



COWDRAY

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2017/18



WELCOME

At all times of year, Cowdray is a stunning place to live, work and visit. As the newsletter shows we aspire to be an interesting and diverse place where inspiration can be sought.

Wellbeing is at the heart of our business. It is key to Cowdray's ethos and values, and is positively promoted throughout the estate's diverse and thriving businesses. In the spring we are looking forward to holding our second wellbeing event at Cowdray House following last year's highly successful weekend of motivational talks.

It has been an outstanding season of events at Cowdray, with the team at Cowdray House welcoming guests from all over the world. Sport is also thriving. Having implemented many improvements to our 18-hole championship golf course, the focus is now on the growth of a junior section. Cowdray Park Polo Academy has also completed a third active season, and we are delighted to highlight the work of one of our enterprising tenants, English Woodlands Timber.

We hope that everyone associated with Cowdray feels proud to be part of a professional and progressive rural business. There are exciting times ahead.

Lord and Lady Cowdray

WELLBEING AT COWDRAY

Wellbeing is integral to Cowdray's ethos and values



As a holistic estate, Cowdray cares about the land, the people that work on the estate and those that come to visit. It is a place to recuperate and relax. Visitors can explore a myriad of footpaths that wend their way through the 16,500-acre estate in the heart of the South Downs National Park. However, it is not only in the farmland, woods and open countryside that a feeling of wellbeing can be found. Wellbeing is positively promoted throughout the estate's diverse, thriving businesses.

Cowdray Hall and Cowdray's Therapy Rooms provide a focal point for self-development. The Hall hosts inspiring workshops and events, as well as weekly classes which can be enjoyed by both local groups and the wider community. Various Pilates and yoga classes take place here as well as Tai Chi and free drop-in meditation classes. There are also three beautifully appointed Therapy Rooms used by a range of practitioners specialising in conventional and alternative therapies.

Our award-winning Farm Shop & Café is located a short walk from Cowdray Hall. With a butchery, deli counter and a Living Area, stocking ethical, eco-friendly and handmade products, the Farm Shop & Café is instrumental in promoting health and wellbeing. Quality, provenance, locality and price are the priorities and criteria for all products sourced and sold here. There is a strong emphasis on organic, gluten free, dairy free and other health-orientated items. Delicious, healthy homemade meals using traditional artisan techniques are served in the Café. Cowdray Express, located adjacent to the Cowdray Farm Shop & Café, is open at weekends in the winter, and seven days a week in the summer. It serves healthy food, smoothies, juices and protein balls to enjoy on the go. The Farm Shop also acts as a showcase for the estate's farming and food production enterprises which set and achieve the highest standards in sustainability and welfare.



Set in 110 acres of private, landscaped gardens, Cowdray House, a stunning, exclusive-use venue, is at the heart of the estate. While it is a perfect venue for corporate events, weddings and celebrations, we have also partnered with Bodhimaya, who run award-winning wellness retreats in the house. The wood-panelled dining room is transformed into a yoga studio, the kitchen used

to create specially crafted juices and bespoke healthy meals, and wellbeing therapies take place throughout the house.

This spring, Cowdray are hosting their second wellbeing event at the House following on from last year's highly successful weekend programme of motivational and inspiring talks. This will take place on Saturday 10th March. The public are invited to buy tickets to hear eminent guest speakers talking about wellbeing. Confirmed speakers are Mark Williams, who specialises in mindfulness, Dr Brian Marien, who has trained in cognitive and behavioural psychology, and author and journalist Bryony Gordon. This will be an inspirational and thought-provoking event.

Another wellbeing event taking place on the estate is an Open Day held at Cowdray Hall and Therapy Rooms on Saturday 20th January from 1.30pm to 4.30pm. This will include talks by Shiatsu Practitioner Kim Lovelace, Clinical Psychologist Dr Sarah Swan and Kinesiologist Louise Penson and 'have-a-go' activities in the Chapel to include meditation and yoga. There will also be Therapy Taster Sessions.

Cowdray does not just promote wellbeing to the wider audience. Estate staff are encouraged to focus on their health by participating in a voluntary programme which includes exercise classes through to therapies.

Health and wellbeing is a lifestyle choice but one that Cowdray believe is vital in today's fast paced and stressful world. Take a moment to explore everything that Cowdray has to offer.



