleans House in 1852. As a foreigner, property law prevented Henri from purchasing Orleans House directly, so it was bought on his behalf by Coutts bank. Born in 1822, Henri was too young to have lived at Orleans as a child, but his choice must have been influenced by the affection with which his father obviously regarded the house.

Orleans was to become home to Henri and his family for almost twenty years. As well as Henri, his wife Marie-Caroline de Bourbon-Siciles (whom he had married in 1844) and their children the Prince de Condé and the Duc de Guise (seven others died in infancy), Orleans was home to servants from all over Europe. Of the twenty-five people recorded at Orleans in the 1861 census, nineteen were French, three Vienese, one Neopolitan, and one Polish, while only two were locally born - one of whom was the young Duc de Guise. By 1871, the balance had shifted with more local people employed with the Duc's household.



Camille Silvy

The Orleans Family during a fête champêtre at Orleans House, June 1864 1864

Image courtesy of Réunion des Musées Nationaux ©

The Orleans Family enjoyed a busy social life in Twickenham. Grand balls and intimate lunches, concerts, gallery visits and even (for the young) trips to see the resident animals were all on offer to guests at Orleans.

Both adults and children developed local friendships,



Le Duc d'Aumale, Chef d'Aumale After Winterhalter, 1840 Private collection

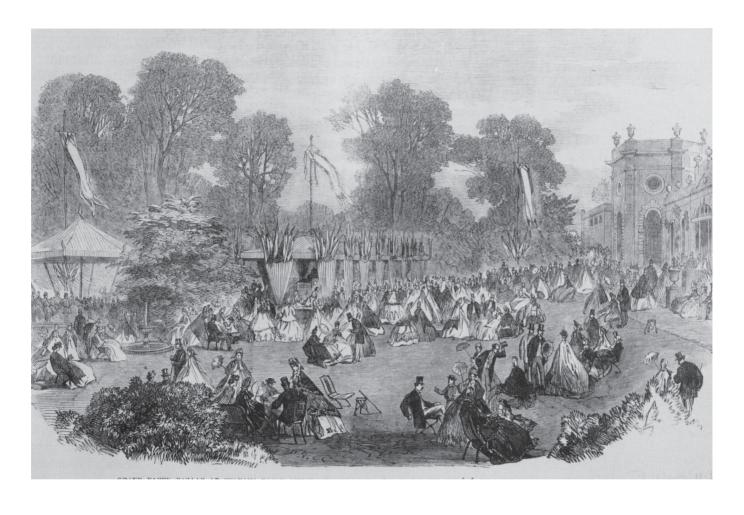
with Frances, Lady Waldegrave at Strawberry Hill a particularly close friend. Upon her death in 1879, eight years after Henri's return to France, Lady Waldegrave bequeathed a family portrait, Reynold's *Maria Walpole, Countess of Waldegrave, with her daughter Elizabeth-Laura* (1761) to the Duc - testament to the strength of their friendship.



Marie Caroline, Duchesse d'Aumale
After Winterhalter, 1840
Private collection



Camile Silvy
Orleans House
1864
photograph
Image courtesy of Réunion des Musées Nationaux ©



Unknown artist **A grand Fancy Bazaar at Orleans House, Twickenham in aid of the French Société de Bienfaisance** From the *Illustrated London News*, 11th June 1864



Bertrand Russell's father, Lord Amberley, as a boy of twelve went to play with Henri's son, Prince de Conde. They played ninepins and the prince showed his visitor his pony, guinea pigs and rabbits. Xiii Another young visitor was Kate Stanley, aged 17, who attended a children's ball at Orleans House in 1859, and recorded meeting a "a great number of the French princes" and dancing with a number of partners including the Duc D'Aumale himself, who "seemed so amused and always made a rush to the top – when Mama was taking us away he came and fetched us back & we staved till ½ 1."Xiv

As Kate Stanley's account suggests, these social events at Orleans House were attended by both English and French friends, including many members of Henri's extended family. His mother, Queen Marie Amélie, outlived his father and lived at Claremont until her death in 1866. During this time, she visited Henri at her former home in Twickenham, on one occasion in 1857 attending a performance by Offenbach. The Queen reportedly wept during *Dragonette* when a French piper appeared with the captured enemy flag and the company sang "Crions en Choeur: vive la France!"

