



The Friends of Osterley Park



A Supporters Group for the National Trust

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NEWSLETTER

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This special edition brings you news of the Reception arranged for "Friends" on 28th May, as well as a round up of news items from the House and Park.

The House opened for the new season on 30th March, and the number of visitors in early weeks has been encouraging. On Easter Bank Holiday Monday, more than 500 people passed through the House, providing an interesting and challenging experience for the volunteer Room Stewards. Interesting, because one meets a wide cross-section of people, and challenging, because the questions that are asked often send one diving into the reference material for the answers - particularly at the beginning of the season, when one is a little rusty!

The colours used in the redecoration of the Long Gallery have been well received, and the effect will be improved when the hanging of the new pictures in this area is complete.

The floral arrangements in the rooms have drawn appreciative comments from visitors. At this early date, daffodils predominate and give welcoming splashes of colour.

In the Park, the cold weather has held back the Spring foliage - although the weeping willow at the East end of the lake is showing delicate green shoots. However, many birds, driven by the lengthening hours of daylight, are already nesting; during a casual stroll I saw coots building on a platform in the lower lake, and great crested grebe sitting on a nest on the south side of the upper lake, opposite the cork oak. A pair of young swans have been at Osterley for some months, but do not yet seem to be sufficiently mature to breed. Some members may recall that about ten years ago a pair of swans raised a brood of cygnets from a nest in the reed bed close to the ice-house; this year, the site is being used by a pair of Canada Geese!

The estate staff, as always, are extremely busy. The Pleasure Grounds are being prepared for the summer, and the bed by the north-east corner of the House is being replanted. Fallen trees are being cleared from the plantation on the south side of the upper lake.

All this activity can make a visit to the Park a rewarding experience!