

Member Newsletter #3: Spring/Summer 2017

Welcome

Thank you for being a Member in 2017 and for supporting The Dartington Hall Trust as we further develop our vision of inspiring a 'many-sided-life' here – one that you can be a part of, help shape and enjoy.

In this spring/summer issue, you'll hear about our latest Member Conversations and find out about the upcoming Member activities and our key summer events here, including the official opening of the Deer Park in July, and Summer School concerts in August.

At this time of year, our Gardens need lots of care to look their best, and we hope you might consider responding to our Grounds and Gardens appeal to keep them looking special for all to enjoy.

As always, we love hearing from you and welcome your feedback. This way we can continue to improve our communication and do our best to incorporate content and events around your interests. Email membership@dartington.org at any time.

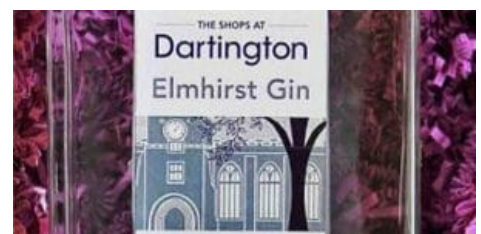
Thank you.

In this newsletter:

History booklet on Dartington now on sale. If you had to convey a historical appreciation of Dartington in 72 pages, what stories would you choose? Would they mirror the rich archive of letters, reports, photographs and artefacts contained in our new publication: 'A history of Dartington Hall in twenty-three moments'?



New Elmhirst Gin captures spirit of the Estate. Created using ingredients from the Dartington Hall Estate, this gin combines the flavour of juniper with a carefully selected range of botanicals and subtle undertones of freshly picked rosemary and will launch at this year's Food Fair.



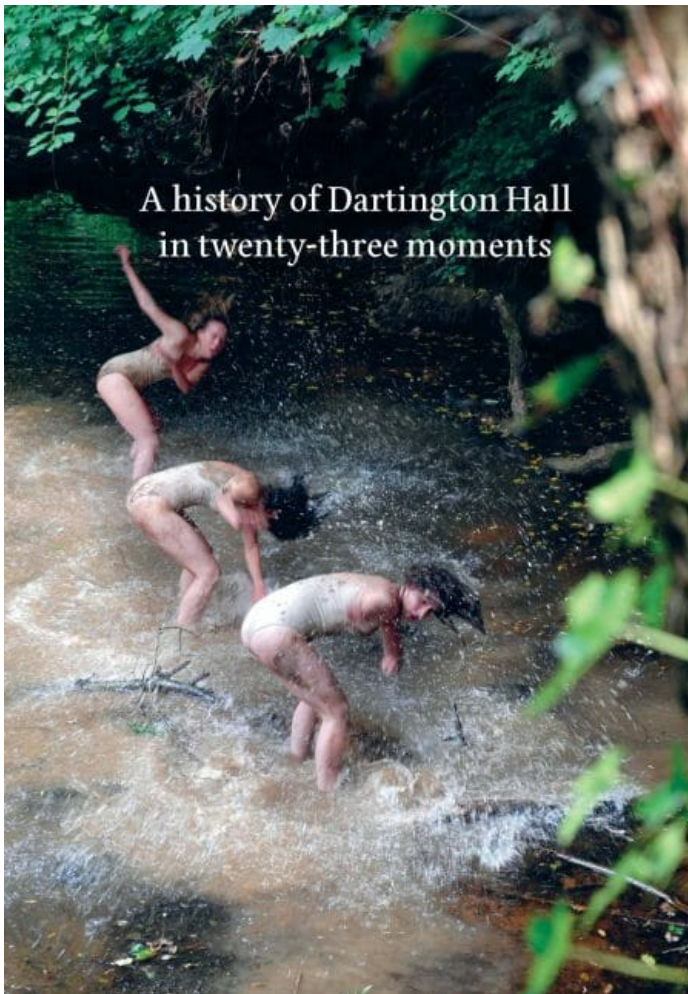
Upcoming Member Conversations and Events to look out for.

Including Member-only events like our Summer Drinks in our brand-new café, The Green Table, plus all the key dates you need to know in our packed summer programme.



History booklet on Dartington now on sale

A trip down memory lane – with a difference



The Dartington Hall Estate goes back as far as the Iron Age and on through Medieval mists of time, with royal connections a-plenty, and then with a significant period of 20th century development to the current day. Love, intrigue, derring-do – we've had it all.