Henri's two surviving elder brothers, François, Prince de Joinville, and Louis, Duc de Nemours, and their families both moved to the area, living at Mount Lebanon and Bushey House respectively. In 1864, Henri's nephew the Comte de Paris moved into York House, Twickenham. Henri's nieces Blanche and Marguerite, daughters of the Duc de Nemours, were frequent visitors to Orleans House, and can be seen in photographs of some of the many festivities which took place. XV

Lefevre after Winterhalter **Marie Amélie** *c.* 1830 engraving

Henri and his family were actively engaged in local life. The Duc was the first president of Twickenham Rowing Club, while his nephew granted the Club land on Eel Pie Island. Other donations by the Duc included £100 to buy a fire engine for the local Volunteer Brigade; the new engine was named *The Orleans* in his honour. Fêtes were held at Orleans House for a range of causes, including a 'grand fancy bazaar' for the relief of French refugees, vividly recorded both in the *Illustrated London News* and by French photographer Camille Silvy (1834-1910), who had moved to London in 1859 and had established a successful studio in Bayswater. A portfolio of 12 photos of the Orleans bazaar by Silvy was sold in aid of the French *Société*

de Bienfaisance. A fête was also held in aid of St Mary's School, and, in 1862, Marie-Caroline opened the new school buildings in Amyand Park Road. Like her husband, the Duchesse took a strong interest in local affairs, though a description by acquaintance Henry Reeve suggests she sometimes appeared out of place in Twickenham:

'I walked for an hour with the Duchess. She and her lady of Honour had been to Richmond on foot; got caught in the rain and half drowned in the mud. There is something grotesque in the picture of a Neapolitan princess, who at Naples never set foot on the ground, paddling through the mud of the Middlesex road.'



The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles Camille Silvy, **View of the Gardens during the Fête Champetre at Orleans House, London,** 1867, albumen, 10.8 x 15.4 cm

There were also sad occasions during the D'Aumale family's time at Twickenham: the funeral of Helene, Henri's sister-in-law, in 1858; the death of various children in infancy and of his eldest son in 1866; and in 1869 the death of his own wife, prompting Queen Victoria to visit Orleans to pay her condolences. Forced into exile with her husband after just four years of marriage, Marie-Caroline was never to return to France. Like Louis Phillippe and several of her own children, she was buried in the French royal vault at St. Charles Borromeo, Weybridge, only to be exhumed and transported to France in 1876.

Despite these events, Orleans retained a place in

Henri's heart after his return to France in 1871. Much more than simply a place of exile, at Orleans Henri experienced the family life he would never have the opportunity to enjoy at Chantilly.

On his return to France in 1871, Henri began rebuilding in the *chateau* at Chantilly, incorporating the picture galleries, which were to become the Musée Condé. The ceiling of the Tribune gallery is adorned with scenes of places important to him. Alongside ancestral family seats across France, this depiction of Orleans House by Armand Bernard (1829-1894) acts as a permanent reminder of the Duc's affection for his home from home in Twickenham.



Armand Bernand Ceiling decoration in the Tribune at the Musée Condé, Chantilly, showing Orleans House, Twickenham, 1882

The Duc's Gallery and Collection

Henri had inherited the remains of the chateau at Chantilly and its art collections (much had been destroyed during the Revolution) from his great-uncle and godfather, the Duke of Bourbon. On arrival in Twickenham, therefore, Henri was accompanied not only by his family and household servants, but by collections of books, paintings and furnishings salvaged from Chantilly. During his years in residence, Henri transformed Orleans House to meet his needs, building a new library and picture gallery.

