

Gardens with royal link

By Helen Peacocke

SHOTOVER House near Wheatley, home of Sir John Miller, offers families a chance to walk through the natural and unspoiled grounds of an extensive property laid out in an area which was formerly a Royal Forest.

It was here that Queen Elizabeth I made her famous speech bidding farewell to Oxford and where the famous 17th century diarist John Evelyn was entertained.

Daffodils, tulips and primroses are the main flowers blooming here at the moment, many of which were planted by the owner of the house, Sir John Miller.

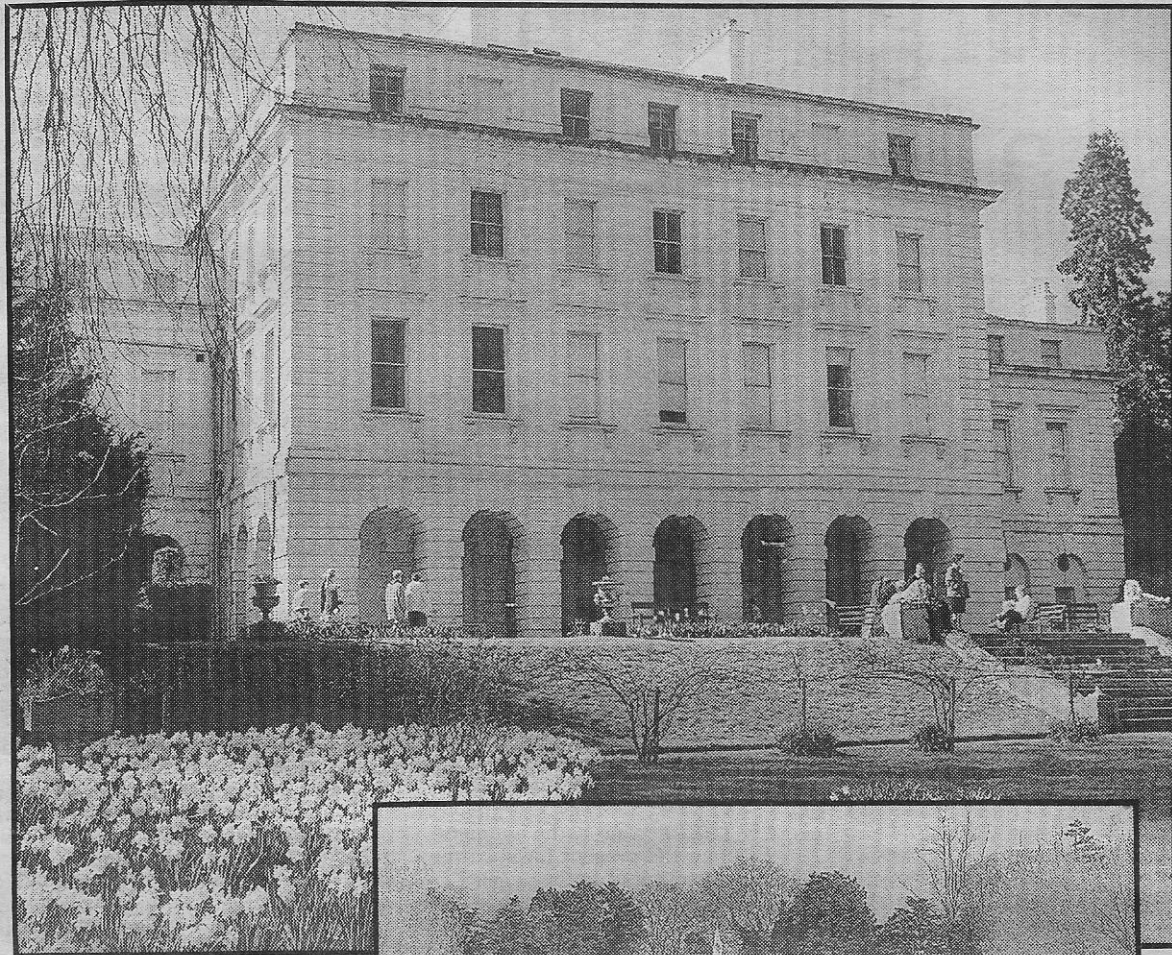
He also planted many double pink ornamental cherry trees close to the William Kent temple in the grounds.

The temple was painstakingly recreated in 1988, as the original temple, built in 1730, was destroyed by falling trees during a freak storm in the sixties.

The main obelisk in the grounds of Shotover Park was built to celebrate the visit by Queen Elizabeth I, the second in 1990 by owner Sir John Miller to celebrate a visit made by our present Queen and the Queen Mother.

The octagonal lake, around which the public are invited to walk, and the sweeping lawns add a distinct air of formality to this property.

But, once you have walked through the areas immediately surrounding the house you will find a series of delightful walks, which take you into natural parkland which has a informal unspoiled look, and on towards the small collection of rare cattle and sheep Sir John keeps on his land.



ABOVE: Shotover House, Wheatley

RIGHT: Visitors using the causeway over the octagonal lake, with the William Kent temple in the background

PICTURES: Peter Farr



Do consider staying for tea if you visit Shotover House. Tea is a treat and served in an area which allows you to relax and enjoy a view of the lake.