

Autumn 2010

Newsletter

Welcome to the autumn 2010 edition of the Wentworth Hotel Newsletter. We have features on changes and improvements at the hotel, seasonal offerings over the next few months, events and developments in the Aldeburgh area – and most importantly of all, lots of reasons to entice you to come and visit us soon!

Our sole aim, based on the hotel's sense of continuity and tradition, is to make sure we're ready to offer you the warmest possible welcome and make your stay comfortable and enjoyable.

I look forward to your next visit to the Wentworth.

Michael Pritt
Proprietor

We've tried to include in the Newsletter as many details as we can about upcoming offers and events – our Christmas lunches, dinner dances, festive welcome, shopping breaks, lunchtime concert packages, wine tastings, long weekend breaks.

Of course you don't have to come and see us for a special break – you can just visit us to relax and enjoy the area. Our three open fires offer warmth and cosiness from the outside elements. And chef will spare you the trouble of cooking by providing hearty and mouth watering food in our candlelit restaurant. Whatever you choose to do, it's going to be a busy winter and I do hope, on behalf of all the staff here at the Wentworth, that we'll be seeing you very soon.

James Green
Hotel Manager

Christmas at the Wentworth

This year we're offering the warmest possible welcome right through the Christmas period:

- * Every day throughout December, for just £4.50 per person, **mulled wine and home made mince pies** by our open fires in the lounges and snug bar;
- * From December 8th, Emma, our Head Receptionist, will have at least 3 beautifully decorated Christmas trees in place in the hotel.
- * From Friday December 10th, a **special traditional two- or three-course Christmas turkey lunch** in the restaurant, lounges and the bar: from £11.95 for two courses, or from £15.95 for three.
- * **Special Festive Lunches** in the restaurant on Thursday December 16th and Tuesday December 21st – from £23.50 per person for a delicious three-course Christmas lunch with coffee, crackers and festive novelties, also including mulled wine on arrival and a pianist playing throughout.
- * **Christmas Dinner Dances** on Friday December 10th, Saturday 11th, Thursday 16th, Friday 17th and Saturday 18th. On the Friday and Saturday evenings, the price of £29.95 a person includes a three-course dinner, with coffee, crackers, novelties and dancing till midnight; on the Thursday night the price will be £25.00 per person. The dinner dances offer a special wine list ranging in price from £14.50 to £28.95 – and a fine Champagne for £38.50. **And we're offering 40% off our normal bed and breakfast prices on all these evenings for dinner dance ticket holders.**

Wine Tasting Dinner

We're holding a special Wine Tasting evening on Thursday November 4th, starting at 7.00pm. Simon Richards, wine buyer at Adnams, and special guest Albane Beaunieux will join us for an evening of great food, wine and lively company. Albane works with the great wine maker Jean-Marc Brocard – www.brocard.fr – in the Chablis region of France, and she will be providing first hand expert knowledge of wine making in that wonderful area. A four course meal will be accompanied by suitable wines, and then coffee to get one's wits back! Tickets as always will sell out quickly. Please make reservations at reception - £47.50 per head.

Special accommodation offer for guests attending the Wine Tasting Dinner: 25% reduction on Bed and Breakfast terms for the Thursday night.



Christmas Shopping Breaks

Two nights at the hotel from just £127 per person including dinner....

Thinking of doing some Christmas shopping in Aldeburgh? Don't forget the town boasts one of the country's very best independent bookshops – The Aldeburgh Bookshop; a wonderful traditional department store – O&C Butcher; a fine range of art galleries, antique shops, chemists and food shops (including national deli of the year 2010 Lawson's Delicatessen) for the discerning; Palmer & Burnett for a great selection of soft furnishings; Moo Moos for household, jewellery, gifts and cards; the only branch of Jack Wills in Suffolk, Musto, Crew, Joules, Fat Face, Quba & Co and other excellent clothes and sports shops, two specialist jewellers, Alde River Pine for a large selection of furniture and gifts – and of course there are plenty of opportunities to rest your feet over a coffee, a meal, or a drink. The range of household, kitchen, clothing and antique shops at Snape, clustered around the famous Matlings concert hall, is a short drive away. One of the best plant nurseries for miles around – The Walled Garden – is only a few miles up the road. The Aldeburgh Christmas lights are being switched on with all the town's delightful festive decorations on Friday November 26th. Does that sound better than fighting your way through the crowds in our big cities?

THE OFFER

Stay with us on a Sunday and Monday night between November 21st and December 20th and our Christmas shopping break offer represents an extra 10% discount on our two-night break rate!

Lunchtime Concerts

Next year the hotel will be sponsoring a special season of Lunchtime Concerts, every Friday from January 14th. All the concerts will be at Aldeburgh's Jubilee Hall (original home of the Music Festival) starting at 12.15pm - and the hotel is offering special concert lunches, for from £10 each for a main course and dessert. Main course choices range from pan fried lamb's liver to Wentworth fishcakes, and there's a delicious selection of starters and desserts. And if you stay in the hotel on the Thursday night before the concert, we are offering 25% off the normal bed and breakfast rate. Lunch bookings in advance are highly advisable – do phone us on 01728 452312 for your reservation.

