



COWDRAY

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2017



WELCOME

Welcome to the Summer 2017 newsletter. We hope the newsletter shows the scope and diversity of our activities at Cowdray which many visitors will enjoy over the summer months.

Whilst Cowdray is both our home and a business, we aspire to ensure that all our activities are managed in a sustainable and environmentally responsible manner ensuring that we can pass on the Estate in the same or better condition than when it was passed to us. Our approach to sustainable management, which is a key objective in all we do, is highlighted in the newsletter.

We are fortunate to welcome many visitors to Cowdray over the summer, and we very much hope this will be an uplifting experience underpinned by our commitment to sustainability, the environment and, health and wellbeing.

Lord & Lady Cowdray

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A PROFESSIONAL POLO PLAYER

James Harper is a well-known local figure at Cowdray Park. Aged 37, he is a professional player who as a youngster was equally good at rugby. He chose polo because of his love of horses and has since competed at all levels of the sport including at international level representing England. 'Harps' will be playing this summer in the world-famous Jaeger-LeCoultre Gold Cup for the British Open Polo Championship taking place at Cowdray Park. He was born and bred in West Sussex and lives with his wife, Shannon, and sons Wills and Jack in Midhurst.



James's year: "January sees me mostly overseas. Although it's a treat to miss the English winter, it's not much fun leaving the family at home. However, in January this year, I captained the England team in the FIP Snow Polo in Tianjin, China, where I had the chance to catch up with best mate John Fisher who I have known since we were about 12 and playing Pony Club polo – he at Cowdray, and myself at Goodwood PC. John is doing a fantastic job as Director of Stable Operations and Deputy General Manager of Polo at the Tianjin Metropolitan Polo Club.

"In early February I captained England in the test match against New Zealand. It was a real shame that we were beaten by one goal in the closing seconds. Then I played the New Zealand Open, filling in for Thomas Hunt who had broken his collar bone. Like many other English players, I have spent numerous winters in New Zealand. It's where many players buy horses and bring them on to become the polo ponies we will play or sell during the English season. At the end of February I moved on to Australia to play for Ellerston in New South Wales.

"March is the time when the English pros begin to head back to the UK for the season at home. Polo ponies get turned out at the close of the English season in September and in March are brought back into work, first being clipped and shod, introduced to their working diets, and then gently started on road or track work. I returned to the UK for a week in April to do the first ride on all of my own and my son Wills' horses. We have 18 in work this season and rising! The first chukkas of the season start in April when you will see Cowdray spring into life once again. However, this year I had to head to Argentina for ten days to join my El Remanso team-mates and get in some solid practice for the coming high goal season.

"During May everyone begins to get excited about the forthcoming high goal tournaments and we enjoy eyeing up the other teams and players taking part. I'm delighted to be playing in the El Remanso side once again. I will also be playing 8 goal with Wills and some 12 and 15 goal with James Beim. As Beimy and I are playing in the high goal together too, we might just be bored of each other by the end of the season...

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“By June everyone is getting excited about the forthcoming Jaeger-LeCoultre Gold Cup which is played for the British Open Polo Championship. Many people simply don't realise that we have the 'Jewel in the Crown' of British polo played here at Cowdray Park through June and July. The British Open ranks alongside the Argentine Open and USA Open in world significance and the fabulous Gold Cup is the trophy every player dreams of lifting at some time in his career. Last year the Britannia El Remanso side, made up of four English professionals - Charlie Hanbury, Ollie Cudmore, James Beim and myself, made it to the Quarter Finals where, unfortunately, we were defeated by the Championship's ultimate winners King Power Foxes. In 2017, we are playing together once again and know each other's strengths and capabilities well. Hopefully we will again enjoy support from the local crowd as the team is based at Manor Farm, opposite the Ambersham polo grounds.

“Once the high goal circus has moved on to Spain, polo at Cowdray continues to be almost as busy but with a

smaller audience. Three very popular HPA tournaments which are open to non-domestic teams follow the Gold Cup and attract a great many entries. Over one weekend in August we play three finals and six subsidiary finals – hectic, but with a lovely mid-summer feel. If I'm not playing, I'm certainly watching with family and friends. There is plenty of polo right through into September, when the weather is often calm and pleasant. Then, we are into the last few tournaments which lead to the final day of the season in late September. Wills had the thrill of being chosen Cowdray's Most Improved Young Player last season, winning the Pimms Cup, a proud day for his parents!

