

The Pensthorpe Post

Issue No 9

closer to nature

Summer 2008

Celebrating 20 years!



Bill Jordan, Professor David Bellamy, HRH the Duke of Edinburgh

A Royal Visit

On 13th April His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh unveiled a plaque to celebrate 20 years of nature conservation in the Wensum Valley. Prince Philip returned 20 years after his first visit on 20th July 1988 to officially open Pensthorpe. So much has changed since then. Pensthorpe has developed into an incredible and formidable force for nature and species conservation with an international reputation. So how did this little part of Norfolk change from gravel pit to internationally respected reserve?



Corncrake Conservation

Conservation

The vision for Pensthorpe was that of former owner Bill Makins. Throughout the gravel extraction period (from the mid 70's to the late 80's) Bill envisaged an 'ecologically led landscape'. Islands, gently sloping banks and varying depths were developed and Pensthorpe's unique character was created. Bill's passion for waterfowl led to the formation of the Pensthorpe Waterfowl Trust and of course the opening of Pensthorpe in July 1988. Aviaries allowed the

exhibition of exotic species such as the striking scarlet ibis and gave visitors a chance to have close-up views of native species such as ruffs, avocets and reedlings. The Pensthorpe Conservation Trust was formed in January 2003 to continue the work of the Pensthorpe Waterfowl Trust focusing on a wider range of issues.

The Trust is now involved with projects such as the Nene Washes Corncrake Release Programme, the Great Crane Project. The Trust is also working on a Red Squirrel programme as well as working with organisations worldwide to help conserve some of our most threatened species.

The Pensthorpe Conservation Centre was opened in May 2007 and is now home to the Cranery with eight of the world's fifteen crane species being represented.

Teamwork

The recent visit by Prince Philip was a great opportunity to recognise and celebrate the achievements here at Pensthorpe of all those people who have supported or worked at the Reserve since its establishment. Pensthorpe helped ensure that this section of the Wensum Valley was transformed from gravel workings into the beautiful and biodiverse site that it is today.

The team here at Pensthorpe have helped to ensure that visitors to Norfolk are able to see some incredible wildlife habitats as well as providing something stimulating for children, gardeners and those wanting to stretch their legs in this peaceful and unspoilt area.



Simon, Bill and Kate

Springwatch

What better way to celebrate our 20th Anniversary than to welcome BBC Springwatch to Pensthorpe. Springwatch presenter Bill Oddie had earlier commented that "Pensthorpe is an amazing place with its combination of good things to see and do as well as wonderful conservation projects going on behind the scenes. I'm thrilled that it is to be the new home of Springwatch."

Find out more over the page.

A pictorial history of Pensthorpe



1946 Aerial View



Gravel Workings 70's and 80's



The Grand Opening July 1988



Commemorating the Millennium



Pensthorpe Conservation Trust



Conservation Grade Farming



Pensthorpe 2008

Springwatch

Bill Oddie and his co-presenter Kate Humble will be based at Pensthorpe for the duration of the Springwatch show which begins on 26th May. As Deb Jordan says "this is great news for Pensthorpe and Norfolk which is the UK's premier bird watching destination.

We are working closely with the Springwatch team to ensure that the best of the Wensum Valley's natural world is revealed to a national TV audience."



Butterfly Garden in the early 90's



The Wave Garden 2008

Gardens

The Butterfly Garden was created for the opening of Pensthorpe in 1988. The Garden was designed to encourage butterflies and insects and has been enjoyed by tens of thousands of visitors ever since.

Pensthorpe's new Head Gardener Imogen plans to further encourage wildlife into the garden and has begun a 'gardening with nature' project, which will include planting more insect loving plants such

as *echinacea* and *sedum*.

The Millennium Garden came 12 years later. Designed by Piet Oudolf and each spring it bursts into life, peaking in the summer and ending with a delightful autumnal seed head phase.

The Wave Garden was opened in 2006. This is a shaded woodland garden designed by Julie Toll to work with nature. It is now maturing into a year round showcase of native plants and brings light and colour into this serene lakeside area.



Find a quiet spot

There may be a lot going on here at Pensthorpe, but you don't have to walk far to discover a peaceful spot to enjoy the beautiful Wensum Valley. Pensthorpe is lucky to have a large range of habitats including wildflower meadows, marshland, ancient woodland and wetlands. Pensthorpe is a great place for photographers and bird watchers, head into one of the bird hides and see such delights as a marsh harrier or perhaps even a kingfisher.

Education

Bringing our visitors closer to nature has always been important, and over the past two decades Pensthorpe has introduced hundreds of thousands of people (and also 1000's of school children) to this beautiful part of Norfolk.

In 2005 the Wensum Discovery Tour began, this Landrover Tour has wowed visitors with its in depth look at the natural history of the Wensum Valley. Join the Wensum Discovery Tour and find out the story of the land and the people who lived here from the Bronze Age. You might even spot some prehistoric creatures who once roamed this area!



The Bug Walk 2008



Our Jean

Jean has looked after us at Pensthorpe for 20 years and has seen all the incredible changes. "Pensthorpe has been my second home for all these years and I have loved every minute of it!" One of Jean's favourite areas has always been the gardens.

Dates for the Diary

23rd, 24th and 25th August

Mediaeval Spectacular
Bigger and better than ever, relive mediaeval Britain and experience a magical journey through time:

26th July, 31st August, 14th September, 25th October, 15th November,

13th December Bird Identification

Discover how to distinguish our native species and visiting migratory birds on Gary's fun and informative walks around the reserve.

Adults £14, Children £9.

29th October, 2 walks - 10am and 1.30pm

Fungi Foray

Take a look into the under growth and the wonderful world of fungi with local expert Dr

Tony Leech. Included within reserve admission price.

6th September, 11.15am or 2.15pm Farm Tours

Join Bill Jordan as he explains the benefits of Conservation Grade Farming on a Land Rover tour around our farm.

Adults £4.75, Children: £3.75.

1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd October, 10am-4pm Photography Workshops

Join expert Mike Powles and learn how to get the best from your camera in these inspiring one day workshops. £60 per person per workshop including light lunch and refreshments.

HOW TO BOOK:

Course places are limited. To reserve your place and avoid disappointment please call Kirsty on 01328 851465 or to find out more information please **visit our website** www.pensthorpe.com

Watch out for more news from Pensthorpe in our next newsletter. Don't leave it too long to come and see us, as you've read there's a lot going on.

Keep up to date with all that's happening at Pensthorpe by visiting www.pensthorpe.com

Pensthorpe Nature Reserve and Gardens, Fakenham, Norfolk NR21 0LN Tel: 01328 851465

Please note, information may change without prior notice. Printed on 100% recycled paper.