

Welcome to the autumn edition of the Wentworth Hotel newsletter. A wise man once told me that it was hard having a public to satisfy. It would appear that after my rather surreal feature in the last newsletter, plus other articles which didn't attract so much attention, people are expectant of another instalment. This will be music to Michael's ears who will be glad to have the pressure eased from him somewhat. No more excuses of writer's blocks will be needed as the mantle is shared!

It has now been twelve months since the previous newsletter where we described events leading up to Christmas and some of what the hotel had planned for the New Year. Michael also

expressed a hope for 2009 to bring stability to our lives. I am not sure this has quite been realised amid a still uncertain economy but people are still visiting us and we are glad to welcome them!

Therefore this newsletter comes, rather belatedly, with news of developments in recent months.

I hope you enjoy reading about what the hotel has been experiencing and look forward to welcoming you back in the near future.

James Green



Festive Lunches in December

Christmas is a time for family and friends and the Wentworth festive lunches are ideal occasions for a get together. A glass of mulled wine sets the tone followed by a festive menu with crackers and seasonal table decorations. A pianist gently playing carols in the background adds that Christmas touch.

December 15th & 17th - £21.50 per person

Christmas Dinner Dances

Bring your party to our party! If you are looking for a little more than a quiet evening by the fireside we have five nights for you to dance the night away to Brian Nickels and his discotheque.

Dinner Dance Nights:

December 11th, 12th, 17th*, 18th & 19th
£27.50 per person (*£25.00 per person)

Hotel Closure!

We are closing for one night on January 7th 2010 to take the staff for a belated Christmas party to yet another rock 'n' roll pantomime – oh no you're not, oh yes we are! The closing will take effect from 11.00 am on 7th January 2010.
Reopening at 9.00am, 8th January 2010.

The Darfield Gallery

When thinking of the Wentworth Hotel what comes to your mind?

Is it the beautiful building, the wonderful location, amazing food and service or is it the fact it's also the perfect location to hold your meetings?

Located across the road next to Darfield House is Darfield Gallery.

The Darfield Gallery is available to accommodate up to 16 delegates boardroom style or 30 theatre style. Our day delegate rate is £35 per delegate and includes the following:

- **Use of an overhead projector and screen, flip charts & WiFi**
- **Morning & afternoon tea, coffee and biscuits**
- **lunch (2 courses)**
- **Ample car parking**

However if you require anything different please do not hesitate to contact James or Paul as we are more than willing to discuss your individual needs and create a package specially for you. It doesn't matter if you are a large corporate company or a local club who meet in the town, we can cater for all.



All set for a conference

From the Kitchen

Hello, I am delighted to introduce myself to you all. My name is Tim Keeble and I am very proud to say I am the new Head chef here at the Wentworth. I was born and raised in Ipswich and have worked in many of the regions premier hotels throughout my career.

I have fond memories of seeing my grandparents cooking, making scones with my mum and digging potatoes with my dad in the vegetable patch. I guess I've been smitten with my love of food since a young age, and after two weeks in a hotel kitchen for my work experience during school, I knew I had to become a chef.

With three years training at Suffolk College under my belt, I began my career in catering as Commis Chef at what was formerly the Marlborough Hotel in Ipswich (converted in recent years to apartments, how things change!). Over the years I worked at The Marlborough's sister hotel in Bury St Edmunds, The Angel, and at only 25 years of age I was promoted to the position of Head Chef at the Salthouse Harbour Hotel on the waterfront in Ipswich. Along my catering journey, I gained valuable experience at The Swan in Lavenham and The Swan in Southwold. I still have a massive passion for food and cooking, and the thirst to keep learning and creating. I have worked with some amazing people and real characters so far, and I look forward to many happy moments here.

I like to look at traditional recipes and classical dishes and see what or how it can be diversified. Sometimes there really is no need, those dishes are always a pleasure to cook, knowing each element is prepared and cooked to perfection. Well that is what we all strive for isn't it? Using some of the forgotten methods, techniques or even a different cut of meat to develop a dish is always a challenge.