“The plan in late September is to return to Australia to keep looking for more horses but I will also be helping out with the World Cup that the Australians are hosting. Hopefully I'll be home for December to spend some much-needed down time away from polo with my family - or we could be going back to New Zealand to help with the South Island polo scene. Let's see.....!”

*Previous page: The victorious Britannia El Remanso side in the 2016 Argentine Ambassadors Cup; James in action for Las Estrellas
This page: James and son Wills, James receiving a prize from The Argentine Ambassador; James taps in a goal*



COWDRAY - A GREAT PLACE TO PLAY

Good health and wellbeing underline the Cowdray ethos and a whole range of leisure activities are available to both local residents and visitors alike.

Clay Pigeon Shooting



Clay pigeon shooting can be enjoyed by all age groups and at any time of the year. Simon O'Leary and Benita Wright of Hownhall Shooting have recently taken over Cowdray's Shooting School, and, with a passion for the sport and a 'hands-on' approach, they aim to deliver a memorable and fun day out for both newcomers and those who already have some experience.

Located high on Verdley Hill with stunning views towards the Downs, the shooting school takes full advantage of its woodland setting through the changing seasons. Simulated driven game shooting experiences are a major attraction using the Deer Park and five other drives, including Cocking chalk pit in the 'off'-season, offering a truly interesting variety of terrains.

Children's tuition encompasses not just the practical side but also gives a steer on etiquette and discipline. Lessons for young people can be held at the shooting grounds or taken out to schools. Women, who now form 38% of the sport's growth, are well catered for. Simon and Benita's practical assistance also extends to helping their clients be correctly dressed, and in every way they aim to give clients a superb experience and the desire to come back.

Fly Fishing



Fly fishing is offered on the River Rother during the season from April to September. The river is stocked regularly with brown trout and there is a healthy population of wild fish. A range of passes can be bought from taster sessions, lessons and day passes to season membership for individuals or small fishing groups.

Yoga & Pilates



Yoga and pilates are held at Cowdray Hall alongside inspirational workshops, other weekly classes and special events. Cowdray Hall is central to the Cowdray ethos of health and wellbeing and offers a haven of tranquillity for a diverse range of classes which focus on all areas of self-development.

Wildlife Tours



Guided wildlife tours over the Cowdray Estate are the perfect way for visitors to appreciate the wealth of wildlife to be seen within the stunning South Downs National Park. The walks, some taking place at dusk, take around three hours and start from Cowdray Golf Club. Barry Martin, the Estate's Ranger, knows every inch of the terrain and is able to guide you to the best viewing spots to see different species of deer, badger, foxes, hare, and a huge variety of birdlife including buzzards and owls. Peace and quiet, fresh air and moderate exercise combine to offer what can only be described as total outdoor therapy.

With hundreds of miles of footpaths criss-crossing the Estate, walking is available to all, but for the more energetic the undulating terrain is excellent for both power-walking and running. What are you waiting for?

“Peace and quiet, fresh air and moderate exercise combine to offer what can only be described as total outdoor therapy.”

Bear Grylls Survival Academy



The **Bear Grylls Survival Academy** launched at Cowdray in March and offers the ultimate in outdoor experiences for adults and children with an appetite for adventure. Bear says: "The Estate has everything - woodland, rivers, lakes and plenty of rugged terrain. It's just perfect for the Bear Grylls experience."

His team of highly trained instructors offer both a Family Survival Course and a more intensive Adult Course. The Family Course steers mums, dads and children through the challenge of surviving outdoors for 24 hours and includes building a shelter, learning how to build and light a fire, foraging for food, knife skills, water purification, extreme weather survival, how to navigate at night and how to tackle river crossings. The final challenge is to put their new-found skills into action by crossing difficult terrain to find their way back to 'civilisation'.



The Adult Survival Course is a more intense experience and includes life-saving skills. Students are first taught how to build emergency shelters and protect themselves from danger in the wild. With limited water and food rations, they have to source food and water within the terrain and are taught how to lay traps, and skin and gut the animals they catch. Survival knife skills, wilderness first aid, fire lighting and rope techniques such as knots and harnesses are all part of the programme. Learning how to be resourceful and to remain calm under pressure are taught as key elements of extreme survival.