Of the works Henri brought over from the Chantilly collection, the series of paintings commemorating the battle victories of Henri's ancestor the 'Grand Condé' (Louis II de Bourbon-Condé, 1621-86) could not fail to make an impression on the young Kate Stanley who attended a ball at Orleans in 1859; her general

impression was of "beautiful pictures, but too close together".

Throughout his time in England, Henri continued to acquire works of art and books, including a famous medieval book of hours, the *Tres Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, which Henri acquired in 1855. The resulting collection, now at the Musée Conde at Chantilly, is second only to the Louvre in France. It is startling to think that, 140 years ago, the majority of this phenomenal collection was here in Twickenham.

Highlights of the collection included the Orleans Madonna by Raphael (1483-1520), acquired during Henri's time in Twickenham. The painting gained its name not from Henri but a previous owner, his ancestor Gaston d'Orleans. Henri liked to collect paintings, which had been in family collections disbursed by the Revolution.



Many visitors to Orleans recalled hours spent in the Duc's picture galleries. In 1862, a visit from the Fine Arts Club prompted Henri to prepare a catalogue of his collections, which included Italian, French, Spanish and Dutch works. Benjamin Disraeli, future Prime Minister, commented: "Happy the prince who, though exiled from his palaces and military pursuits through no fault of his own, finds a consolation in books and an occupation in the rich domain of Art."

Although 'exiled from ... military pursuits' Henri's collections continued to reflect his dual status as both a soldier and a scholar. He had joined the army in 1840 and became a popular hero, helping to defeat a revolt against the French in Algeria, where he subsequently became Governor. As well as his books and paintings, visitors to Orleans House noticed battle trophies and paintings of North Africa, reminders of his army days.



opposite page La Galerie des Batailles, Chateau de Chantilly

These battle paintings, shown in situ at Chantilly, were among the works of art Henri transported to England and displayed at Orleans during his residency.

Raphael

The Madonna of the House of Orleans
Undated
oil on panel
Image courtesy of Réunion des Musées Nationaux ©



Demolition and beyond

After the deaths of the Cunards, who had owned the estate since 1882, their executors unsuccessfully tried to sell the property. At this time, despite the 1902 act of parliament to protect the view from Richmond Hill, many properties were under the threat of development. In 1910, it was reported that Orleans House was again occupied – this time by the Ladies of Compassion, a Catholic congregation who wished to use the building as an orphanage. In 1919, the other section of the estate was sold off to the Eastern Telegraph Company to be used as a sports club for their Exiles Club.

In 1926, Orleans House was purchased by a firm of ballast and gravel merchants and on March 3rd a sale of furniture and fittings took place. Twickenham Public Library commissioned photographs of the house once the sale had been announced, but unfortunately, the photographer was too late, arriving after the doors and windows had been removed. Shortly afterwards, the main house and link buildings were demolished. Thanks to the timely intervention of Mrs Nellie Ionides (1883-1962), who occupied Riverside House next door, the Octagon Room and remaining buildings were saved.

During the 1930s, gravel excavation continued on the site of the old house. The scene is vividly captured in a painting by Bloomsbury group painter Duncan Grant, who produced a quick sketch when visiting his parents who lived in Twickenham.

"Grand Reception Hall in the centre of the main structure, entered from the portico by a pair of glazed doors ... having a broad bay window facing the lawns, and a French door in the same, giving access to the grounds by a flight of stone steps; a fireplace with fine old 17th century mantel of oak, carved portraits framed in arabesques....

Stately 18th Century Staircase in oak, with exquisitely carved baluster rails and soffites and magnificently painted walls and ceilings in frescoes, attributed to Verrio, classically treated in Allegorical subjects, the ceiling portraying figure of "Time" carrying away Venus; the walls those of draped figures in Grecian architectural surroundings ...

