

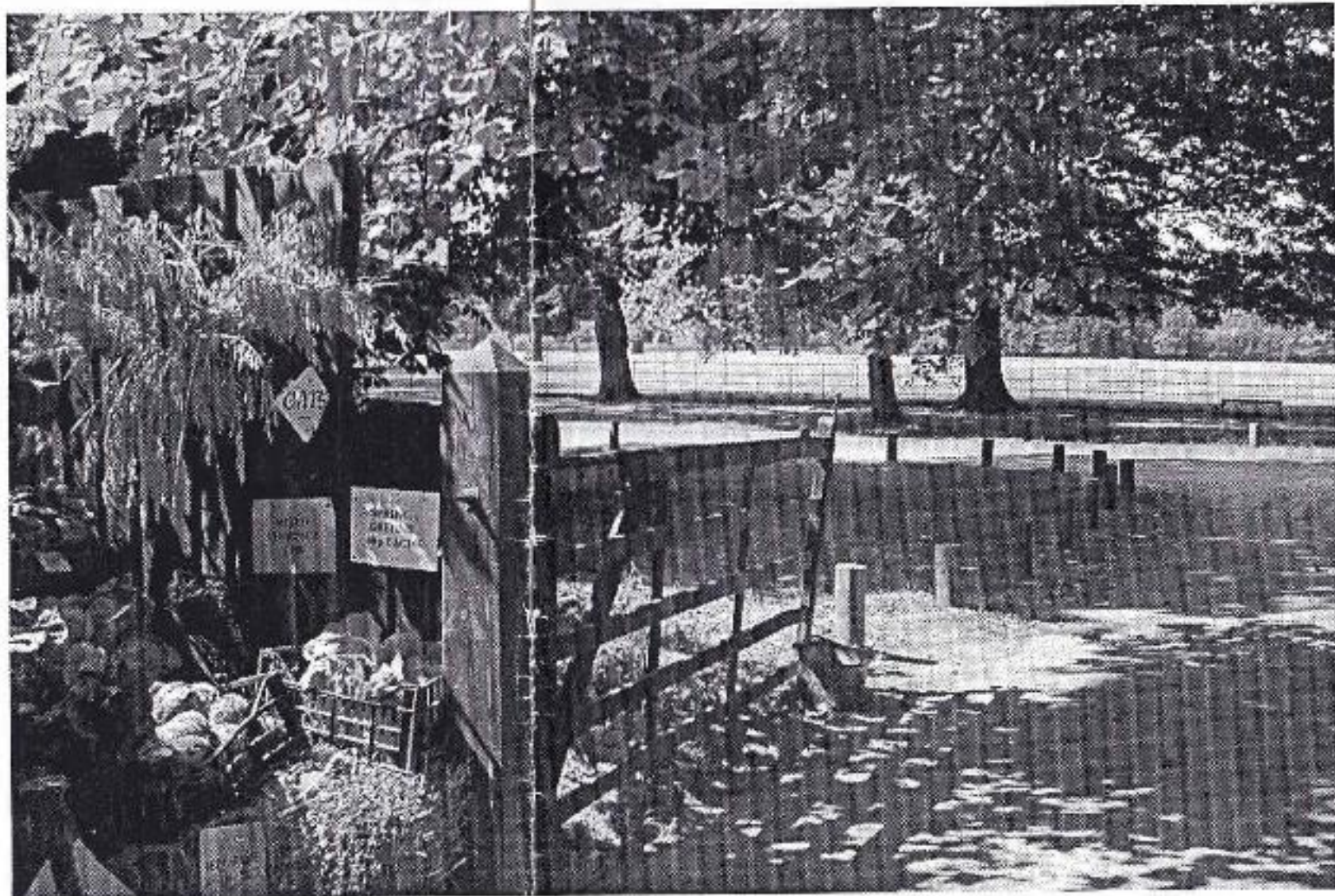
 **The Friends of Osterley Park**
A Supporters Group for the National Trust

NEWSLETTER

Issue 53 June 2004

Useful Contacts

Chairman
Kui Donacher
020 9560 8523



Osterley Farm Sheep Gate
Photo and cover design:
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OSTERLEY DAY

SUNDAY 11TH JULY

11 am to 4 pm.

**The "Friends" Major Fund-raising
Event, with stalls in the Stable yard.**

DONATIONS WANTED!

**The BRIC-A-BRAC & BOOKSTALLS will
welcome gifts of bric-a-brac, costume
jewellery, china, ornaments,
hardback & paperback books.**

**The TOMBOLA STALL gives a prize
every time, and needs donations large and
small - from large unwanted gifts down to
cans of soft drinks!**

**FOR COLLECTION, RING AUDREY
CONACHER ON 020 8560 8523**

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

IAN CONACHER

As the Annual General Meeting drew near, I became rather anxious, as the appeal for members to volunteer to serve on the Committee had not so far produced any response.