Golf



Cowdray Golf Club has panoramic views to the South Downs and boasts a challenging course of 6,331 yards over undulating fairways and greens. The course was laid out at the beginning of the last century and parts of its stunning terrain cover parkland originally designed by the famous landscape architect Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. Light soils and good drainage enable year-round play.

A significant programme of tree planting and landscaping in recent times has enhanced the experience for players and the club's practice facilities are first class with a 5-hole Academy course and a recently refurbished driving range – home to the club's dedicated teaching professionals Matt Watson and Hannah Ralph. The club welcomes groups and societies and high on the list of events for 2017 is the Cowdray Pro Am taking place on 18th June - likely to be the biggest in Sussex - with the Shooting Star Children's Hospice nominated as the charity to benefit from the day.

Women's golf is a hot topic in the world of UK golf with various initiatives in place to increase participation. Here at Cowdray, we have a well-established Ladies section which has been complemented by an influx of new members taking up the game under Hannah Ralph's expert eye. Hannah runs weekly clinics and the club is also hosting introductory 9-hole games on certain Saturdays throughout the spring and summer to encourage lady players. Keenly aware that today's youngsters will form the backbone of the club in future years, a positive drive is also in place to deliver coaching to juniors of all abilities, building on good relationships with the local schools.

Polo Academy



Cowdray Park Polo Academy welcomes everyone from experienced riders to beginners. If you think polo might be your thing, or you have an adventurous youngster keen to take a swing with a polo mallet, get in touch with Cowdray's registered coach Guy Verdon. Guy has played polo for over 30 years and coached all over the world including Argentina, New Zealand, the USA, Spain, Dubai and Brunei for the past 15.



The Academy offers tuition from just one hour to a week on horseback. Half and full day discovery sessions include stick work, polo style riding and 'stick and balling'. Private or group lessons are offered and the Academy aims to take new players to instructional chukkas after just ten hours of private lessons. The instructional chukka programme creates a game scenario with professional players playing alongside to explain, guide and create moves. Once safe, students progress to club games on Cowdray pitches thereby creating a platform for new players to step into the very heart of the sport at one of the finest clubs in the country.

Bespoke corporate days are great team building exercises and can be extended into an afternoon watching the professional end of the sport on Cowdray Park's famous polo grounds, giving everyone from complete novices to those with some riding proficiency an experience to remember.

Visit www.cowdray.co.uk for details of all leisure opportunities at Cowdray.



COWDRAY
ESTATE

Sustainability on the Cowdray Estate



“Sustainability is an often misused and misunderstood word; however, at Cowdray it represents an ideology and philosophy which guides all we do.”

We are privileged to manage an iconic part of the South Downs. However, our mission will always be to manage the land for the benefit of future generations so that we can hand it over in better condition than we found it. As such, decisions we make today will heavily influence the land for future generations.

Sustainability is therefore a fundamental part of our decision-making process as overseen by Lord Cowdray who is both committed to and focussed on ensuring the Estate is an exemplar in the way it carries out its business in a responsible and caring manner.



Management in accordance with sustainable principles is most apparent within our farming practices where we have created objectives and benchmarks to ensure that we achieve a farming system which, amongst others, improves soil health, adopts a selective approach to the use of chemical inputs, reduces the use of antibiotics and is focussed on improving

animal welfare. The aim is to ensure that our farming activities are as environmentally sensitive as we can make them and to create a system which allows the land and the animals on it to thrive with minimal intervention.

Our sustainability credentials extend into our golf and other leisure activities where we are trialling deeper rooted drought and disease tolerant grass types so as to reduce the need for irrigation together with a move away from some of the more traditional chemical-based management activities.



Sustainability also extends to our built environment where we are embracing renewable energy systems, historically through PV and biomass. The need to improve thermal and energy efficiency within our properties remains fundamental to our management policies.

Estate businesses tend to have long term, multi-generational plans meaning that we are highly focussed on the future consequences of our decisions and the activities we undertake today. By truly embracing a sustainable management model throughout, we aim to ensure Cowdray remains a thriving progressive business for years to come.