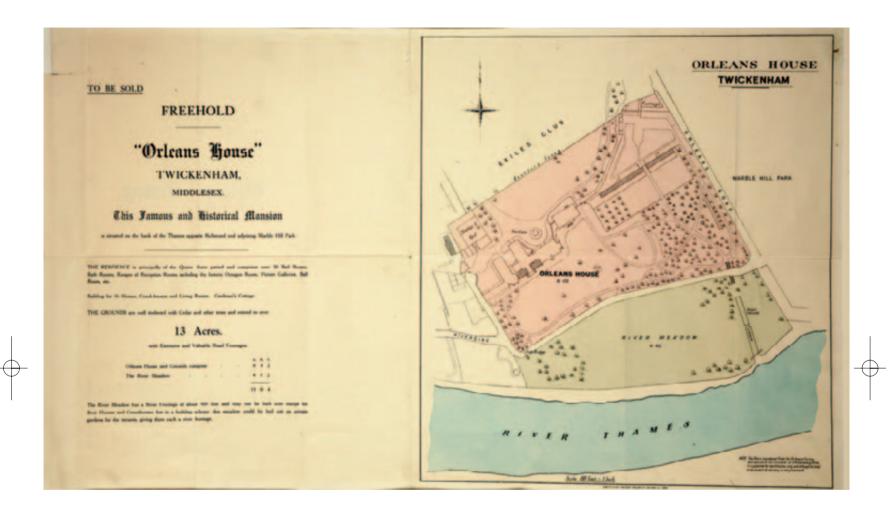
The Large Drawing Room leading out of the Entrance Hall, with windows in front giving prospect to the Lawns and River, and alcove bay at the side giving view over the Grounds... fitted open fireplace with dog stove and fine old French fire back designed with Duc d'Aumale's Arms...

Small Drawing or Morning Room on opposite side of Entrance Hall ... fitted parquetry floor surround, stove with tiled hearth and mahogany mantelpiece with stove screen, and having glazed doors opening into he Conservatories extending for a distance of 84 feet across the front of the House facing the River, and forming the grand entrance way to the "Octagon" Room (the Dining Hall), paved in marble and tiles...

Stately Renaissance Dining Hall, historically known as the "Octagon" Room, constructed in the architecture of the Renaissance period, with lofty domed roof, containing bold relief portraits of noble personages and exquisite Ionic column doorways having pediment tops surrounded by well-modelled cherub figures, the entire room superbly decorated in marble, carved oak, etc., in colours, enriched gilt with sumptuous yet most elegant effect.

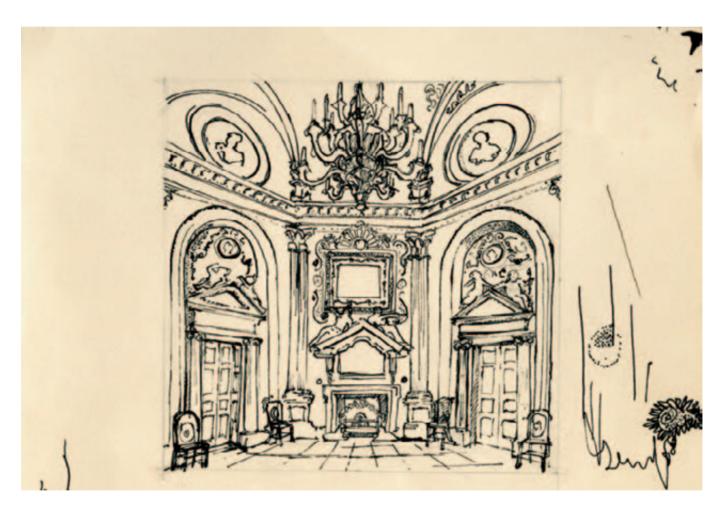
Small devotional chapel, forming the centre of the Western Wing, in the form of an octagon, decorated in pietra dure work and telamoid figures and furnished with oak parquetry floor, and fittings carved Duc D'Aumale's Arms."

Extract from 1907 sales catalogue, courtesy of Richmond Local studies Collection. The sales catalogue provides the most complete record of the house prior to its demolition.



