



WENTWORTH

HOTEL AND RESTAURANT

Aldeburgh

E S T A 1 9 2 0 S H E D

UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF THE PRITT FAMILY FOR THREE GENERATIONS

Welcome to this Autumn/Winter edition of the Wentworth Hotel newsletter. You may notice some changes compared with previous years. The principle one being that this edition is larger than usual but will be the only newsletter this side of Christmas. It contains our news and rates from October until the end of March and includes Easter which in 2009, returns to April. This should give you plenty of time to make your plans for coming to Suffolk in the New Year.

Pleading writers block, I assigned to James Green, Duty Manager and Emma Sitch, Head Receptionist the task of producing this letter. Emma describes life from her side of

the Reception desk and James describes some of what we've been up to in the last twelve months.

Despite the disappointing weather and the financial turmoil which affects us all, Aldeburgh has been as busy as ever and business at the Wentworth has been brisk. What lies ahead though is anybody's guess. On a more optimistic note it is a little early to wish you all a Merry Christmas but I will all the same and I can certainly express a hope that for all of us 2009 will bring a return of stability to all our lives.

I and all the staff look forward to welcoming you back to Aldeburgh and the Wentworth Hotel.

Michael Pritt

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 16th & 18th - £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 12th, 13th, 18th*, 19th & 20th
£27.50 per person (*£25.00 per person).

Hotel Closure!

We are closing for one night on January 8th 2009 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 11.00am on January 8th until 9.00am on 9th January.



WINE TASTINGS

Thursday 13th November - £27.50 per person – Wine tasting and lunch.

An informal, but tutored, tasting with an opportunity for guests to enjoy suitable wines for Christmas and New Year accompanied by a three course lunch.

Thursday 27th November - £45.00 per person – Wine tasting and dinner.

An opportunity to enjoy a selection of six interesting wine matched to a selection of dishes. Hosted by Steve Parsons, senior wine buyer for Adnams wines.

Adnams will offer a discounted case price for wines selected by guests on both occasions.

25% discounted bed and breakfast terms will be offered in conjunction with each event.



Wartime Memories of the Wentworth

My first visit to the Wentworth was during World War II. I was serving as a sapper in the Royal Engineers 79th Armoured Division and was posted to Aldeburgh in the winter/spring of 1943/1944 and billeted in the Wentworth. I was 23 years old.

It was the stage of the war where plans were being made for landings on the mainland of Europe and the Royal Engineers were training units in this area in tank warfare to enable the heavily fortified German controlled European coastline known as the 'Atlantic Wall' to be successfully breached and successful landings made in France. The tanks were to break through the concrete and metal fortifications to clear the way for the following soldiers.

I remember arriving at Aldeburgh Railway Station never having been to Aldeburgh before. The Wentworth housed about 200 hundred soldiers. The building was completely empty (apart from the soldiers) with bare floor boards. There was no furniture whatsoever and it bore no resemblance to a hotel! My sleeping quarters were in a room on the first floor fairly near the top of the stairs which three of us shared (very near, if not actually, room 5 where I stayed during this year). We made our own beds from whatever was available; mine was four pieces of timber with hessian sacking stretched across like a hammock. Time has dimmed the memory of the layout of the hotel rooms but I do remember that there were areas to which we were not allowed access. The army also used a large house on the opposite side of the road to Wentworth for offices and more living quarters which is still there next to Darfield House.

I remember soon after I arrived a familiar faces appeared around the door. It was a chap who I had served with on my previous posting who had also been transferred to tank training.

Army cooks prepared the meals which we ate at tables. We carried our own plates and cutlery in our kit and washed them after the meal in a tin bath. Reveille as at 6-30 am immediately followed by PT exercises in the on the road between the hotel and what is now the car park before breakfast; there was no traffic! There was barbed wire on the beach and we never ventured there.

Days were spent training on and maintaining the heavy adapted Churchill tanks which were parked on the land opposite Aldeburgh Golf Club. There were about 20 tanks and we either went up there on foot or were taken up by army vehicles. The tanks were fitted with a petard which when fired was capable of shattering concrete. The cabin was small, not for the claustrophobic! We had to keep the tanks in good working order and serviced as we knew we had to depend on them. In the early days we had no anti-freeze so the tanks engines had to be kept going over night to stop them freezing in cold weather. We had a rota to do the night shift to keep the engines going.