Winter Special Lunches

Why not also visit us for our Winter Special lunches – a main course and dessert are offered for from £10; a three course meal from only £14. Choices include our much-loved liver and bacon with creamy mash, or poached fillet of salmon with traditional hollandaise sauce. Evening dining is priced from £16.50 for two courses and from £22.00 for three – and our Sunday Night Special is from just £14.40 for three courses (booking is highly recommended!)

5 Night Midweek Breaks - save up to £152

Sometimes a short break isn't quite enough – do you know that feeling? We have a solution – arrive at the hotel any time in November or December on a Sunday evening, stay for five nights, departing the following Friday, and you can take advantage of a 15% reduction on the usual two-night break terms, including full English breakfast and dinner. This can save as much as £152 per room!

Stretch Your Weekend!



Weekend Breaks have a whole new meaning at the Wentworth; the traditional constraints of having to arrive on a Friday and leave on a Sunday are a thing of the past. Our new Flexi-Break rate means you can choose to stretch your weekend to run from Thursday to Sunday, or from Friday to Monday. Or even Thursday to Monday, if you want. If you have the flexibility, we can match it! Room rates for these extra nights start at just £105 per night for a standard inland double room, with two people sharing, including full English breakfast and dinner.

January 14th
The Barbirolli String Quartet;

January 21 & 28:
The Lawson Piano Trio;

February 4 & 11:
The Finzi String Quartet;

February 18 & 25:
The Sigum String Quartet;

March 4 & 11:
The Badke String Quartet;

March 18:
The Prince Consort;
(vocal ensemble);

March 25 and April 1:
The Elias String Quartet;



Notes and Jottings

It's easy to recall the special charms and qualities of the Wentworth:

- Its continuity – not many hotels have the benefit of being in the same family since the early 1920s and can enjoy a continuous tradition of care and attention;
- Its position - sitting elegantly on the edge of Aldeburgh, with the town a two-minute walk in one direction, the sea two minutes to the front and the clear stretch of beach to Thorpeness to the north;
- The quality of its restaurant – two AA rosettes and an AA guide recommendation: "the smart dining room is a beacon of excellence locally.... Seasonal changes and local suppliers keep the food fresh and interesting on daily-changing menus."
- The binoculars in the sea-view rooms, the comfort and space of the lounges with their comfortable sofas and chairs (many a guest has been unable to resist a short post lunch nap!), the quality of the décor and the fresh flowers and paintings; the copy of Kathleen Hale's Orlando the Marmalade Cat (who took his seaside holiday in "Owlbarrow" (Aldeburgh)) in every room.
- The recommendation from the AA: "this reassuringly traditional hotel exudes a real sense of quality and retains the charm of a private residence. It overlooks the beach at



the quiet end of town, and has three stylish lounges and a cocktail bar in addition to the dining room with superb sea views."

- The courtyard garden attached to Darfield House, on the inland side of the hotel – and the Gallery in Darfield House in which the Aldeburgh Festival was planned through its early years;
- The quality of its improvements and refurbishments, from the impeccable, stylish downstairs loos to the decorative standards of the bedrooms;
- The engaging, modern design of the Tiffany Garden;
- The delightful history, symbolised by the pile of hardback copies on the reception desk of Joyce Grenfell's Letters from Aldeburgh, capturing her love of the town and its festival, and her friendships with Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears: "*I do love this town and the music festival. Everyone is concerned in the goings on, and there is the sea, and yesterday the sun shone.*"

What's new for 2011

Michael Pritt writes:

Several improvement projects are all intended to keep the Wentworth as Aldeburgh's favourite hotel.

A two stage kitchen upgrade is in hand so that Tim Keeble and his team can continue to produce the quality of cooking which our guests have come to expect. In the first stage this year, the plate wash and pot wash departments will be stripped out and redesigned. **It will be necessary to close the hotel from January 3rd, reopening January 8th, to complete this vital upgrade.**

The present **Reception desk**, which dates back as far as the late 1920's, and which has been chopped about over the years, will move over to make way for a new desk not too dissimilar, but which will take up less of the hotel entrance.

The **Reception area** is also due for an overhaul. Nothing drastic – there will be new wall paper, a new carpet, and a little well judged repositioning of furniture, with one or two new pieces added. The downstairs area has a special feel to it, and we want to be able to continue to showcase our collection of Guy Gladwell paintings, including the wonderful boat painting by Guy on the end wall of the bar corridor (pictured); but we have more of his work, showing off his range of styles and subjects, from Aldeburgh beach to Langan's Brasserie in London.

