

Members 2020 Winter Newsletter

SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM THE DARTINGTON MEMBERSHIP TEAM!

WE hope this finds you well as we move into the new Tier 2 restrictions, and adapt once again to changes in our day-to-day lives. Here on the Dartington Estate we are open throughout December, offering our members a festive place to eat, drink, walk, talk and make merry, albeit slightly differently this year.

You'll find the medieval Courtyard aglow and looking rather lovely each evening, and whilst adhering to the new government restrictions on indoor mixing for households and support bubbles, we'll be offering White Hart evening suppers, sit down Sunday Roasts plus takeaway mulled wine and mince pies too! See all of our opening / serving times, menus and offers online.

You'll be pleased to note that The Green Table will continue to offer their incredibly popular fresh-frozen dinners takeaway service, and The Shops at Dartington has re-opened its store doors for all of your festive gift shopping needs.

There's also been lots of work happening on the learning front too, and we're very pleased to report that the estate is once again home to a vibrant learning community. The rebirth of Dartington Arts School, some key changes at Schumacher College and a burgeoning short course programme have made quite a difference this year. In September 75 students joined us to study at postgraduate level, while we anticipate a further 50 on programmes beginning in January 2021. This is quite an increase from the previous year, and you can really feel the place buzzing with the curiosity and energy of student life now!

WELCOMING OUR ASSOCIATE
DIRECTOR OF WINE, JUSTIN
HOWARD-SNEYD MW.



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MEET OUR CONSERVATION
AND LAND MANAGER,
RAFAEL POMPA



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An update on our Member Sessions

WE recently held our third series of member sessions with the directors, which took place online. We were able to share our plans and provide members with some reassuring updates, including the wonderful news that we have been registered under the Office for Students. This enables UK students to access full government loans to study with us, which has greatly impacted our intake.

We've also been able to provide some encouraging news about our on-site businesses which, despite the adaptations we've faced with hospitality restrictions of late, are all moving forward into better financial stability. We are in no doubt that this is mainly thanks to the fantastic support we've received from our members and locals who have continued to support us during this period, be that through membership, a kind donation, a regular Green Table takeaway or a pot of chutney from the shops - we thank you!

We are working on plans to restore our many buildings, and have some great new ventures ahead for next year, including opening an Art Gallery and a Spring Festival that will draw on craft, art and music interests.

"The member sessions have been a great source of feedback for us, and it's been wonderful to see so many members engage and care deeply about the estate."

Alan Boldon, Managing Director, Dartington Trust

We are also refurbishing the Totnes bookshop as a shopfront for the Trust, serving as a box office, where you will be able to buy tickets, membership and also books.

In other news, Research in Practice - a key pillar of Dartington Trust's social justice activity - is going from strength to strength. We deliver services in the social care sector and now work with 80% of local authorities in England - working with a wide range of organisations to enable them to access, understand and apply evidence in their work with children and families, young people and adults.

We will continue to run these popular member sessions online via zoom, sharing the latest latest news and engaging in conversations with you, our members.

The next series of sessions will run in January and February, and if you'd like to get these first-hand updates, you can book online now.



Wine takes centre stage



MEET our Associate Director of Wine at Dartington, Justin Howard-Sneyd MW.

Together with academic staff he will initially be developing a new programme of short courses in culture, history and appreciation of wine as well as 'Taste and Talk' events with leading figures from the industry, including wine writer Oz Clarke.

There are also plans that some of Justin's work will contribute to our new Sustainable Food and Farming undergraduate degree, being launched by Schumacher College next year, with some experimental wine production.

The programme is and will be the first undergraduate degree in the UK to offer agricultural education with crops and livestock, developed around sustainable principles.

“Wine is not just about biology and chemistry but how it interfaces with humans and with culture, you just have to look back through history to see how wine is deeply woven into our lives,” said Justin.

Justin has spent nearly three decades working in every aspect of the wine industry from cellar-hand and assistant winemaker to wine-buying for leading supermarkets and consulting for some of London's finest restaurants.

Since 2007, Justin has produced his own wine (www.domaineofthebee.com) from four hectares of vines in the Roussillon region of the South of France, near the village of Maury.