Sales catalogue of Orleans House 1925 Richmond Local Studies Collection The Octagon Room enjoyed a new lease of life in the 1950s, when Mrs Ionides revived the tradition of sumptuous entertaining by hosting sparkling Edwardian-style dinner parties in the room on special occasions. Her granddaughter recalls that as the Octagon had no kitchen, all the food had to be brought

over from Riverside House, on trays held high, with a procession led by the butler (in tail coat), footman (in blue and gold livery), and several kitchen and parlour maids (smartly attired in black dresses and frilly aprons):



Unknown artist
Octagon Room Interior
undated
pen and ink

"Perhaps the idea of an eight-sided building appealed" to my many-faceted grandmother, Nellie Ionides. Her dominant aspect was her love of beauty, which led her in 1926 to buy land from the river up to Richmond Road, in order to rescue our unique Gibbs Octagon and prevent the urbanisation of our world-famous rustic view from Richmond Hill, then to secure its green vista forever by leaving it to the ownership of the borough. My grandmother had always loved this area, having spent the early years of her first marriage in Whitton, from whence she had studied all the great houses along the river. When she made her purchase, the main mansion, the huge Orleans House stretching right across the park, had just been pulled down to open up the land for gravel quarries. She managed to save only the landscape and the Octagon plus two ungainly extension wings.

The Octagon became a sort of isolated folly, glistening with rather worn-down gold leaf, next to her cosy Riverside House. Occasionally in summer, she would give sparkling candle-lit dinner parties there. I remember in the 1950s and early 1960s some magnificent Edwardian-style evenings, sometimes in connection with the Regatta on the Thames, or, more often, during Richmond Horse Show week. Grandmama would take a box for the show, and invite special friends to watch her high-stepping, champion hackney ponies dashing round the ring, driven in style by the fearless Mrs Cynthia Hayden, after which we were invited to Orleans House. The Octagon, awakened from its lonely state of conservation, would be filled with small dining tables with white cloths, and with a mass of garden roses as decor. The guests always included the Mayor, the Town Clerk and many of my grandmother's witty and distinguished friends, especially Sir Hartley (later Lord) Shawcross of Nurenburg Trials fame, the comedian Cyril Fletcher, actress Margaretta Scott, Mrs. Hayden, the outspoken hackney-driver and other fascinating characters.

These parties followed the tradition of Queen Caroline who used the Octagon for feasting "break-fasts" for the ladies of her court, including roasted peacock. If my grandmother could have fed us on roast peacock or swan for that matter, she would have done so - but it had become illegal to eat these noble birds by the 20th century! The vintage wines and the food, however, were exquisite, often chicken with delicate white wine sauce. Dinner almost always ended with chocolate éclairs stuffed with beaten cream, the likes of which in present cholesterol-conscious days are lost in dim but heavenly memory.

The Octagon had no kitchen, so all the food had to be brought over from Riverside House on travs held high, with a procession led by the butler (in tail coat), footman (in blue and gold livery), and several kitchen and parlour maids (smartly attired in black dresses and frilly aprons). In the centre of the Octagon was a tall octagonal table, black marble, if I remember rightly, inlaid with colourful geometric patterns made from semi-precious stones. It was too grand and indeed much too tall to be used by the guests. This, together with the huge chandelier and the fine 18th century Panini painting over the great fireplace were regrettably stolen in a 10-year period of neglect after my grandmother's death, before the gallery restoration took pace. (Perhaps they have come back into the international art market and we might find them again. It would make an exciting detective hunt.) Our present superb Orleans House Gallery in that period was almost a ruin, "blind", with bricked up windows. The vivid and ever-stimulating use of the gallery today would delight my grandmother - and she would be touched by the new use of the Octagon as a framework for joyful weddings."

Camilla Panufnik, 2007

In 1962, Nellie Ionides died. She bequeathed the buildings and site, and a collection of some 450 portraits and local topographical views to the Borough of Twickenham. Over the next ten years, the buildings adjoining the Octagon Room were transformed to create a contemporary gallery space. The gallery was

opened in 1972 and since then has staged, on average, six temporary exhibitions per year. The opening of the Stables Gallery, followed by Heritage Lottery Funded work to develop the stables courtyard between 2005-2008, has continued to transform the Orleans House site into a vibrant, creative public space.