The Conservatory section of the Garden lounge will also be refurbished. This room has to be adaptable and easy to change for different occasions, so the challenge is to find light but comfortable furniture which can be used for relaxing in and watching the world go by, or can be used in equal comfort to enjoy a delicious bar lunch.

As I really dislike throwing away furniture that still has many years of life left, the existing wicker furniture, ideal for a conservatory at home, will be available to anyone who is prepared to make a reasonable donation to the charity of our choice.

And nor are we stopping downstairs! **Bedroom Corridors** should be part of an adventure and with the help of Renaldo Jones, design advisor to the hotel since 1987, we have found a re-coloured 1880s William Morris style wall paper by C.F.A. Voysey – one of the all-time greats of Arts & Crafts design – which we think will give the bedroom corridors the feel of a featured part of the hotel.



Earlier this year another 5 bedrooms were refurbished. Two of them are larger superior rooms (8 and 38), another is a standard sea view room (26), and the other two are standard inland rooms (11 and 27). January 2011 will see another 4 rooms undergoing refurbishment.

Wind Farm

Take a look out to sea from the Conservatory lounge during the day and you will see a hive of shipping activity; and similarly in the evening the horizon is lit up with dozens of lights. What's happening out there!? Ships waiting to go into Felixstowe, Lowestoft or Harwich?

No – it's the construction site for Greater Gabbard, which will be the world's largest offshore wind farm, built at a cost of about £1.5 billion. No less than 140 wind turbines are being erected about 23 kilometres off the coast of Suffolk. The first turbines are due to be completed and commissioned in late 2010 and the whole site is scheduled to be up and running in 2012.

The site will create enough power for over half a million homes. Or no power at all if there is no wind!

The onshore element of the windfarm site is interesting in itself – archaeological work has been in hand ahead of the heavy building required near Sizewell and has uncovered evidence of 12th to 14th century habitation.

Remains of timber buildings and three large external ovens have come to light in Rosary Field, Sizewell, which might have been a farmstead. An apparent barn building was 16 metres long and 5 wide with a clay floor.

Toast!

Hardly anything on a hotel menu causes more controversy than toast. No matter how good the rest of the breakfast, guests worldwide of all kinds of hotel from the ultra-luxurious to the very basic feel very, very strongly about their morning toast.

So many things can be wrong: too cold, too soggy, too dry, too dark, too light, too nasty, too not quite right. Many a kitchen capable of perfect eggs Benedict every time has tripped up on the tricky hurdle of pleasing guests' exacting requirements for toast just the way they like it. Thousands of pounds have been wasted on the latest conveyor belt kitchen technology.

So - this year we have installed the solution; courtesy of the John Lewis kitchen department, a four-slice red Dualit pop up toaster now sits proudly in the dining room, ready to make your toast just the way you like it.

This is the best – it even has a trade-name registered Peek&Pop function, which enables you to check progress without interrupting the toasting process.

What could be better?

Another example of our unique blend of traditional excellence with modern technology....

And on a more general note we do encourage our guests to let us know their opinions on all aspects of the hotel. Of course we can't guarantee to act on every single suggestion – but we will certainly take every idea seriously. Your opinions matter to us!



There were climatic changes happening at the time (does this sound familiar?); rising sea levels and coastal erosion were causing problems. Medieval Sizewell was being lost to the sea, with Leiston becoming a safer site for the population.

Another major find has been the remains of an early medieval boat. It had been broken up sometime between the 12th and 14th centuries and parts of the hull were re-used to line a well. The boat was built using the same techniques as the famous Sutton Hoo ships. Wool fibres seem to have been used to seal the gaps between the planks.

Lights offshore – funny how they lead you into modern technology, threats from climate change and coastal erosion, and ancient boat-building techniques.



Tiffany Outdoors and In

Built in 2006, the Tiffany Garden is now a mature, attractive feature at the Thorpeness end of the hotel. Before, it was a windy, square of unappealing garden; now, it is an asset for guests to enjoy. It is a plant lovers' delight, a sheltered refuge full of plants chosen specifically by David Gifford, our plantsman, to be able to tolerate the East coast climate and the poor Aldeburgh soil, which consists mostly of sand and gravel.

Designer Norman Perry of A Touch of Grass (whose company is now to be found on the Notcutts Garden Centre site in Woodbridge) turned an unpromising site into an enjoyable place to go when the weather allows for an alfresco lunch or a Wentworth cream tea; he marked out areas with hefty posts of French oak – visual punctuation marks, which are now weathering into a silky grey colour. Even in the depths of winter, the posts are a striking feature.

In the centre of the Garden is a delightful sunken lawn bordered by lavender and which is surprisingly sheltered from the (in)famous North Sea winds, and catches the eye of passers by as well as hotel residents.

And just inside the hotel, at the end of the main restaurant and overlooking the garden, is a charming private room, which can seat up to 22 guests. Provided there are 16 or more guests, there is no extra charge for use of the room, and of course the menu for any meal can be tailored to your individual requests.