Five years ago he also launched his own, gold medal winning English sparkling wine – Hart of Gold.

Justin has been a consultant for a number of businesses around the world including the Masala World Group, which has some of London's leading Indian restaurants in its stable including the Michelin-starred Amaya Bar and Grill.

He currently heads up the Global Advisory Panel for the Global Wine Database and sits on the Council of the Institute of Masters of Wine.

He is also a founding partner and director of The BIB Wine Company Ltd, which sells organic and sustainable wine.

Events & Offers

WHILST many of our short courses this season have had to be postponed, we've developed an online offering around arts, movement, wellness and health, to continue to bring you new learning opportunities to take part in during these isolated winter months, and you'll find that your 10% members discount is available on many of these courses and they could make for a great gift too.

LANDSCAPE PAINTING WITH ANTHONY GARRATT (ONLINE)

1, 8, 15 December; 6:30pm
Join internationally-renowned landscape painter Anthony Garratt for five fabulous art classes, live from our Shippon Art Studios.



EARTH TALK: JOURNEY

9 Dec. Ultrarunner Lizzy Hawker presents the story of a journey along the Great Himalaya Trail: beautiful, rough, hard and unforgettable...

ENGLISH WINES TASTE & TALK WITH OZ CLARKE

10 Dec. 7pm, Great Hall.
Join us as we launch our new wine programme with an evening with one of Britain's most popular wine writers and broadcasters, Oz Clarke.



DECEMBER B&B OFFER



We realise that the 20% off accommodation offer didn't get to see the light of day last month, so you'll be pleased to hear that we've extended it throughout December (excluding Christmas weekend). Now's the time to grab a bargain, and book your festive stay in one of our beautiful courtyard rooms. There are also some optional extras to really enhance your stay, including: a bottle of organic Prosecco on arrival, festive feasts in the White Hart and late Sunday checkout with a delicious roast.

We've just enabled your 10% member discount on our new click and collect service! Use the code MEMBENEFIT when ordering online, and cap off a crisp Sunday stomp on the estate with a superlative roast with all the trimmings, prepared fresh and served hot by Arri and the White Hart team. (Plus, your member benefit is also available on frozen dinners from The Green Table)

CLICK AND COLLECT ON SUNDAY ROASTS



FESTIVE DINING



We are taking bookings for festive dining at the White Hart in December for groups of up to six people who share a household / support bubble (as per Tier 2 guidelines). The menu is packed full of locally sourced, seasonal favourites and Christmas flavours. Book online now and get your 10% members discount to sweeten the season cheer!

Gardens Focus

NOW that the trees are bare and wildlife burrowed, the gardens team have set to work on the preparation for spring, planting bulbs in the wild meadow which will provide bursts of colour next year. Repairs are being made to some of our more accessible tracks that will enable buggies and wheelchairs to reach even more areas of the gardens, and the team are busily preparing ahead of the re-opening of the listed gardens to the public next spring.



From Mexico City to Dartington: Meeting Rafael Pompa

RAFAEL Pompa was born in the most urban of environments, in Mexico city, but he always knew his future lay closer to nature. Earlier this year, he took on the role as Gardens, Conservation and Land Manager at Dartington Trust and he is passionate about what the unique landscape can offer. "I am interested in the relationship between people and nature together here at Dartington. I would like people to see the land as the meeting point of all our different elements. "This landscape provides a context for the arts, education and social justice - for all our learning. It is like the glue for me. It is the canvas on which we work."

Raf or Rafa, as he is known, says he knew the role would be challenging but overseeing such a diverse landscape of 1,200 acres with a small but dedicated team is not always easy. The estate is made up of woodland, riverside, marshes, farmland as well as the historic listed gardens all which have very different requirements.

To add to the challenge, he has had a baptism of fire, coping with colleagues on furlough during lockdown and ever-changing Covid-19 regulations.

"It is hard for people to appreciate just how much work goes on behind the scenes. It's complicated and there is always a new problem that needs attention.

"We always have to consider the balance between public access here on the estate and protecting the natural environment."

He grew up surrounded by a densely urban landscape and 9 million neighbours in the vibrant Mexico City. Little wonder, that he took every opportunity to explore the wildlife around him and often going camping or hiking.