Tim Keeble, Head Chef

The more complicated a dish is, with lots of intricate methods and astounding ingredients, the more opportunity there is to mess it up completely. Many times dishes can be broken down to be simpler, allowing nature to do the work and all you need to do is encourage those flavours out.

Our region produces some of the finest ingredients and if, as a chef, it doesn't inspire you to go and use it, maybe it should! Seasonal meat, fish, fruit and vegetables from local suppliers and shores are going to feature heavily on the new menus here at the Wentworth, and along with a new kitchen garden, we will start to work on a 'grow it, cook it, eat it' belief and I cannot wait to start getting things growing! Tomatoes on the plate picked from the garden - you won't get fresher than that! Who knows where it will lead!

Tim Keeble

From the Garden

For more reasons than one this has been a challenging year and I am not referring to the economy! After getting off to a colourful start with a generally mild and wet spring the ground has become progressively drier and drier. Keeping things green, let alone colourful, has been a struggle. At the time of writing Aldeburgh hasn't seen any real rain for at least two months. Combined with our naturally light and gravelly soils this has meant an almost Darwinian process of natural selection has been taking place in the gardens, favouring those plants that are adapted to putting up with the extremes against those that are not.



David Gifford and Graham Baird

Of course the Tiffany Garden is subjected to salt laden freezing north-easterlies as well which all added up means that plants doing well here will survive almost anywhere. So the lesson is always try to use plants that will cope with the conditions. Of course it is sometimes trial and error and one's pre-conceptions are often found wanting. But by the same token some plants can often be full of surprises. It certainly sorts out the "doers" from the "don'ts".

As always the geraniums have thrived in the hot dry weather and the summer bedding and containers have been a highlight. For added colour, and to extend the flowering season, we have planted *Perovskia atriplicifolia* "Blue Spire" and *Ceratostigma plumbagoides*. Both are coping well with the challenging setting. An experimental double pruning of the lavenders at different times, and with varying degrees of severity, has also extended their season and colour. Proof that we should always push the boundaries and try different things

Perhaps the most exotic plant in flower this season has been *Echium wildpretii* (a strawberry coloured smaller version of the spectacular tree *Echium*), usually a native of the Canary Islands. Could this be a sign of a warming climate? Let's see if it produces fertile seed.

This is the time of seasonal change and the work of planting and preparing the winter and spring bedding and containers is currently underway. There is always something to look forward to in the garden!

David Gifford

I have been at the Wentworth Hotel for just over 4 years, working with David Gifford. I think its fantastic what we have achieved in that time – although all the clever things are left to David.

Basically my duties are trying to keep the grounds tidy. This includes mowing, edging, weeding and sweeping – the latter being particularly important at this time of year. We have four compost bins where we recycle garden material and kitchen waste. I am also responsible for maintaining two staff house gardens – one in Aldeburgh and one in Leiston.

I enjoy my work and hopefully will continue for a few more years.

Graham Baird



Just needs a little bit of weeding

There are many members of staff that are not so readily seen by the guests. They work 'back of house'. Their work though is just as important and they act as vital cogs amongst

our fairly well maintained machine. Here two particular members of staff give a brief insight into their work. The gardens, I'm sure you will agree, are maintained to the highest order, and it is due to the hard work of Head Gardener David Gifford, and his assistant Graham Baird. David has appeared on Gardener's World and both do a fantastic job to keep the visual beauty of the gardens throughout the year.

During our summer season it amused me how many guests said to me, when asked if they are having a nice time, "yes we are having a lovely time, not looking forward to going home, bet there will be lots of weeds". My Nan is the same. Whenever I go round and visit I'll always comment on how lovely her garden looks and she'll always say, guaranteed, it needs a good weeding. I always have to look twice at this moment but I can never seem to justify her point. Weeds???? There might be a maximum of two, if that! Life's too short to worry about one or two weeds, enjoy your garden, I say.

