



THE HEVER CASTLE TIMES

SPRING 2010

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WELCOME TO OUR NEW NEWSLETTER

By Duncan Leslie - Chief Executive

Our intention is to do a newsletter at least every quarter to keep you up-to-date with what's going on at Hever Castle.

Of particular interest this year, we have the long-awaited Pavilion Restaurant renovation, which we hope will be open in time for Easter; however, it is unlikely to be completely finished until the end of April.

The building will be renamed the 'Guthrie Pavilion' to highlight that the building has totally changed in its appearance and presentation. Outside the tarmac will be replaced with a sandstone terrace over which columns will hold up an oak pergola, made from trees cut down in our own woodland. Inside, the old 1970s suspended ceiling has been replaced with a series of vaults (see photograph). The old metal windows have been replaced by timber framed French doors which will open directly on to the terrace. The floor of the building will be oak.

The restaurant will be open for table service as well as having a small cafeteria. It will be used for more functions as the previous building was not considered attractive enough by prospective clients. I have just tasted the new menu for the Guthrie Pavilion, and I am now very excited about the very real possibility of Hever Castle gaining a reputation for its quality food.



There is also a new toilet block to be called the 'Lavender Loos' adjacent to the greenhouses.

We hope that you like these changes and would ask you to bear with us if visiting over Easter, as the building work will not actually be completed until

"The old 1970s suspended ceiling has been replaced with a series of vaults"



the end of April, at the earliest.

Elsewhere in the Grounds you will see the gardeners have been busy, with lots of new shrubs and trees planted and many more to be during March; while the Playground sports a new aerial slide. Phil the Boatman has lowered his jetty, and we have also cut down a lot of dead or dying trees which were potential hazards to the public, which will now be used to heat the premises. I should add that the Guthrie Pavilion will be heated entirely by timber, utilizing all the off-cuts from the building process itself and then our own supply of timber from the grounds and woodlands.

We very much hope you enjoy your next visit to Hever and you have our assurances that we will be continuing, as ever, to improve the visitor experience. I wish you the very best for 2010.

LATEST NEWS

The Annual Easter Egg Trail April 2 - 5

Hunt for clues, with the help of Henrietta Hen and friends, to claim your chocolate egg. Fun for all the family.



A Garden Weekend Special with Tom Hart Dyke of Lullingstone Castle Friday 14th May 2010

Ever wondered what it was really like in the Colombian Jungle? Enjoy a sumptuous meal in the company of Tom as well as Neil Miller, Head Gardener at Hever Castle. Combine this with an overnight stay in one of our beautiful bedrooms and a personal tour of the Gardens with the head gardener the following morning and you have a weekend to remember! For further details please call us on 01732 861 800.



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OTHER NEWS

One of the main winter projects this year for the Day Visitor Manager, Sarah Lewis-James, has been to update all the rope ladders and climbing nets in the Adventure Playground and to have installed a fantastic new Aerial Slide, which runs an even longer distance than our old one!

Several film crews have been on site recently including a shoot for 'Fabulous' magazine and a Japanese crew who were creating an episode on Anne Boleyn for a series called 'World Heritage', which is a very popular history programme in Japan.

In between these projects we have been recruiting, planning Induction Day for all our seasonal staff and getting everything ready to open for the season.

New Guthrie Pavilion

Jose Afonso, the deputy General Manager of Leith's Catering at Hever Castle said "we are extremely excited about the launch of the new Guthrie Pavilion in 2010, which will add extra value to the visitor experience by providing table service during the peak periods.

The refurbished Moat Restaurant was well received last year and we will continue our focus to provide customers with good food by sourcing truly local and truly British wherever possible. Our main focus for this year will be to earn the continued loyalty of our customers by consistently demonstrating why we are the first choice for quality, service, value and innovation. Encouraged by the positive feedback, the catering team is more committed than ever to continue improving the efficiency of our offer.

Leith's originally founded by Prue Leith in 1972 is now part of the Compass Group UK & Ireland and specializes in providing conference, banqueting, hospitality and food services to cultural, arts and exhibition locations throughout the country

Latest Refurbishments

During the closed season lots of work had to be done to the Castle. The beautiful leaded light windows are 100 years old and many are buckling, or cracking. This specialist job requires many hours hard work – sometimes in very tricky and high up parts of the building!

The Dining Hall carpet dating to the late 1800's is to undergo some conservation work and will be benefiting from cleaning and repairs. The enormous antique carpet measuring 4.5m x 7m will prove a logistical challenge for the castle team to pack it up for its journey to the conservation studio.

The castle rooms are also being deep cleaned to ensure they are free from dust and potentially harmful insects such as carpet beetles and moths.

Head Gardener Neil Miller reports on the gardens

Despite being the winter months the gardening team are surprisingly busy. It is amazing how much heavy work can be undertaken when the gardens are closed to visitors.

Each year we change a couple of beds in the rose garden and, unlike in Lord Astor's time when this would have been dug out by hand, we hire an excavator and dumper truck to remove all the soil and replace it with layers of well rotted manure and fresh topsoil.

This year we are planting two new wonderful roses 'Super Trouper' – the novelty rose of the year in 2010 with dazzling orange blooms and 'Tintinara' a rose with delicious glowing red blooms.

The gardening team were

also involved in the construction of Santa's winter wonderland grotto and the erection of dozens of Christmas trees around the castle and gardens, which just proves that the Hever gardeners are multi-skilled

We are also constructing a rabbit fence along the top half of Anne Boleyn's Walk in the hope that it keeps our furry friends out of the Italian gardens and



tempting herbaceous border.

The new carpet bedding beside the Yew Maze has been redesigned and raised so that future displays can be seen from topiary walk. Watch this space for this year's stunning display.

Over the next few months, more exotic planting is being undertaken around the new Guthrie Pavilion and to replace shrubs we lost over the winter – one night the temperature dropped to -10°C.

On a final but exciting note, the gardens here at Hever Castle have been vetted by the Royal Horticultural Society and we are delighted to say that we are now listed as an RHS recommended garden.

The Festival Theatre at Hever Castle

The Festival Theatre is situated on the stunning Two Sisters Lawn within the gardens and is pleased to announce its plans for the summer. Gates open for evening performances at 6.30 allowing time to enjoy a picnic in the gardens, or a pre-theatre supper at the newly-refurbished Guthrie Pavilion.

Events this year run from June to August, and include three plays produced by resident theatre company Kent Rep, as well as full and varied programme of Opera, Jazz, classical music and concerts.

Highlights for 2010 include Shakespeare's **The Taming of**

the Shrew, Bizet's Carmen, The Gondoliers by Gilbert and Sullivan, Acker Bilk, Rhapsody in Blue and a celebration of the music of the Beach Boys, the Fab Beatles and Last Night of the Hever Proms.

The Box Office opens for priority booking on Monday 1 March; it is open to members of the Theatre's Patrons Scheme and those qualifying for group discounts. The Theatre is offering **a special offer to Castle Season Ticket Holders to become Theatre Patrons** for the year for just £10. This entitles you to priority booking during March and a 5% discount on theatre tickets purchased during this time.

General Booking starts on Monday 29 March.

For more information on this year's programme or to become a theatre patron, email theatre@heverfestival.co.uk, call 01732 866114 or visit www.heverfestival.co.uk