"I was always drawn to forests and mountains and jungles - that's where I was happy because I felt I was part of something bigger. He studied biology at university and wrote his dissertation on how people in forested

environments use their natural resources. He then did a diploma in community-based forestry and a master's degree in forest ecology and management based in indigenous communities.

Before taking up his latest role he was part of the facilities team at Schumacher College. Now he is working hard to manage a full-time job, a young family and trying to find time to complete his PhD in ecology and agri-environmental research.

In all his work forestry is a common thread but he is fascinated by the human engagement with trees and woodland, and with nature in general.

"Often traditional forestry is looking at things like timber production and extraction but I am also interested in the other services the forest can provide like carbon capture, habitat provision, soil conservation, as well as cultural benefits such as aesthetic appreciation, symbolic meaning, and educational value of the land. I would like to help breaking the barriers between areas like forestry and agriculture that traditionally have been conceived as separated activities. "

It's really looking at the value of the landscape as a social-ecological system, and value the benefits that society receive from conserving nature. "The Marshes are a good example. They play a crucial role to prevent flooding and support wildlife habitat, which are very important in a world with a changing climate. But also pandemics, which are the result of habitat loss, deforestation and climate change.

When pushed to name his favourite places on the estate he hesitates, knowing that some of the best places are the quiet ones rarely visited, rather than the more obvious visually striking places.

"I like to visit North Woods because I like being in forests but my favourite places are the higher points like Aller Park or Peek Plantation where you get to see the landscape and the relationship of everything together and you realise what a special place this is."

by Andrea Kuhn

Other News

NEW FACULTY LECTURERS

At Dartington Arts School we're delighted to welcome two respected artists, Dr Jo Joelson of London Fieldworks, and Dr Tine Bech, who will teach on the MA Arts and Place course. Also joining us to teach on programmes at Schumacher College are Dr Sarah Elisa Kelly, who will teach on the new Engaged Ecology MA, while Dr Troy Vine works on our prestigious MSc Holistic Science programme.

HEX AND GYM RE-OPENS

our Hex and Gym building has re-opened its doors to serve as a temporary learning environment for two special needs schools. Bidwell Brook in Dartington and Ellen Tinkham School and College in Exeter were in need of a spacious and adaptable location to continue their face-to-face teaching through the COVID months.

KEVICC POP-UP EXHIBIT AT BOOKSHOP

Refurbishment is soon to be underway at the Totnes Bookshop and we encourage you to pop by and see the brilliant arts exhibition by KEVICCs students and take a peek at the emerging talent we have on our doorstep. The shop will re-open in the spring and alongside books, will also have a box office and be a space to host events.

We're supporting Food in the Community

Food in the Community on the Dartington Estate aims to reduce food waste, poverty and social isolation and was originally set up to redistribute short-date or surplus produce from local businesses.

More recently it has been given a government grant to buy food from local producers who have lost custom as a result of the hospitality industry being placed into lockdown.

The group based at School Farm organises volunteers to collect and re-distribute unwanted fruit, vegetables and other fresh food from local producers, which has also included Schumacher College.

In the last eight months they have repurposed around one and a half tons of food every week, much of which would have otherwise been composted, ploughed in or fed to animals.

The food boxes are delivered to households, charities, foodbanks, statutory services and Covid-19 support groups across South Devon, who are delivering food parcels or hot food to people in need.

David Markson, co-director of Food in Community on Dartington Estate, launched Food in Community

with Laurel Ellis eight years ago after he moved to Devon to take a course in sustainable horticulture.

"I remember looking around and seeing that there was really good quality food that was going to waste and I felt there was something that could be done about it."



"We have experienced a really significant increase in demand," said David. "What's really nice is that recipients often become volunteers too and therefore receive produce as a big thank you for their great help in helping others, a sort of virtuous circle."

Gift Membership

There's no better time to think outside of the box this Christmas, and consider the gift of memberships for your loved ones. In a time when we all need to look after our health and mental wellbeing, Dartington offers the space, community and creativity to really lift people's spirits!

www.dartington.org/whats-on/info/gift-vouchers