We drove our tanks over to Orford which was known as the Orford Battle Area where a replica of the 'Atlantic Wall' had been built and practiced manoeuvres. There were six of us in the tank crew. In my tank the driver was from the Royal Armoured Corps and was from Prestatyn, I was the co-driver. I remember once when there was a mechanical problem with our tank we were late back to the Wentworth and the army cooks had locked up and gone. We were lucky enough to find the (still famous) fish and chip shop in Aldeburgh open and we had fish and chips and this good meal sticks in my mind.

The owner of the cinema put a film on for us and some of the locals one evening but I cannot remember which film we saw and I also remember going to the Mill Inn occasionally for a beer. There were a lot of army personnel in Aldeburgh but I remember that not many of the shops were open. We went to the parish church for Sunday morning service every week.

We knew we were being trained as the front line advance into Europe and were expecting to be part of the D-Day landings however because of logistical problems we were delayed. About three weeks after D-Day we drove our tanks to a railway sidings near Snape and then drove them one by one onto a long tank transporter train. A difficult exercise as the track to the transporter was very narrow and an inch over the edge of the track could have been catastrophic. We were assisted in this by staff from the Railway Company. The tank transporter took us to the south coast, a landing craft and the beaches of Normandy. I remember arriving in France and seeing green through the glass. It was the sea; we were 4'5" under water briefly before emerging onto the beach. Fortunately our maintenance training in Aldeburgh had paid off and the tank's seals held! We went on through France crossing the Rhine eventually ending up in Hamburg at the end of the war, but that is another story!

My next visit to the Wentworth was in very different circumstances as a hotel guest over 25 years later and I have returned many times since. Every time I have visited the memories of those wartime days of bare floor boards and no furniture have come flooding back!

Philip Arnold
Cheshire – July 2008

MY IDEA OF HOTEL HEAVEN



I had been in limbo for some time, searching for a place to feel at ease and be at peace at long last. The unknowing nebulous was starting to numb me and a choice had to be made. Flames had long been licking eagerly at my feet, waiting to devour me should I make the wrong decisions. In contrast a shining light beckoned me from afar, requiring only a momentary leap of faith to reach it. I approached the gates with a touch of trepidation. A hyperbole of feelings enveloped me, both fear and excitement being paramount.

Slowly I pushed open the portal-like entrance to reveal a glimpse of the world beyond - a time warp portraying warmth and embracement in a world of frostiness and detachment.

A jovial figure greeted me, a brilliant shining light emanating from it's head. We talked for a while, about the world he existed in and the world I had come from. They were similar but here was somehow different. I felt a belonging and homely feel that I had been devoid of previously. There was however, I sensed, a higher power at work. The decision to my eventual sentencing would be made by someone else. My fate would be in his hands.

The man with the wispy grey hair smiled wryly as I stood before his throne. He knew the kingdom he presided over was good and only those deserving would be welcomed here. I awaited my destiny, the flames or the light - this sovereign would decide.....

Well I have now worked for Michael Pritt for a year and contentment has been reached. His

undoubting charm and wit guide you with an unwavering focus. There are odd moments that disrupt our (I think I can say 'our' now) haven but these are soon remedied. Those who have already been welcomed and accepted have already had the mystical magic of the hotel bestow its mark upon you. Those who have not yet been please come and let Michael, Jolyon, myself and all the staff welcome you to the Wentworth Hotel - our piece of heaven in a world of madness.

James Green

Renovations

There will 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.

Food for thought.....



Graham, Head Chef & Skipper Chris Wightman

As chefs attempt to appease the newly found ethical consciousness of the general public certain words or phrases now appear regularly on menus. "Corn-fed", "Fair-trade", "Free-range" and other similar descriptors have become 'buzz' terms, and are now a staple pre-requisite of any reputable restaurant.

People not only want to know where the food on their plate has come from but moreover that it has been reared in good conditions, fed the correct feed, and caught or slaughtered in a humane way.

At the Wentworth Hotel sourcing such produce is paramount, and locally of course. But members of the kitchen brigade have gone one step further and recently embarked on two separate trips to witness first-hand where our fish and pork respectively originate from.

It is no mean feat to stir Graham, the head chef, from his slumber. So a 4.30am start for a fishing trip is an excellent indication of Graham's dedication to sourcing the freshest and local produce. With Jun, chef de partie, a willing accomplice, Graham set out on a trip with 'Maximus Sustainable Fishing' run independently by the Wightman family.

