



CHISWICK HOUSE FRIENDS

NEWSLETTER Spring 2023

Charity No 289907

Patron: Lord Burlington



In this issue we focus on trees and dogs. In the middle pages we include highlights from the Friends' 2004 Tree Trail - with some interesting additions and some inevitable losses (for instance the Swamp Cypress on the right).

Inside we hear about Dog Show volunteering from Caroline Starkey, the Volunteer Coordinator, and on this page news of the Doggie Dash next month.

On the back page we have our regular column from Richard Sales, and are prompted by a letter from a Friend to comment on the state of rubbish littering in the Gardens, especially after a weekend.

John Armstrong



Doggie Dash! Run by CHF Dog Show Committee

Is your dog another Usain Bolt? Can he/she beat the world record? Come and join in the Doggie Dash on Monday 8th May on the back lawn (by the lake) 1 – 3 pm.

Made popular by the Dogs Trust at the annual Chiswick House Dog Show (this year it's on 24th September), the volunteers from the Dog Show Committee are going to do their best to make this version just as popular! Three classes – for small, medium and large dogs – will be tested by running/sprinting/cantering along a 35m run to their owner (and possibly a treat!) and will be timed down to the last mini-second. Prizes for each class have been donated by **Dog Town** and by **Brian Recommends Dog Treats** (a big **THANK YOU** to both of them).

Entry is free but you need to register your dog on the day!

Chiswick House Gardens Tree Trail

Below we print highlights from the Friends' Tree Trail, first published as a leaflet in 2004, and now located on our website. To follow the trail, refer to the plan opposite, and start behind the House facing NW....

1. The ITALIAN CYPRESS, *Cupressus sempervirens*, (*right*) is the classic cypress of the ancients and is the only one known before 1600. Planted here as part of the restoration work these form a processional avenue of trees and sculptures that began with statues of a boar and a wolf, and lead to the lions and statues of the 'exedra'. The cypress avenue was regarded in Renaissance Italy as a symbol of authority, and is characteristic of the Italian landscape today.



2. The CEDAR OF LEBANON, *Cedrus libani*, (*left*) is renowned for its grandeur and longevity. It is mentioned in the Bible as a symbol of fertility and abundance and can be used to line wardrobes because its scent repels insects and moths. It was the only exotic tree used by Capability Brown. These cedars were planted in 1741.

3. The LONDON PLANE, *Platanus x hispanica*, has hybrid vigour combined with near indestructibility and a great life span. On large planes the well-known mottled bark is only visible higher up. It is popular as a city tree because the shedding of its bark plates prevents it being suffocated by urban grime. The two magnificent specimens near the Italian gardens are among the tallest trees in the Gardens.

4. The MONTEREY PINE, *Pinus radiata*, is a large tree with a deeply fissured bark. Introduced from California by David Douglas in 1833, it is a fast grower, putting on up to 4' a year in Britain (and five times that in New Zealand).

5. The MONKEY PUZZLE or CHILEAN PINE, *Araucaria araucana*, also a popular tree in Victorian times. It was introduced in 1795 by Archibald Menzies who, while dining with the Viceroy of Chile, managed to 'acquire' the kernels offered as dessert and germinated them later.

6. The MAIDENHAIR TREE, *Ginkgo biloba*, is the sole survivor of an ancient family of trees that existed some 160m years ago. Regarded as sacred in the East, it is often planted in the vicinity of Buddhist temples.

7. The YEW, *Taxus baccata*, is poisonous to humans and livestock and was often confined to churchyards, having survived from older, Celtic or Pagan sacred sites where it represented immortality and the afterlife.

8. The SWEET CHESTNUT, *Castanea sativa*, believed to have been introduced by the Romans who used its nuts for flour – these still used today to make *pollenta*.

9. The AUSTRIAN or BLACK PINE, *Pinus nigra* – dark foliaged, tough, tolerating pollution better than most.

10. The HOLM OAK, *Quercus ilex*, has been cultivated in England since the 16th century but originates from the Mediterranean where it is used for hedges and topiary. Many of the holm oaks in these gardens were planted by Lord Burlington who also planted other 'Italian'

trees such as cedar, cypress and laurel to evoke images of ancient Rome.

11. WOLLEMI PINE, *Wollemia nobilis* (*right*) has to be one of the rarest trees anywhere. Believed extinct for two million years, it was "rediscovered" in 1994 by David Noble, a NSW Wildlife Officer. It is believed only 100 wild trees exist today.



12. COMMON LIME, *Tilia x europaea*, first came into fashion during the 17th century. A hybrid of Europe's big and small-leaved limes, it is our tallest broadleaf. The quality of the grain makes it popular for carving and for musical instruments. It is used at Chiswick to line Dukes Avenue and Lord Burlington's Avenue, which originally focused on the Bagnio (now demolished).

