

HARTLAND ABBEY NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2011

Dear Visitors,

So much has happened since our last newsletter in the spring. It has been a really busy summer with lots and lots of visitors which is wonderful. Being the venue for the future King of England's stag party certainly had a huge, unexpected effect. It had remained a secret for a long time until eventually the press got hold of it, but by then it was old news.

We have had a lot of television coverage this year. German ZDF television filmed here last year for a lifestyle programme 'Landtraume' ('Country Dreams') which came out in the spring. Then Hugh was filmed for ITV's 'Countrywise' which showed the Abbey and the estate in a beautiful light. The day they filmed was a most perfect spring day. The Hartland and Clovelly area looked wonderful and has resulted in many extra visitors.

The final Highgate Junior School Reunion for the boys evacuated here in the War was held on 27th May. Many had travelled a long way to come back here for the last time. The bedrooms were full with old boys, their wives and widows staying. It was a wonderful time of reminiscing. For the first time Christopher Morahan was able to attend; as one of our leading film and theatre directors, he had been too busy in the past. It was particularly poignant for him as his daughter, Hattie, had starred in 'Sense and Sensibility' filmed here in 2007. The 'boys' were delighted that the present Highgate headmaster, Adam Pettit and Simon Appleton, head of English, were also able to be here. We had a wonderful lunch, some light speeches and a wander round the gardens. We hope to see lots of them again – Hartland has a perennially open door to the Old Cholmeleians who were so much part of the more recent history of the Abbey.



Rhod. Percy Wiseman in May



Highgate School Reunion 27th May 2011

In June we hosted our annual house party from Germany. It is always a great group of people who enjoy walking, visiting gardens and having a good party! Jenny Curtis-Beard, who brings groups to walk the South-West Coastal Path throughout the summer, spends the week based here taking walks and visiting gardens in the area. Everyone loves the cooked breakfasts, delicious dinners in The Dining Room and relaxing evenings in the Library or Drawing Room in front of the fire. Anyone interested could contact Jenny at curtisbeardwalks@aol.com

The Midsummer Charity Weekend in aid of the North Devon Hospice and The Cancer Research Fund was held here from 24th – 26th June with a Ball for 500 on the Friday night, The Last Night of the Proms on Saturday evening for 450 and the Country Fair on Sunday when thousands turned up. It was a wonderful weekend which raised a huge £66,000 for the charities. Due entirely to the sheer hard work and dedication of the local Hartland committee,

inspired by the wonderful Sheila and Kelly Arkless, a mother and daughter who have both had cancer, it was a staggering success for such a small and remote community.



Jousting at the Country Fair



A few days after the Country Fair Glamour Magazine arrived to do a photoshoot for their September issue. They spent two days on the estate with one in and around the Walled Gardens and in the house; the second day was spent at Stoke Barton, the farm opposite the church which is also a wonderful camp site. They shot some stunning images which did look wonderful in the magazine. Later in the summer a German car magazine came to the Abbey to shoot photographs. An enormous trailer turned up and slowly a very smart, yellow Ferrari emerged; it had been Tony Curtis's car in 'The Persuaders'. There was much excitement from the car enthusiasts, especially when the boot was up as it had the great man's signature on it! It lives secretly in North Devon somewhere.



The Persuaders car at The Abbey



Walled Garden in August

Last autumn the BBC confirmed that we would be a location for The Antiques Road Show in July. We were stunned and thrilled but it soon dawned on us that this was a precious jewel in the BBC's crown with which we had been entrusted and that there was an enormous task ahead to make sure everything went to plan. Most of the venues they choose are houses, museums etc with full time administrative and catering staff; here it is just us! In May we had a planning meeting around the Dining Room table with the BBC Production team, the two local policemen and us; they were amazed that it was just Hugh, myself and Nancy Johns (who voluntarily runs the Tea Room for the church) who were going to be organising such a huge event. I am sure that they must have had their doubts at that stage whether it was going to work here!

The logistics were enormous; we were to expect between 500 (if wet) – 2,500 people, many of whom would need food and drink, but we would never know until the day! The car parking, the

promotion (thousands of flyers, posters, three huge banners, the local press and any other way we could think of), local accommodation for the BBC (approx 90 beds), crime prevention, vehicle access for the huge technical vehicles, loos, masses of extra tables, chairs, crockery to be hired and so much more! Leighton had to virtually rebuild the bridge between the Upper Lawns and the road as it was collapsing and unsafe for so many cars! We needed 31 voluntary stewards to man the queues to each expert's table. Every bedroom in the Abbey was booked for Fiona Bruce and the experts; 70 of the production team and experts wanted dinner the evening before and everyone from the BBC, stewards etc (130) needed lunch in the Dining Room on the day! Some of the voluntary stewards were to provide tea, coffee and biscuits all day to the experts and those waiting to be filmed. There was a huge amount to organise with many, many sleepless nights to follow.