Unknown photographer **Nellie Iondies with Poodle** *c.* 1945 photograph

Nellie Ionides is shown here with one of her beloved poodles Cliquot.



Niamh MacGowan
Orlean House Gallery
1998
copper engraving, artist's proof



Unknown photographer Orleans House 1969 photographs





"I arrived at Orleans House Gallery in December 1977, a sleepy gem in a tangled woodland garden. The gallery had been open for a few years with a series of exhibitions showing pictures from the Ionides Bequest organised by Diana Howard, the Borough Reference Librarian who I was soon to learn had an amazing breadth of knowledge of the history of the area. I was the first professional Curator and my main job was to develop the exhibition programme. When I started there was a show already in place called 'Hollywood on Thames' about the Twickenham & Teddington Film studios, which was displayed on a giant film roll, which snaked all around the gallery. It was six months before *I saw what the gallery really looked like behind all this.* My first project was to display a curious collection of paintings and memorabilia relating to the Victorian explorer Sir Richard Burton for the new Sheen Library. Exhibits included a testimonial from the Great Imam at Mecca, a necklace of human bones and cast of Burton's hand and foot.

In the early years we were a very small team – me, Bob the caretaker and Bill Kinsman, the technician (a dab hand at cutting bevelled mounts freehand) and also an expert archer and animal lover – the pigeons and squirrels had a 3 course lunch every day under the catalpa tree.

There were around six exhibitions a year and planning these was both challenging and rewarding. I made many good friends over the years — artists, photographers, planners and especially local historians. I must mention the amazing four who were experts on Twickenham and Hampton history — Dick Cashmore, Alan Irwin, Donald Simpson and Gerald Heath. They were unfailingly generous with their knowledge and very kind to me who knew so very little to start with. Together we produced several successful

exhibitions and publications on Richmond and Twickenham houses, gardens and people.

Because the area was home to many famous buildings and people, I was able to put on shows with expert help which attracted interest nationally such as 'Horace Walpole & Strawberry Hill' and for this we borrowed Walpole's famous Chinese fish tub (the one in which Walpole's cat Selima drowned and Thomas Grey memorialised in his poem 'Ode on the death of a favourite cat'). We decided to fill it with gold fish and weed, the only problem being that it needed cleaning out once a week. I did get the owner's permission but it was a nerve-wracking experience and conservation nightmare!

I also have memories of famous living people who came to the gallery. A visit by Prince Charles got the Council to fill the potholes in the drive. We managed to get Lord Clark (Kenneth Clark of Civilisation) to open an exhibition about the artists Charles Ricketts & Charles Shannon, but when he arrived he looked very sour and demanded a whisky. It turned out that as he was arriving by taxi he had taken a swig from a flask but had mistaken his wife's cologne bottle for his hip flask.

I also remember a magic day when the Octagon was used to film a series of programmes about the history of ballet and Dame Margot Fonteyn used my office as a dressing room.

After 11 years at Orleans House Gallery it seemed time to move on so I exchanged a riverside idyll for the busy streets of Wandsworth and tougher challenges."

Pat Astley-Cooper

Select glossary of terms

Aide-de-camp (French): Assistant to a person of high rank, usually a senior military officer.

Ballast: Gravel, broken stone, slag, etc., placed between and under the ties of a railroad to give stability, provide drainage, and distribute loads.

Baroque: Originating in 16th-century Italy, European style of architecture and art typified by bold curving forms, elaborate ornamentation and balance of disparate parts.

Book of Hours: Book containing order of prayers, readings from Scripture and rites for the Canonical hour, often beautifully illustrated.

Bust: Sculpture depicting a person's head and shoulders.

Classical: Relating to the ancient Greeks and Romans, especially architecture, art, philosophy and literature.

Château (French): A residence, country house or palace of the lord of the manor, gentry or nobility.