Sustainable incorporates stock, not necessarily fish, that is maintained at a constant level despite produce being caught in that area. The eco-system of the area must not also be threatenend. Thus the fishing area is carefully selected to ensure fish is in abundance. Long line is a method of fishing where the line has been specially adapted to avoid catching threatened species such as seabirds and other marine life. This is usually done by attaching coloured 'scare tapes' to the hooks. Both practices are duly employed by Maximus.

So 18 miles off the coast of Lowestoft Graham was going green – ecologically and literally!



Chef Jun with tonight's supper

10 hours were spent diligently exploring how exactly the fish reaches the hotel from our suppliers. "It is important for me to source the best local produce", says Graham, "But to follow the fish from hook to plate is something special". Indeed Graham and Jun both claimed catches of some skate and cod, and some lovely sea bass that found its way onto the Wentworth Hotel's menu the very same evening – you can't get fresher than that!

The second trip was to Dinley Dell Farm near Wickham Market. Four of the brigade went on this trip. It is a family owned farm specialising in breeding and rearing welfare friendly and local pork. The farm is situated in the Deben



Spot the Chef!

Valley and the breeding sites provide piglets all year round. The sows exhibit natural behaviour and are fed on natural cereal based diets. The piglets are weaned at 5 weeks and then moved to the nursery. This is more of a 'play area' where the piglets have an abundance of space to play and eat in.

The equally important element is the taste and this is one of the primary reasons the Wentworth Hotel continues to source its pork from the farm. The farm uses a breed of pig which has consistently shown in meat eating trials to produce the best eating experience when crossed with other breeds. Pigs produced using a balance of Duroc genetics have more intramuscular fat or marbling which adds to the flavour. Dingley Dell Pork contains 25% Duroc in the final carcass. Factors at farm level include nutrition, health and a stress free environment. All Dingley Dell pigs are fed a natural cereal based diet and are bred grown and finished outdoors. All these factors contribute to ensuring guests at the Wentworth Hotel receive the finest pork – ethically bred and an excellent taste.

Graham and the brigade returned more informed of the source behind the pork they cook on an almost daily bases. Graham said "The trip to the farm has really changed my perception of free range – these pigs live in ideal conditions and hopefully this is offset against a superior taste for people tasting the pork dishes."

The trips have inspired the kitchen team and they endeavour to consistently provide the best produce sourced in a ethical manner. Trips to Brancaster (for mussels) and ensuring our game is humanely caught could soon be on the horizon!

Music Lovers

Dates for your diary

In January, February and March 2009, 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.

Concert offer No 1

Early concert lunches and free parking at the hotel.

Main course £9.95.

Each additional course 3.95

Concert offer No 2

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

2009 Friday Lunchtime Concerts

January: 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th

February: 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th

March: 6th, 13th

SPECIAL EMAIL OFFERS – BE THE FIRST TO KNOW!

Apart from the special offers contained within this newsletter there are many occasions throughout the year when it is possible to offer last minute special offers. Because they are last minute they can only be communicated to you by email. If you are not on our email list you will not be able to take advantage of them. Don't miss out!

If you would like to be kept informed of any email last minute offers just go to our website www.wentworth-aldeburgh.com click on "Special Offers" and enter your email address.

Your comments are important to us

We do listen to what you say and whenever possible and practical we do something. Recent examples of this are installing air conditioning in two bedrooms which in the summer can become uncomfortably warm. Even this last summer! In the winter the same units will also heat the room. Another frequent comment was regarding the rope banister on the main stairs. Many guests commented that it did not provide the support they needed. As a result this rope has now been replaced by a sturdy wrought iron banister made in Aldeburgh by Peggs. Televisions are also beginning to appear in your comments as perhaps being not the latest models! As a result autumn will see the phasing in of new flat screen sets. We had been installing these in newly renovated rooms but this process will now be accelerated.

There are always ways in which we can make your stay at the Wentworth more enjoyable and comfortable. We do appreciate constructive comments and although not all your suggestions can be complied with, that does not mean we are not listening to you.



Tastes of the sea and raising the stakes (vegetarian ones!)

A new summer heralded a new seafood menu, bringing extra dishes to an already excellent selection. Throughout the summer lobster, crab & oysters crawled their way onto the lunch and evening menus. The seafood section led to Coast Magazine visiting the hotel to sample the menu. "Obviously ocean fresh" and "possibly the best sea bass I've ever tasted" are certainly quotes that mean the new menu is a qualified success.