But if you had to convey a historical appreciation of Dartington in 72 pages, what stories would you choose? Would they mirror the rich archive of letters, reports, photographs and artefacts contained in our new publication: 'A history of Dartington Hall in twenty-three moments'?

Compiled and designed for the Trust by **Kevin Mount**, this new booklet conveys 'the spectacular coincidence of desires, aspirations and resources on which today's Dartington Hall was founded, and tries to give a flavour of the energy and ambition still needed to drive its work forward'. It also effectively illustrates the many-sidedness of Dartington that continues to develop and enrich lives today.

While not sparing some of the more gruesome exploits and political machinations of The Middle Ages, the mainstay of the

book covers the Elmhirst era onwards. The arrival of Dorothy and Leonard is described as ‘the equivalent of a thunderbolt, looping over from New York high society and introducing into a broken local economy an explosion of creative thinking and an astonishing plume of ready cash’.

Some of the other gems you’ll find within:

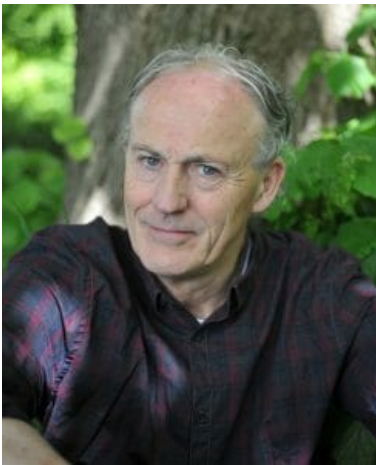
‘There was intrigue as well as high drama at the Hall in April 1930, when through the entrance archway, side by side, walked the great bass singer and civil rights activist Paul Robeson and a trio of rising West End stars – Peggy Ashcroft, Sybil Thorndike and Ralph Richardson’

Of Michael (Lord) Young, a pupil of Dartington Hall School: ‘Some say he played a major role in preparing the 1945 election manifesto, others that he wrote it single-handedly at Dartington on a diet of tomato soup’

On garden design: ‘The cobbled perimeter Courtyard path, hard on bare feet and high heels, might look as if it belongs to the same antique period as the quadrangle of buildings it connects. It is actually of American design and as modern as the dollars that paid for it’

Of the ‘Great White’ flowering cherry tree: ‘A former head gardener, Graham Gammin, likes to tell the topsy-turvy story of the rediscovery of the Tai Haku cherry and of his own encounter with mysterious coincidence in a geisha house in 1995’

Kevin Mount is a freelance writer and print designer with arts clients including the poet Alice Oswald, Wayne McGregor, Garry Fabian Miller and Stevie Wishart.



During the decade before 2010, he ran the writing-design practice, DeMo, under the umbrella of Dartington Social Research Unit, and in partnership with the ex-Pentagram designer Julie Depledge.

Clients during that period included Dartington College of Arts, The Dartington Hall Trust, and many organisations involved in implementing and evaluating social policy and social care.

- www.kevinmount.co.uk

On sale now!

You can buy this book at the Visitor Centre, The Shops at Dartington, and Totnes Bookshop for £4.50 (inclusive of your member discount of 10%).

New Elmhirst Gin captures spirit of the Estate

We’re very excited to tell you that we will be launching our very own Elmhirst Gin at the Dartington Food Fair (28-29 May) this weekend!



The gin has been created using ingredients from the Dartington Hall Estate, combining the flavour of juniper with a carefully selected range of botanicals and subtle undertones of freshly picked rosemary – hinting towards the history of Dartington Hall and capturing our pioneering spirit.

The new gin will be crafted in small batches in the Devon Distillery's 'Still on the Move'; a mobile Italian copper still. Members will be able to watch the distilling process on the Sunday morning of the Food Fair (28 May).

The honorary Elmhirst Gin will afterwards be available to buy from The Shops at Dartington as a bottle with glass stopper or gift box complete with a Dartington Copa glass. Members can benefit from their 10% discount, too.

Help us keep the Grounds and Gardens looking stunning this summer



Your donations are vital in supporting our conservation work on the estate, and keeping this special place beautifully cared for and open for everyone to enjoy.

£5 buys a perennial plant or some bulbs, giving colour to the gardens year round

£25 pays for a bird box, for blue tits, sparrows and robins to nest

£100 buys and plants a specimen tree, adding diversity to the gardens

There are various donation boxes located on the estate, or you can donate online [here](#). (Thank you.)