13. The SWAMP OR BALD CYPRESS, *Taxodium distichum*, deciduous and native to the Florida everglades, and was introduced by John Tradescant c. 1640. Its needles turn a splendid red/brown colour in autumn. The 'knee-like' growths arise over points where its deep sinker roots descend into the mud.

14. The LOMBARDY POPLAR, *Populus nigra* 'Italica', is distinctive in being very narrow and often planted in a group. It has glossy green leaves which turn yellow in autumn. Its wood is used in France to make Camembert boxes. It was brought to Essex from Turin in 1758 and is highly adaptable as to site and soil.



15. The FULHAM OAK, (*above*), *Quercus x hispanica* 'Fulhamensis', often mistakenly called a Holm, Turners or Lucombe oak. However the identity of ours has been proved by DNA testing. The Fulham Oak is a hybrid originally raised at Osborne's Fulham nursery around 1760.

Note its cork-like bark.



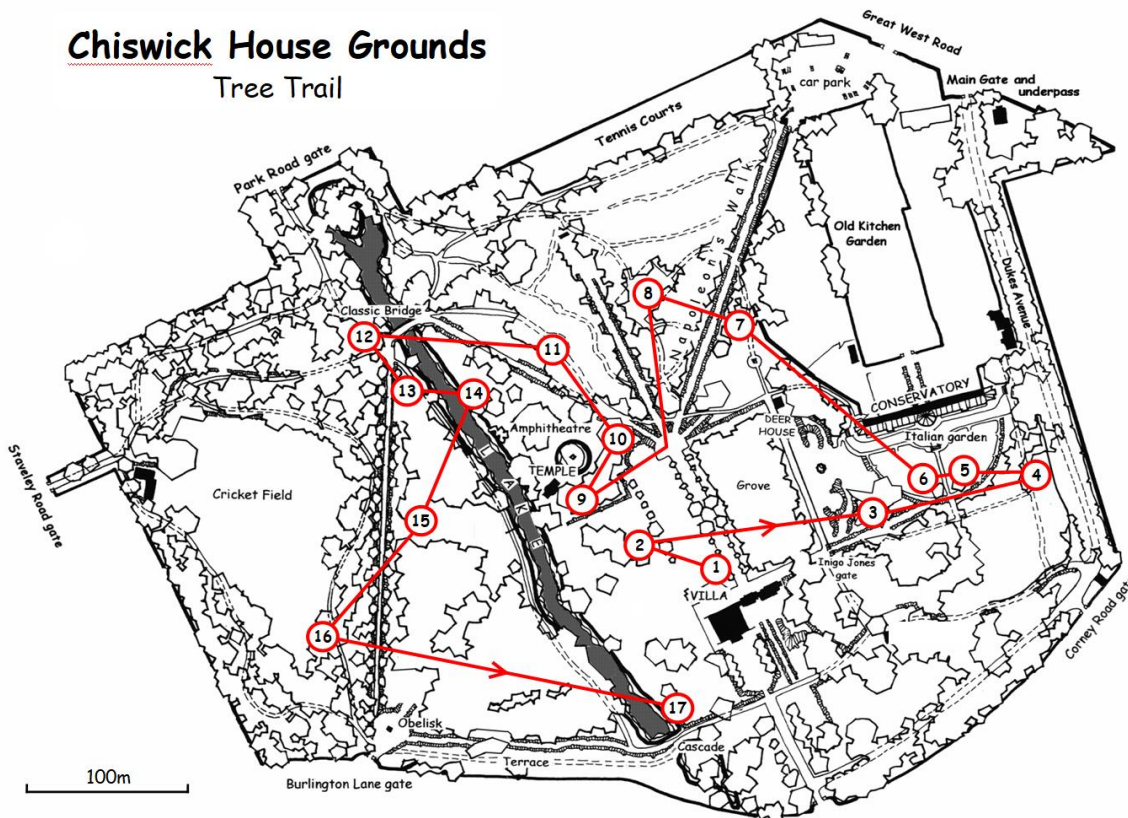
16. The FASTIGIATE OAK, *Quercus robur* 'Fastigiata', (*left*), also called a Cypress oak because of its tall columnar shape, quite unlike the usual spreading oak. It was discovered in a German forest in the 18th century.



17. The TULIP TREE, *Liriodendron tulipifera*, (*right*) – so called because its flowers are tulip-shaped. These flowers are usually only produced after the tree is 25 years old or so. It flowers in mid-June and goes a magnificent golden yellow in the autumn. It prefers soil that is not too dry, so this location near the lake in full sun is perfect.

Chiswick House Grounds

Tree Trail



This map is taken from the full Tree Trail on our website (CHFriends.org.uk), and illustrates a tour of the seventeen most interesting trees in the Gardens.

Start behind the House facing NW and make your way round the trail to finish near the Cascade.

Chiswick House Friends News

Volunteers: CHF's Dog Show 2023

Chiswick House Dog Show is now one of the largest annual dog events in London and attracts thousands of visitors both with, and without, dogs. 2023 will be the 19th Dog Show and the money raised pays for 'dog-related' activities in the grounds (including removal of 36 tons of dog waste each year), tree maintenance and safety, and goes towards funding other projects in the gardens.