Early in the evening, before the start of business, I was delighted when Jim Tickle, a former Committee Member, who has for many years been organising the summer Trips and Tours, offered to rejoin the Committee. We shall be glad of his help, which will assist in planning the summer activities.

At the close of the meeting, I was again surprised and delighted to be approached by members John and Patricia James, who offered to take on the duties of Membership Secretary and Minute Secretary.

John and Patricia are long-standing local residents, with a great affection for the Park. John is a Churchwarden at St Mary's and has many other activities and commitments, but his computer skills mean that the task of transferring the Membership List from Dilwyn Bowles machine will be achieved electronically.

Time has passed swiftly since the A.G.M.; this Newsletter must now be in your hands as soon as possible, to give reminders of events in June and July. Principal among these are the Covent Garden Dancers Performance on Saturday 19th June, and Osterley Day on Sunday 11th July. Full details are on other pages, but both of these will be generating income for the "Friends" - so please give us your support!

FINANCIAL REPORT.

IAN CONACHER

As "Acting Treasurer" during the last months of 2003, the task of compiling and presenting the Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2003 fell to me. A copy is included with this

Newsletter, and you will see from this that Expenditure exceeded Income by £2,671.83. We retained a balance of £3,319.24, adequate for our needs, as in these days of low interest rates, there is no incentive to hold large balances.

Your money, generously donated in various ways, has been used to good effect, as can be seen by studying the list of donations to the Trust at Osterley during the year. We have adopted four items of recurring expenditure, which we either pay directly or reimburse the Trust. Last Year, these costs amounted to:-

| | |
|--|------------|
| Materials for Volunteer Flower Growers producing blooms for display in the House | £1,033.53. |
| Welcome Leaflets, handed to all first-time visitors in the Car Park. | £482.00. |
| Leaflets and other support for the Education Service's work with Schools. | £1,452.73 |
| Repairs to Battery Cars for the less-mobile | £829.07. |

"One off" items included payment of the balance of £1,300 for the four new metal garden bench seats for the Park, and £1086.88 for sponsorship of performances by the G.W.R. Preservation Jazz Band at the Spring Bank Holiday Concert and on Osterley Day.

Income amounted to nearly £6,000; noteworthy items include £1,096 raised by the "100 Club"; we thank Ron Piper for all the work he has put into achieving this. His report, on another page, includes a list of winners and an appeal for more members.

The surplus on Jim Tickle's Excursion programme, a small percentage of the total receipts, resulted from the actual ticket sales exceeding his cautious budgeting! Osterley Day stalls raised £781.50; we hope that this figure can be exceeded this year!

GRESHAM'S ELIZABETHAN HOME

Most Members will already know that in the 16th century, Thomas Gresham, courtier and business man, founder of the Royal Exchange, built a house on the site of the present Osterley House. Here, we are told, Queen Elizabeth visited him on several occasions. On her first visit, it is alleged that she commented unfavourably on the great size of the courtyard. Gresham is said to have engaged bricklayers to work overnight building a wall down the middle of the area to divide it in two. This building is shown at a very small scale on Moses Glover's map of 1635.

During last year an artist, David Webster, was engaged by the Trust to gather all the evidence from the map and from the traces of the original building still visible in the house as rebuilt by Robert Adam. Working with the Trust's staff, a series of drawings were made to show a possible front elevation of the building. The final drawing is reproduced on the centre pages.