Upcoming Member Conversations and Events to look out for:

- **Summer Drinks at The Green Table**
- **July: Barista Training**
- **August: Member Conversation and workshop with Michael Honor – Printmaker and Artist**
- **September (TBC): Annual Members Meeting**

Other dates for your diary

- Food Fair at The Shops, Sunday 28, Monday 29 May. [Find out more →](#)
- Community Day, Thursday 1 June. [Find out more →](#)
- Ways With Words, 7-17 July. [Find out more →](#)
- Deer Park – join us for the official opening of the Deer Park, 27 July. [Find out more →](#)
- Campsite set to open early summer. [Find out more →](#)
- Summer School throughout August: this year Members get an exclusive 10% off all 5.15pm and 10pm concerts. [Find out more →](#)



Plus: Invitation to our Schumacher community lunches

Members are warmly invited along to our informal fortnightly Schumacher College help-yourself lunches (Wednesdays) in the run-up to summer. Come and be a part of these wonderful feasts in the company of many of our staff, volunteers, business and residential tenants.

Choose from the following or attend all three!

- 14 June
- 28 June
- 5 July

Lunch is served at 1pm sharp in the dining room at Higher Close at the top of the estate. Food is organic and vegetarian/vegan with gluten-free options available.

How to book

Please email our chef direct: ruth.rae@schumachercollege.org.uk at least 24 hours in advance to secure your place as

numbers are limited. Please also include any dietary requirements.

£5 payable on the door. Bon appétit!

Sample menu from May:

Lentil and lemon soup (GF and V)
Tomato and basil salad (GF and V)
Hummus (GF and V)
Tzatziki (GF)
Green salad (GF and V)
Rustic bread (V)
Pistachio Baklava or fresh fruit

Member interview: Carole and Alan Rolfe

Three interesting things about you

We enjoy meeting people and the simple pleasures in life such as birdsong, sunshine through leaves and fragrant plants.

[OK, that's more than three, but who's counting]

Dartington Hall Trust / Estate in three words

Tranquil hidden gem.

Favourite place on the estate (and why)?

Sitting by the Twelve Apostles looking across towards the reclining figure of Henry Moore. It's a timeless and peaceful scene.

Favourite event/s on the Dartington calendar (and why)?

Summer concerts in the Great Hall: wonderful acoustics, top class performers and a perfect setting at affordable prices.

How long a Member and what made you decide to join?

Been Members for some years now and we wanted to give something back to Dartington as it gives us so much pleasure.

A memory of Dartington worth sharing with us?

Seeing our little grandsons from Australia enjoying the freedom and space while playing in the Tiltyard, chasing a rabbit. Always brings a smile to our faces.

Dartington is an inspiring place, an antidote to the fearful world we live in. We think of it as spiritual medicine.

Dartington is keen to create a 'many-sided life' here. What does that mean to you personally?

Encouraging the involvement of all the senses and creative abilities in a natural environment.

If Dartington were a work of art, what would it be (and why)?

It would be the Henry Moore statue - beautiful and accessible.

Are there any ways in which you'd like to get more involved with Dartington?

(Carole) I'd like to be a contributing artist, representing Dartington in fused glass.

Ideas for future Member events?

You already do such a varied range but reviving a maypole dance with schoolchildren would be lovely and perhaps more poetry events with Members participating with their own efforts. In fact, anything that involves fun and creativity.

Could this be you?

We are always on the lookout for Members with interesting stories to tell, memories they can share about Dartington in the past or thoughts about Dartington present and future. If this sounds like you, please get in touch and let us know why! Email membership@dartington.org



Our Living Community – conservation projects

We are busy working hard on our conservation projects across the Estate, and here are just some of the exciting things we're getting up to behind the scenes:

→ [Helping the wildlife thrive at Berryman's Marsh](#)

→ Repairs and conservation of the stunning Deer Park wall and footpaths, with school programmes and volunteers engaging with the project, with [work underway on new interpretation and an official opening scheduled for July](#)

→ Plans are afoot in reinstating seven hectares of Queen's Marsh field as a wetland and also to reduce some of the potential future flood risk. This will involve digging out two ponds, seven [scrapes](#) and regrading the bank of the Bidwell Brook. [Read more about the project here](#)

Member Conversation Review

Biodynamics and shared memories, featuring Wendy E Cook

As expected, there was a full house at the Member Conversation in February to hear speaker, author and biodynamics

devotee Wendy E Cook, who also just happens to have been the first wife of comic genius Peter Cook.