As the autumn and winter seasons are upon us whole skate wing and steamed Brancaster mussels will feature as will regular dishes such as baked fillet of monkfish with sweet chilli jam and whole Dover sole. Feedback from guests has certainly been positive. A whole section of the menu devoted to seafood has given the chance for many more guests to sample the dishes. The lobster and crab are just a stones throw away from Aldeburgh beach to our kitchen, ready to be put on the menu the same night.

The vegetarian menu has also been revitalised. With a little help from the internet, cookery books and vegetarian food lovers the content of dishes has been elevated. The Wentworth recognises the popularity of vegetarian food amongst all diners and now offers two different choices on the menu each night.

On duty in reception



On January 2nd 2009 I will have been at the Wentworth 13 years! I hadn't planned to stay that long but things change and you never know what's round the corner! At school, when struggling to find a career, I told my patient careers advisor I wanted to be a builder. I didn't want to do this at all but being at an all girl's school I wanted to shock her and be different from the norm! I had hoped to go to

catering college but failed maths a miserable three times. (Funnily enough calculating End of Day and solving the problem if we don't balance is now one of my favourite parts of the job!) Instead I went to agricultural college and followed my main passion – conservation and outdoor life. The exact title of my course was Rural Resource Management – a very posh name for a little bit of everything! And it did cover many areas including agriculture, conservation, leisure & business management. I learnt to drive

tractors, use chainsaws, make cement, build cross country jumps for the equine department, dig out ponds and hedge laying. I can still remember some of the Latin names for trees. From here I worked as a Summer Warden for the National Trust on the North Norfolk Coast and also as a Countryside Warden for Suffolk County Council. I also did some voluntary work for Suffolk Wildlife Trust and was a soil sampler for an agricultural firm. That's when I saw the advertisement for a Hotel Receptionist at the Wentworth. No previous experience was required as "on the job" training would be provided. After two interviews I was offered the position and began work on 2nd January 2006.

Reception is sometimes perceived as an easy job always sitting down and drinking tea. Not so! There are four receptionists in our team. Each day one receptionist is on duty from 7.30am until 3.30pm then another takes over from 3.30pm until 11.30pm. We also have a receptionist covering the middle shift from 9.00am until 5.00pm. Reception is the hub of the hotel. We take reservations for rooms and meals, answer all kinds of questions, act as go betweens between guests and guests, guests and staff, staff & staff. We are expected to know everything about our guests even though we've never met some of them, for example, "how do you expect me to climb two flights of stairs when I've just had an operation for a hip replacement!" We deal with all sorts on the phone, most very nice, some not so nice. We look after all the money, balance the books, daily, ensure special requests for anniversaries or diets reach the right person. We are expected to know where everything is and who's doing what. We are "secretaries" for managers, chefs and any other member of staff who wants something typed out. We have to cajole some guests into writing us a letter or email of confirmation even when, with great indignation they swear blind that they have never been asked to do this before! Michael's answer to this is "tell them we can't guarantee their booking then" and guess what - the next day a confirmation letter comes!

On answering the telephone during my first week at the hotel, I was asked by a guest who I was and how long I had been there (at the hotel). Having answered the questions and before we had got as far as discussing the reservation enquiry, the reply came back "put me on to someone who knows what they are talking about." This guest still visits the hotel on a regular basis and I often smile to myself when I recollect our initial conversation.

The evening shift receptionist has to do the "Sleep In". We have accommodation with in the hotel. The telephones are put through to the duty receptionist's room in case there should be an emergency during the night. During the sleep in we also have to come downstairs if the fire alarms or the burglar alarms are activated. With the fire alarms, thankfully it has always been a false alarm. But we still have to call the fire brigade and evacuate the hotel much to the disgust of some guests!. The burglar alarms are usually activated by guests coming in late at night and going into the lounges. You may even have passed a sleepy-looking receptionist in her pyjamas hurrying downstairs as you are going back up to bed.

On one occasion I was called in the early hours of a very wet and windy night because a gutter was over flowing and the water was being blown against the bedroom window. The guest was quite insistent that this should be rectified as soon as possible. In the end I rang Michael at home and he drove in to help me. At 4.00am we had to unlock the office, find the keys to the lock up, fetch a ladder, carry it across to the hotel, and climb up the fire escape on to the flat roof hauling the ladder with us. I stood at the bottom of the ladder while Michael cleared out the gutter much of whose contents fell onto me! I was then back on duty at 7.30am.

So next time you pick up the phone to speak to us or come to the desk be gentle; you've no idea what we might have been up to the night before!

Emma Sith, Head Receptionist