Our show is run entirely by volunteers. The extraordinary committee of twelve work for 11 months a year (some over 600 hours) to organise the show; and 160 volunteers (or 540 hours of volunteer time) are needed on the day. That Dog Show fun takes a lot of organising!

It is volunteers who start setting up the show as dawn breaks at 7am, directing 72 commercial and catering stall vehicles on and off the cricket pitch, erecting gazebos, flags and signs and moving tables, chairs and boxes from the Pavilion to their show sites. Before the show starts, volunteers of all ages organise and set up the Registration desk, Volunteers Desk, Dog Show Bar, Information Desk and 'Green Room' (at the pavilion), run them during the show, and dismantle them afterwards (though only over 25's can help on the Bar).

The competition rings are run by volunteer Judges, Marshals, Ring Stewards, Runners and Photographers. The "front and back stage staff", the Show Stewards, not only help visitors and keep dogs watered, they also keep the recycling and refuse under control – all those visitors produce an enormous amount of rubbish and waste collection is one of the major expenses of the show!

The all-important Charity Bucket Rattlers tempting money from your pockets are also volunteers. Some roles are exclusively for children – such as helping in the Rings – and some are better done by them (dressing up and rattling charity buckets!) and we encourage younger children to volunteer with a friend. Depending on age and maturity, children can also help setting up or dismantling the Show, on the Class Registration Desk, and as assistants at the Pavilion or elsewhere.

We ask volunteers for two hours of their time, though many help for longer. If you would like to volunteer, we would love to hear from you. Please complete the online form at <https://www.chiswickhousedogshow.org.uk/volunteer-sign-up> or visit our Pink Gazebo on Bank Holiday Monday (8th May) on the Western lawn by the lake for more information.



Caroline, Volunteer Coordinator
volunteer@chiswickhousedogshow.org.uk

Early Spring Update from Richard Sales

After an extremely dry last half of January and February, the weather has reverted to its normal pattern of early Spring rain and warmth. In late January there were nine consecutive nights of below freezing temperatures resulting in a very thick layer of ice on the lake on to which young and old visitors threw large quantities of logs and branches. The ice took five days to melt and me a further two weeks to remove them.

Around the back of 'bamboo' island, in the southern pool, years of silt and logs have reduced the water depth to practically nothing, so I have encouraged Aron Cool, a Chiswick House & Grounds general helper and all-round brilliant engineer, to do the work of removing it while I watch that he doesn't drown. He is over 30 years younger than me and much stronger and more agile. The silt is about three feet in depth: slow progress is being made although we have disturbed the resident coy carp.

Our resident pair of Egyptian geese hatched four goslings in late February, the first since 2018, but sadly they all died within a week.

The male swan pair have built a new nest between the temple and what was the fenced-off dog-proof tree covered swampy area, which was a secure haven for nesting birds. That wildlife area has now been severely cleared to enhance the views – using a shire horse, see pic below – and I worry for the breeding wildfowl, in



particularly the tufted ducks and mallards. Coot are already nesting and we have an abundance of moorhen, tufted duck and mallard.

'Angel' our disabled Canada goose is still with us, but we appear to have lost 'Limpy' our broken legged mallard female. Nuthatch and greater spotted woodpecker have been seen and heard as has our winter visiting little grebe. On 12 March I was delighted to see, flying over Chiswick House and grounds, a magnificent red kite. This is the closest to central London that I have seen one.

Rubbish Bins

Friend Tony Bowden writes in to complain about the state of the rubbish bins after a busy weekend – even as early in the year as March.



The Trust is determined to keep rubbish bins out of all areas except by the café, to reduce cost (park rubbish can only be removed at commercial rates) and encourage visitors to take their rubbish home. Despite appearances, there has been a reduction in rubbish and removal costs. It has resulted however in unsightly mess around dog waste bins, especially by the car park exit, from visitors who have not yet learnt to take their rubbish home.

We would like to see the rubbish bins restored, and have suggested various solutions to this problem, but so far the Trust's emphasis has been on litter collection from around the Gardens. If any of our readers would like to help with this please contact the Volunteers' Manager vickym.taylor@btinternet.com. Or if you have ideas or suggestions or just want to let off steam, write to us at the email address below.

Important Dates

Thu 25th May – Chiswick House reopens. From this date it is open 11am - 4pm Thursday to Sunday only.

Mon 5th June – CHF AGM, Chiswick House 7pm

Weds 16th August – CHF Summer Party, Italian Gardens 6 :30 - 8:00pm. Tickets from the Secretary.

Sun 24th September – Dog Show

We are hoping to hold once more the Junior Royal Academy of Music concert for young musicians, but have not yet agreed a date with the Trust. We will let you know.

Published by the Chiswick House Friends

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