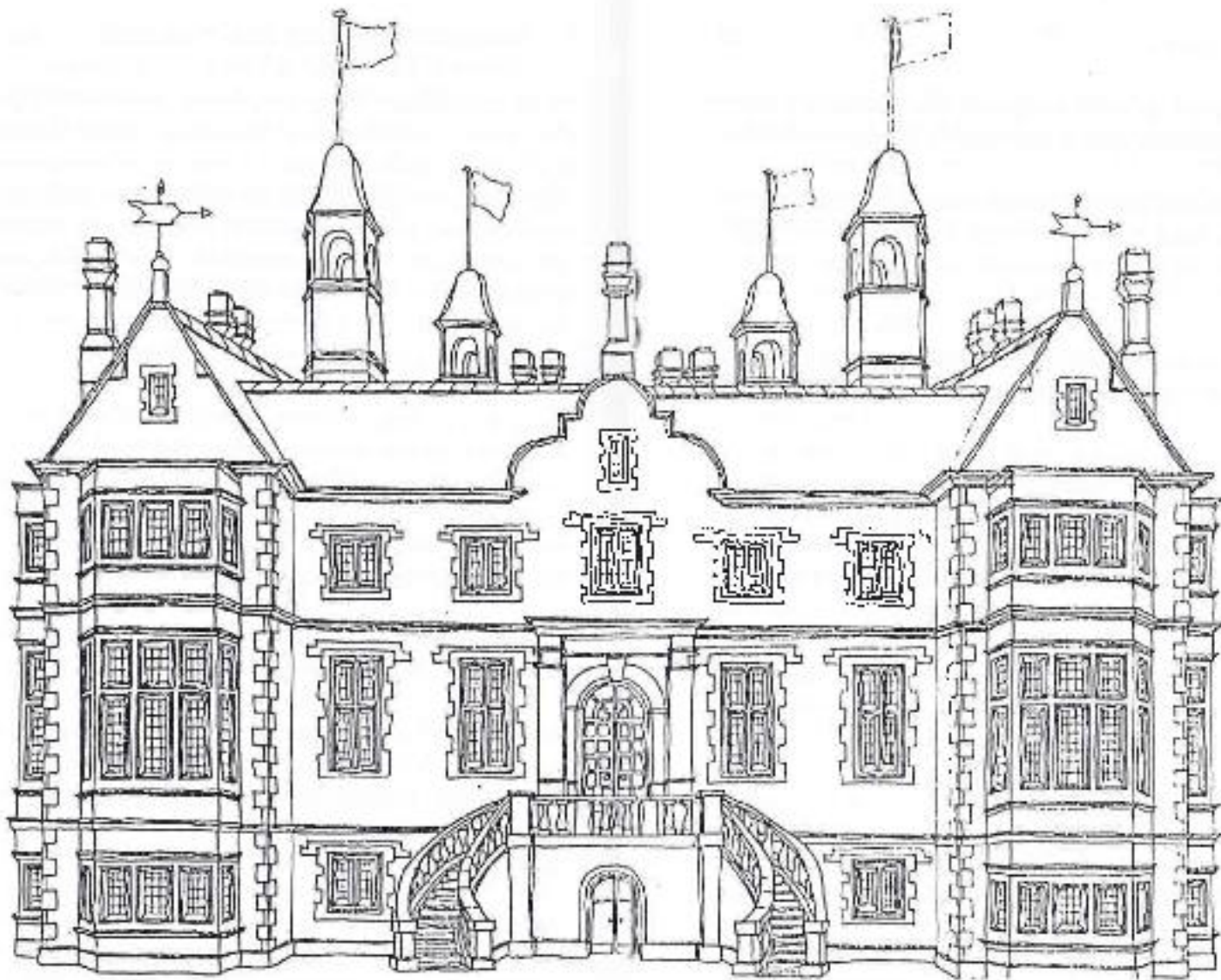
The "Friends" Committee were asked to subsidise the cost of this research, which amounted to £680.

It is evident that Adam took down the East wall of the courtyard, replacing it with the existing portico. Some traces of the original stairs were discovered in the coal cellar beneath the existing steps.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

Our thanks are due to all those who have already renewed for this year; a Final Reminder form is included for those who have not! Please note that our new Membership Secretary is:-

John James,
Parkfield Cottage, Osterley Road,
Isleworth, Middlesex, TW7 4PD.



Thomas Gresham's House at Osterley

An Artist's Impression by David Webster

NEWS FROM THE PROPERTY

Two members of the staff have recently resigned; the Warden, Julie Kerans, has already left and returned to her native Derbyshire.

Anthony McManus has been on the gardening staff since the Trust took over direct Management of the Property in 1991; he is leaving at the end of June to work as a self-employed gardener. We wish him every success.

The pair of swans on the Garden Lake nested again this year; three cygnets hatched, but did not long survive, possibly taken by a fox.

One problem caused by visitors, keen to feed the ducks, is that vast quantities of bread are tipped into the Garden Lake. This decomposes, robbing the water of oxygen and leading to algal growth. However, there seems to be a healthy fish population lurking in the murky waters, as evidenced by the resident herons, standing motionless at the water's edge or in the shallows.

Visiting water birds also fish in the lake. Cormorants are regularly seen, and terns are also seen from time to time, circling over the water and diving on their prey.

LONDON WALKS.

During last year, Doris Sherwood led a series of walks around "London Villages", which were much appreciated and raised a useful sum for the "Friends".

This Spring, Doris has continued with walks around Hampstead and Highgate, again greatly enjoyed; two of the ladies who attended commented to me at the A.G.M. on how much energy, knowledge, and enthusiasm Doris put into her talks. We are hoping that she may be persuaded to lead further walks later this year.