Entente cordiale (French): A friendly understanding, often between two or more nations.

Fender: A low metal guard before an open fireplace, to keep back falling coals.

Firedogs: One of a pair of metal stands, usually of iron or brass, for

holding logs in a fireplace.

Formal: A non-naturalistic symmetrical, highly organised garden. **Mansard (French):** Also called a mansard roof, a hip roof, each face of which has a steeper lower part and shallower upper part. Also refers to the floor or story under this type of roof.

Mount: Ornamental artificially raised area in a garden, often used as a viewing point.

Niche: A recess in a wall for holding a statue or urn.

Ninepins: Bowling game in which nine wooden pins are the targets.

Order of the Garter: The Most Noble Order of the Garter is an order of chivalry or Knighthood originating in medieval England and is the pinnacle of the honours system in the UK.

Palladian: Pertaining to the 16th century style of Andrea Palladio or follower of Palladio, e.g. circle of Lord Burlington (18th c.)

Pediment: triangular wide low-pitched gable surmounting the façade of a building.

Relief portrait: Sculptural portraits incorporated into architectural decoration.

Rococo: Originating in France (c. 1720), elegant refined development of Baroque, typified by ornamentation of scallops and foliage.



Emma Smith, Time, Time, Time: Past, 2006, manipulated digital image

References

ⁱColen Campbell, Vitruvius Britannicus, Vol I, 1715

ii Campbell and Burlington advocated a return to the example of 'correct', well proportioned classical architecture as found in the work of Italian Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio (1508-1580) and Inigo Jones (1573-1652), whose buildings, based on a close study of Paladio's and of ancient Roman structures, were among the first to introduce classical architectural arrangements to Britain. Inigo Jones' restrained, well-proportioned architecture was important for John James too, to the extent that he has been described as 'an early disciple of Inigo Jones'. See Sally Jeffery, "John James: An Early Disciple of Inigo Jones", in *The Georgian Villa*, ed. Dana Arnold, 1996.

iii For this attribution, see Christopher Hussey, 'Twickenham II: Orleans House; The Octagon', *Country Life*, Sept 15 1944

iv Carstare's state papers, quoted in *The History of Orleans House, Twickenham*, p. 5.

V The Wentworth Papers 1705-1739, London 1883

Vi Daniel Defoe, A Tour through the whole island of Great Britain, 1724-26

Vii Details taken from The History of Orleans House, Twickenham,

1984, p. 17, based on a copy of a document in Richmond Reference Library, whereabouts of the original unknown.

Viii Colen Campbell, Vitruvius Britannicus, Vol I, 1715

^{ix} Daniel Defoe, A Tour through the whole island of Great Britain, 1724-26

X John Macky, A Journey Through England, 1722

Xi Report in The Times, quoted in *The History of Orleans House, Twickenham*, 1984, p. 24

Xii Louis Philippe to Marie Charles Rossalie de Rohan Chabot. Chabot had lived in Sion Row from 1806 for 5 or 6 years.

Xiii Diary of John Russell, age 12, 4 December 1854, quoted in T. H. R. Cashmore, *The Orleans Family in Twickenham 1800-1932*, Borough of Twickenham Local History Society Paper No. 49, 1982, p. 32

Xiv Journal of Kate Stanley, age 17, 7 March 1859, quoted in T. H. R. Cashmore, *The Orleans Family in Twickenham 1800-1932*, Borough of Twickenham Local History Society Paper No. 49, 1982, p. 33

XV The two young princesses were day pupils at Gumley House school, and a selection of photograph albums and personal memorabilia has recently been gifted to Orleans House Gallery by the school



Emma Smith, Time, Time, Time: Future, 2006, manipulated digital image



Front cover image: Johan Dietzsch, Orleans House, c.1750, watercolour

Back cover image: Eighteenth-century carved decoration from Orleans House, now at Musée Condé, Chantilly

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Miranda Stearn, Mark De Novellis, Pat Astley Cooper. With thanks to THR Cashmore and Mavis Batey