*Clockwise from top left:
Chestnut for wood fuel
The River Rother
The 5th Green at Cowdray Golf
Calves at Moor Farm*



COWDRAY
FARM SHOP & CAFÉ

Cooking with Estate reared venison

Venison is a delicious and healthy wild food which is carefully managed at Cowdray and provides the perfect example of sustainability. If left at unsustainable numbers, the local deer population can seriously damage crops and forestry. Fallow roam in large groups, up to a couple of dozen in number, and spend the summers raiding fields of cereal crops on both Cowdray Home Farms' and tenant farmers' land. In contrast, it is our forestry operation which is particularly badly hit by Roe deer. They nibble shoots on young saplings and damage them with their antlers to mark their territory – a major problem on an estate where over 60,000 young trees have been planted annually over the past three years.

Whilst deer are farmed at many locations throughout the UK, all the venison offered at Cowdray's Farm Shop & Café is truly wild, having been culled by qualified hunters and inspected for food health safety before being delivered to the Farm Shop and other outlets. Venison is highly nutritious, low in calories and cholesterol, with almost twice as much iron as beef or lamb. It can be readily substituted for beef or lamb in many recipes.

In the hands of Cowdray's skilled butchers it is transformed into a variety of cuts which can be cooked in a number of ways. Cuts such as saddle and fillet are suitable for more rapid cooking, whilst haunches from the back legs are roasting joints. The forequarters are more often used as tasty, low-fat, venison burgers or the very popular Cowdray venison sausages. Butcher Hawie Jooste's speciality is cold smoked venison, using the 'cannon' or eye of the loin. It is salted, cured and smoked, has a similar texture to bresaola, and is perfect for a delicious light meal or appetizer.

Around 200 burgers are sold in the Café weekly – and Head Chef, Ben Jupp, likes to add a little Pancetta for moistness. Venison sausages are perennial favourites, and, constantly looking for new ways of serving such a delicious, healthy meat, Ben's venison pie has been a real hit.

Cowdray venison has already won one Great Taste Award and has been entered

again for the 2017 Great Taste Awards organised by the Guild of Fine Food. Our entries include a boned and rolled saddle from the butchery counter along with Hawie's smoked cannon and Cowdray Farm Shop Café's delicious venison pie.

*Clockwise from top:
Head Chef Ben Jupp
Venison burger served in the Café
Jason Griffin, Cowdray's Deer Manager
Butchery Manager Hawie Jooste*





COWDRAY

FARM SHOP & CAFÉ

Award for Cowdray Farm Shop

In February the Cowdray Farm Shop won the award for Sussex Food Shop of the Year in the Sussex Food and Drink Awards, which General Manager Rupert Titchmarsh and Shop Manager Esme Westcott-White were thrilled to accept from Sally Gunnell OBE at the Amex Stadium in Brighton. The judges were looking for an excellent food outlet offering a great range of local produce aligned with business principles that support local producers. Rupert spoke for all the team, saying: "We are absolutely thrilled to win this award. The standard of all the finalists was incredibly high and we feel extremely proud. I'd like to thank everyone who helped us come out as winners – we really value your support."

Congratulations to the suppliers and our dedicated shop team who have worked so hard to put Cowdray on the map as a fine food destination.



COWDRAY

ACCOMMODATION

Cowdray's newly refurbished Golf Lodge

A stylish refurbishment of the accommodation at Cowdray's Golf Lodge has been completed offering the perfect place for an overnight 'play and stay' golfing break, or to enjoy a longer visit. Six charming rooms and suites provide a range of options, whilst the addition of the picture-perfect historic Bothy has seen this quirky feature room become an instant hit!



COWDRAY

EXPRESS

Cowdray Express opens

Cowdray Express opened for the summer season on 12th April. Located opposite the Cowdray Farm Shop & Café, Cowdray Express serves freshly prepared healthy snack food, Barista coffee, smoothies and juices to enjoy 'on the go'. It is open from 8am to 2pm on weekdays, 8am to 3pm on Saturdays and 9am to 3pm on Sundays.



A FINAL NOTE

We hope you have enjoyed our summer 2017 newsletter which showcases a number of our exciting and diverse businesses. We are privileged to host many visitors from around the world who we hope have taken advantage of the scope of activities Cowdray has to offer.

We continue to strive to create an interesting and diverse visitor experience at Cowdray which, whilst operating at the highest level of service and standards, reflect the Estate's underlying commitment to sustainability and the environment.

CONTACT US

Cowdray Estate
Cowdray Park
Midhurst
West Sussex
GU29 0AQ

w: cowdray.co.uk
e: enquiries@cowdray.co.uk



Jonathan Russell
Chief Executive, Cowdray