Wendy's colourful dialogue took Members back to a time of growing up in post-war Britain and onto the dawn of a new and exciting era from the late 1950s. They were treated to stories of her idyllic yet underprivileged upbringing, where her multi-talented mother introduced her to the joys of gardening, art and music. Wendy went on to study Theatre Design and Illustration at Cambridge, which she described as 'the place where the creatives gathered and where jazz was born'. It was here she met Peter Cook, and life took a new direction. She summed up the courtship in this one charming statement: "He made me laugh, I made him dinner".

Wendy recalled the days when Peter's career took off with the stage performance of 'Beyond the Fringe'. The 22-year-old from 'the cabbage fields', as she humorously described herself, was suddenly travelling across the Atlantic with Dudley Moore, Alan Bennett and Jonathan Miller, mixing with the likes of Bobby Kennedy and hosting dinner parties for some of popular culture's greats, including John Lennon and Paul McCartney.

After spending the best part of their marriage in the limelight, during which Wendy became a mother twice over, she and Peter divorced and she took to a quiet life in Majorca, redeveloping old ruins and rediscovering her roots. It was the illness of one of her daughters that led Wendy to study and understand deeper aspects of nutrition and how different foods impact our human health and consciousness, as described in her book 'Foodwise'.

Wendy's inspirational life came full circle, following several years studying Steiner and helping to run the kitchens at Schumacher College. She now works closely with Huxhams Cross Farm just up from the Dartington Hall Estate, and is passionate about organic farming to biodynamic principles. After sampling her very own hazelnut sablés at post-event drinks, Members were left with a taste for so much more.

Copies of her books 'Foodwise' and 'The Biodynamic Food & Cook Book' are available to buy at the Visitor Centre.

Reviewers needed! Would you like to get involved in writing up short reports of events you've been to that you think other Members would like to know about? Contact membership@dartington.org if you're interested and we'll be in touch.



Wendy E Cook: one of her favourite portraits of self

Member Conversation Review

Stories about wool and other yarns, featuring Dawn Riggs

A small group of Members were treated to a talk and demonstration at the Craft Centre at The Shops at Dartington in March by wool merchant Dawn Riggs. Her delightfully stacked shop is an absolute wonderland for wool lovers.

From a very young age when she first learnt to knit, Dawn's craft has been the continuous thread in her life. "I can't honestly remember learning to knit," she shares. "I was just two when I learnt the garter stitch. It's so ingrained that I could quite easily nod off now whilst knitting." Dawn recalled times at school when she would crochet garments and sell them to friends. She enjoyed the freedom of organic patterns and continued to stitch and knit throughout her childhood.

Her hobby soon became her career path, when as a married mother of three she came across a magazine article on fleece, and her interest in the production of natural fibres began.

Her first Ashford spinning wheel was a 10th anniversary present, and enabled her to do demonstrations at primary schools, where she would teach the history of spinning and how to spin. She became an expert in the natural fibres of cotton, silk, linen and wool, and gave popular talks across local



education centres called 'The Threads of Time'.

As part of her demonstration, Members were shown how to card wool into a rolag [a roll], to spin using both a drop spindle and a spinning wheel, and to ply into various size yarns.

Dawn spoke of the history of wool production and how she only deals with natural fibres in her store, recognising the environmental benefits of working with flax, hemp and nettle for fibres. Dawn has herself grown cotton bulbs and flax, and even bred silk worms to gather the fibres for spinning.

We highly recommend a visit to Dawn's shop 'The Wool Merchant' in The Shops at Dartington's Craft Centre where creative inspiration can be found in abundance.



In April, Mary Bartlett regaled Members with stories about her three passions in life: gardening, unicorns and bookbinding. Here she is giving a tour of her bindery on the Dartington Hall estate and talking about her diverse work and the books she has written and hand printed. Mary's fascinating association with Dartington started in September 1963 as a student on a horticultural training scheme.

Spotlight on Dartington

- Listen to [coverage by the BBC R4 Open Country programme](#), when Helen Mark came to the Dartington Hall Estate to find out about 'the extraordinary history, present and future of a movement and community inspired by the landscape of Dartington'.
- The Guardian [tapped into our 'Tiny House' project with Plymouth University students](#), which was built earlier this year out of recyclable materials from the Estate
- [The Times' coverage of Dartington's summer outdoor cinema](#) set to pop up at Bovey Castle in June

Disclaimer: Dartington is not responsible for views and opinions expressed therein nor for associated content on the webpages they sit on.

Would you like to volunteer with us?

We are currently looking for volunteers to join us across many areas, particularly during the busy summer period. [Browse our current list of volunteer opportunities here](#) and contact us if you feel able to help.

Dartington

An **old place**
with a **new story**

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**“Dartington is not one thing,
but a complex unity of activities.”**

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