Presently at the Wentworth Hotel things can only be described as exciting with our new Head Chef Tim Keeble starting. Because of this, there is a big focus on the food, so what better time to start creating our very own kitchen garden. Located next to the top car park you'll find our old walled garden. I felt this

would be the perfect location for our kitchen garden. As it was originally my idea I felt it only right to be the one who makes a start on the garden. Now there's only one major downside to this, the weeds, some of which are at least four feet tall! The grounds of the Wentworth Hotel are very spacious with many beautiful flowers, plants and shrubs especially in Tiffany garden. All of these take a lot of looking after so sadly our walled garden had become the forgotten garden until now!



The Kitchen Garden

I have started work on the garden with the invaluable assistance of David Siddons our maintenance man, although work is a bit slow mainly because of how busy the hotel has been (can't really complain). I do feel however progress is happening. I've actually just spotted some soil under all the weeds. The plan is, once all the weeds are gone, to start with some herbs and then move on from there to vegetables and maybe some fruit.

David Gifford, the Head Gardener, has been advising on the best methods to tackle this project. David possesses a fountain of knowledge. His input will prove invaluable if the garden project is to be succeed. We will keep you up updated on our progress. Soon some of the ingredients on your plate will hopefully have come from only a stone's throw away.

Paul Smith
Assistant Manager

Renovations

There will be some renovation work taking place in the hotel during January. The tariffs for the month reflect this but any inconvenience will be kept to the minimum.

Four wheels or two?

On three occasions during previous months the Wentworth Hotel car park has been turned into a showcase of transport nostalgia and extravagance. First, after a successful trial run the Bentley Drivers Club visited us for a weekend in June. It was a pleasure for all to view the cars parked in the hotel grounds.



Bentley Drivers Club



VCC Rally

Second was the Veteran Car Club Rally. An enjoyable weekend was again spent by all members at the hotel and we hope to entertain the club again next year.

Third, and slightly different, is the Northampton Motorcycle Club. They visit the hotel annually for their 'ride out' luncheon. Rather than perceived as a noisy intrusion to the peaceful ambience of the hotel these vehicles are again appreciated by all when displayed in all their splendour in the car park.



Northampton Motorcycle Fellowship

Hopefully word of mouth will entail additional similar clubs to enquire about bringing their members to the hotel. It certainly brings the limelight onto our usually humble car park!!

90 years old and still going strong!

In Geneva The League of Nations was established. In Rome, Pope Benedict XV canonizes Joan of Arc as a saint. In The USA the Postal Service rules that children may not be sent via parcel post. And in Aldeburgh, Suffolk, the Pritt family assumes control of the Wentworth Hotel. All these major events happened in 1920, the last being our focus (although the fact about posting children is quite interesting!). So began a continuous thread of history which is almost unique amongst today's business world. 2010 brings about 90 years of the ownership of the Wentworth Hotel by the Pritt family.

We have often been stuck between a rock and a hard place but the Granite Anniversary is something definitely worth celebrating. The hotel has retained individuality and novelty amongst a hospitality industry encompassed by 'chain' hotels and corporate imagery. People often comment on the 'home from home' ambience generated at the hotel and this is undoubtedly the major factor behind the hotel's success, offering a recluse amongst a hectic

world. This basic premise has been retained throughout the years but the years have also seen major changes.

The hotel was acquired in 1920 by Michael's grandfather. His doctor had advised him, due to heart problems, that he should relax in the countryside and run a hotel. This advice, I'm sure, is not lost on many guests who visit the hotel for relaxation and recuperation. 16 years of reasonable health later and Michael's grandfather unfortunately did succumb to his heart problems and passed away at the age of 66. The hotel then passed to Michael's father in 1936 and then, with the onset of the war was taken over by the army to billet soldiers who were posted to Aldeburgh for training in anticipation of the forthcoming invasion. The hotel returned to hotel use in 1946.