TRIUMPHS AND DISASTERS

Before the A.G.M., Barry Williams led Members on a short walk around the Pleasure Grounds, pointing out the progress which has been made with the planting of the flower beds in front of the Adam Garden House. These contain a selection of plants which were used by Eighteenth Century gardeners.

We also saw evidence of the problems which come with the maintenance of 200-year old gardens. A massive beech tree, near the north west corner of the walled garden, fell without warning in the early spring. Fortunately, no-one was injured, and there was no damage to the brick walls.

The Oriental Plane, near the north west corner of the House, has delighted generations of visitors - although to prevent damage to the spreading branches there are now notices asking children not to climb on these. However, the adjacent Copper Beech, which to a casual glance appears sound, is in fact in a bad way. Fungus is growing on the base of the tree, and there is a hole in the trunk just above ground level and indications that the interior of the trunk is rotting. Regrettably, for the safety of visitors, this must cut down before it falls down, which will cost several thousand pounds.

Another headache for the Estate staff is the risk of a disease, brought in, it is thought, by rhododendrons, and known as "Sudden Oak Death". Osterley has a collection of various species of evergreen oaks, including the Cork Oak by the lake and the Luccombe Oak opposite the Kiosk which may be at risk.

It is partly to protect these that many of the rhododendrons have been cut back, although some die-back has occurred due to variations in the water table. This is another major problem; some of Osterley's magnificent cedars have been affected by this, and measures are being taken to conserve these.

100 CLUB

RON PIPER

Two draws have been made since the last newsletter - at the Winter Lecture on 24 March and at the AGM in May. Winners were as follows:

| <u>24 March</u> | | | <u>12 May</u> | | |
|-----------------|------|-------------------|---------------|-----|------------------|
| 1 st | £100 | 48 Mrs W E Coombe | £100 | 85 | Mrs M E Leman |
| 2 nd | £ 50 | 89 Mrs E Smith | £ 50 | 83 | Mrs S Haisman |
| 3 rd | £ 15 | 143 Mr G Williams | £ 20 | 14 | Dr & Mrs P Bush |
| 4 th | £ 10 | 26 Mr R Piper | £ 10 | 47 | Mrs P Latchford |
| 5 th | £ 3 | 161 Mr R Cook | £ 5 | 166 | Mrs K V Blackett |

Many thanks to all members who renewed their membership for the new competition that started on 1 April and to those who either took additional shares or who joined the Club for the first time.

Membership is slightly down this time and now stands at 133. Total subscriptions received are £1614 so we will be giving prizes totalling £807 with a similar sum being available for the financing of projects for the Trust. This is a bit disappointing as since the Club was started by John Robertson several years ago we have always raised over £900 for the Trust.

New members would of course help to make up this shortfall and you can now join for the reduced cost of £9 per share to cover the next three draws to be made between now and 31 March 2005. If you are interested, please drop me a line to 44 Killowen Avenue, Northolt, UB5 4QT with details of your name, address, telephone number and Friends membership number together with a cheque for £9 per share required and a SAE for the return of your membership card.

The next draw will take place in the Autumn on a date to be announced.

COVENT GARDEN DANCERS

We hope that this Newsletter will reach you before the 19th June, when we welcome the Covent Garden Dancers on what must be their fourth or fifth visit to Osterley. The performance begins at 7.30 pm; a glass of wine will be served in the interval, and the second half will include an opportunity for "Audience Participation".

At the time of writing, tickets are still available, and can be reserved by telephoning 01494 755572. Hopefully, we shall have a fine evening for dancing in the Courtyard of the House. If wet, the performance will be in the Entrance Hall.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES.

There is a great shortage of volunteer Room Stewards in the House, particularly at weekends. The job offers light duties and congenial company, while extending your knowledge and enjoyment of the House. No qualifications needed - training will be given!

Outdoor volunteers are also wanted, for driving the "Buggy", assisting visitors wishing to use the self-drive Battery Cars, or assisting with the growing of flowers for display in the House, which often draw admiring comments from visitors.

Contact Philip King on 020 8560 3918 for further details.

KINGSTON LACEY & COMPTON ACRES - 15TH JULY.

Jim Tickle advises that there are a few vacant seats on the coach trip to Kingston Lacey, the National Trust's 17th century House near Bournemouth, which was modified by Sir Charles Barry in 1835-41. The trip concludes with a visit to Compton Acres Gardens, Poole (not National Trust), which should be at their best at this time of year. Cost £17.35, including admission to Gardens. Coach departs Osterley House Car Park 9am. Bookings, Jim Tickle, 020 8894-4174.