As soon as the Charity weekend was over and their marquee was taken down on 3rd July the BBC marquee was put up on the front lawn as an insurance against wet weather. From then on it was non-stop with everything arriving in huge articulated lorries. The marquee, the tables, chairs and umbrellas travel to every venue so have quite a history themselves. It was exciting and that was the moment we really began to enjoy ourselves after the months of hard work.



Nancy Johns had been planning the catering for months before which was really difficult, not having a clue how many people would turn up on the day. Ronnie and Simon, from the South Street Kitchen in South Molton were going to come in and do the sandwiches as it was just too much for Nancy. She and her team of dedicated helpers, all church volunteers including our indomitable vicar, Shirley Henderson, were all extremely busy preparing cakes and scones to sell to people in the queues, some of whom have to wait for 4 ½ hours to be seen! But it was so difficult to know how many people to cater for...

On 6th July Fiona Bruce arrived to start filming the introduction to the show. She was such a charming person as was everyone from the BBC. In the afternoon we had a briefing for the volunteer stewards from Tiggi Trethowan, the Event Manager. She made everyone feel so proud to be involved. Stewarding for the Antiques Roadshow is a vital job, you are there to keep everyone happy after queuing so long and to keep 'your' expert happy too making sure of people arriving at the table with their treasures unwrapped. The stewards really make or break a show and ours were voted by the BBC as the best this year! The experts staying in the house arrived; Fiona Bruce, Paul Atterbury, Philip Mould, Hugh's cousin Mark Poltimore, Hilary Kay, Susan Rumfitt, Richard Price, Janet Gleeson, Clive Stewart-Lockhart and Barley Roscoe.

In the evening we had a lovely party here with all the experts and the production team, all staying locally. It was a wonderful atmosphere starting with drinks and going on to dinner in the Dining Room and the Billiard Room, where we had extra tables. We woke on 7th July at 5am to a terrific storm raging outside and pouring rain; I just couldn't believe that this was what we had earned after so much hard work! However, 'rain before seven, sun before eleven' really worked for us; apparently as near as Clovelly it rained all day! From daybreak cars started to arrive and by the end of the day we had had over 3,000 people, surpassing all expectations.

The house was closed to the public for the day as the Drawing Room was the Make-up Department, the Billiard Room was the Waiting Room for those waiting to be filmed and the Dining Room was the canteen with lunch being served nearly all day for 130 of the experts, crew and stewards. Jenny Stone and her son Sam, who help us with functions, did all the catering admirably from our minute kitchen, helped by a great team of Carol and local helpers. It was such a fantastic day; lots of people had come and many new treasures found. There was a wonderful atmosphere, it was a day we will never forget. After all the hard work from everyone, over 3,000 people had come here and it had been a dry day. Working with everyone at the BBC had been a joy, they had shown so much kindness and help to us all. The programme will be shown on 19th and 26th February 2012, we think, but it may change.

In July we went to Scotland to the christening of our youngest granddaughter, Edie Alice Morgan. It was a very happy time. August has seen the house bursting with our family, all 9 grandchildren, my mother and lots of friends staying. The beach has had masses of sand this year which the children have adored. They love all the space at Hartland and a particular favourite is to climb the huge Thuja in the Shrubbery. It is very quiet now holidays are over! Thank you so much for visiting us this summer, we appreciate your support so much. Hugh and Angela Stucley September 2011



Edie, Ran, Lucinda, Billy and Lucinda Morgan



Mummy (Diana Toller), Margot Scudamore and Edie Morgan



Grandchildren at Blackpool Mill



A lovely summers day at Hartland Quay



Antiques Road Show Top row L to R: Fiona Bruce and Mark Poltimore; Fiona Bruce and Andy McConnel
 2nd Row Fiona Bruce with us both; Fiona with Paul Atterbury 3rd Row Mark Poltimore (pictures) with John Rous from Clovelly.;
 photo from roof. 4th Row Queues on the lawn; Barley Roscoe and Mark Hill (miscellaneous) 5th Row Our grandchildren Billy
 Morgan, Margot and Myrtle Scudamore with friends; Edie Morgan eating the programme!