Michael's father remained in charge until 1975, and died in 1983, aged 79. In 2010 Michael will enter his 36th year. We will not give any hints as to Michael's age but we do hope he retains the enthusiasm and emotional investment he puts in to the hotel on a daily basis, and that he remains in charge for a further ten years. And then who knows, 2020 could see a centenary celebration of single family ownership at the Wentworth – something really worth a party!

Pre Christmas Italian Wine Tasting and Dinner

Thursday 26th November 2009

An opportunity to enjoy a selection of six interesting wines matched to a selection of dishes. Hosted by Jane Macaulay from Enotria Wines, London.

£45.00 per person

25% discounted bed and breakfast terms on the 26th offered in conjunction with this event.



Music Lovers

Dates for your diary

In January, February and March 2010, the Wentworth, in conjunction with Aldeburgh Music, is sponsoring the Britten-Pears Young Artists Programme featuring a series of lunchtime chamber music concerts at the Jubilee Hall in Aldeburgh.

There are two special offers for Wentworth guests attending the concerts.

Offer 1 - Early concert lunches and free parking at the hotel.

Lunches from £10.00 **for a main course and dessert**

Offer 2 - Arrive the night before the concert and enjoy a 25% discount on the bed and breakfast terms for that night.

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| 8 Jan. <i>Solstice Quartet</i> | 12 Feb. <i>Signum Quartet</i> |
| 15 Jan. <i>Badke Quartet</i> | 26 Feb. <i>Ensemble Diderot</i> |
| 22 Jan. <i>Doric Quartet</i> | 5 Mar. <i>Piatti Quartet</i> |
| 29 Jan. <i>Doric Quartet</i> | 12 Mar. <i>Rodovsky Quartet 1</i> |
| 5 Feb. <i>En Accord</i> | |

Carol Myhill 1947-2009



It is with great sadness that we remember Carol Myhill who sadly died in a road accident on her way home from work in February this year. Carol worked at the hotel as Senior Waitress for 25 years and was a dedicated and much admired member of staff. She will be missed by staff and our guests alike.

Many guests have said that they would like to make a contribution to a fund to help a cause that would have been dear to Carol's heart. Her family would like any such contributions to go to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). Three members of the Aldeburgh lifeboat crew were first on the scene and tried valiantly to save Carol's life.

Any donations by cheque can be sent to: RNLI, Westquay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ. If you wish to donate by credit card the telephone contact number is 01451 214999. In either case please quote Supporter No. 30295584. The 'In Memory Fund' will then be used specifically by the Aldeburgh Lifeboat Branch.

Your comments are important to us

We appreciate the many positive comments we receive and they are enormously encouraging, but it is those which tell us where we are going wrong or what is not working which are the ones which we have to act upon. And our guests are best placed to tell us when something is not quite right!

Mattresses and showers were the predominant causes for comments this year. We have prematurely renewed many of our beds this year because they appeared to have not lasted the length of time they were designed to do. For some guests the beds are always going to be too soft or too hard, but with these the springs had collapsed! It is essential that our beds provide you with good nights sleep and although the mark of a true hotelier is that they are supposed to sleep in every room in the hotel to make sure everything is as it should be that is not always possible and we rely on your feedback. When the comfort of a mattress is in doubt it has to be replaced. Under normal circumstances all beds are replaced every five years when room refurbishment takes place.

Over the last 3 or 4 years we have installed showers in all the bathrooms. There has been more than a grumble or two regarding the lack of pressure from the showers on the top floor. In the last two years we have installed individually powered showers and these have been so successful and remarked upon by guests that in November we are now going to replace all the gravity showers on the top floor with similar units. Hopefully, this will be the end of dribbling showers for those for whom a shower, rather than a bath, is a must.