*Left: Yoga in the Chapel at Cowdray Hall
Below left: One of the suites in the Cowdray Therapy Rooms
Clockwise from top right: Cowdray Farm Shop
Unicorn Latté's from Cowdray Express
Cowdray House dining room, set up for yoga on the Bodhimaya Retreat
Ruby Wax speaking at the previous Cowdray Wellbeing Event at Cowdray House*





COWDRAY
EVENTS

A SEASON OF OUTSTANDING EVENTS

From events to event venues, there is something for everyone at Cowdray



Since its spectacular refurbishment and relaunch as an exclusive-use country house destination, a prestigious corporate retreat or a magnificent wedding venue, **Cowdray House** has seen guests from all parts of the world delight in its superb facilities. And now that an upgrade of the North Wing's accommodation is well underway, by April 2018 the House will boast 22 luxurious bedrooms, including two large suites, all of 5* accommodation.

The House lends itself magnificently to wedding ceremonies which may be conducted in Buck Hall, the Dining Room, Drawing Room or the rustic Summer House within the property's stunning gardens. Alternatively, the actual ceremony can take place in one of the local churches. Cowdray House has hosted a small number

of exclusive weddings during the year, with international guests from Hong Kong, America, Europe, London and all parts of the UK reveling in its unique atmosphere and luxurious accommodation.

Located within easy reach to London, Cowdray House has formed a unique partnership with the Stafford Hotel, a luxury five-star boutique hotel located in the heart of St James's. As the Stafford's country house and rural destination of choice, hotel guests can now enjoy the perfect town and country experience.

While the House Events team have been busy entertaining private clients, the wider estate has also played host to a myriad of diverse and exciting events throughout the summer and into the autumn. Events held

across the estate range from country homes and lifestyle shows, Bear Grylls Survival Academies, fine art antique fairs and the Cowdray 5k-10k cross-country run. For this event, runners gathered at the spectacular Cowdray Ruins before setting off along pathways normally closed to the public.

Top American polo player Nic Roldan hosted the inaugural UK Sunset Polo & Gatsby Party in the grounds of Cowdray House. On a glorious summer's afternoon in June, the public enjoyed equestrian displays, afternoon tea and a sunset polo game. In the evening there was a Gatsby party and dinner inside the house. The following month, the highly-successful Midhurst Town Cup took place at the Lawns, Cowdray's world-renowned polo grounds. Blessed by beautiful sunshine,

crowds gathered on a Sunday in July to watch exhilarating high-goal polo games on the pitch and were able to enjoy fun activities off the pitch, including a mini funfair, street food and a bar. Events were far from confined to the summer months. In November, the Sussex Maverick Silva Dark Series Race took place at Cowdray House. Over 250 trail runners set off in the dark with head torches on running across varied and challenging terrain ranging from woodland to open heath.

Visitors were not only attracted by the diversity of events but also by everything on offer at Cowdray itself. The Cowdray Heritage Site, one of England's most important early Tudor courtier's houses, opened to visitors for the summer season. The Farm Shop & Café was particularly busy, and hosted events such as the Summer Tasting Day, Argentine Asado and Venison Evening. Recently added to Cowdray's choice of events venues is **Capron House** in Midhurst. Capron House, once the home of the 2nd Viscount Cowdray, underwent a renovation with new paintings, carpets, furniture and a refreshed garden. It is licensed for civil ceremonies, and is the perfect venue for small intimate weddings, family celebrations and conferences. With three well-proportioned rooms and a private walled garden, it is a truly versatile event space. The historic rooms are hung with a selection of paintings by Lady Cowdray's grandfather, the Edwardian artist and designer Alister Maynard.

Steeped in history and heritage, Cowdray is a unique and diverse estate which is fully embracing modern lifestyle choices. This is reflected not only in the range of events held on the estate but also the variety of event venues available. We believe there is something for everyone.

*Opposite top left clockwise: Cowdray House
Sunset Polo Dinner in Buck Hall
Diamond Bedroom at Cowdray House
Wedding Ceremony in Buck Hall
This page clockwise from top: The Country Brocante at
Cowdray Heritage
The Midhurst Town Cup
The Maverick Race at Cowdray House
The Garden at Capron House
The Cowdray Room at Capron House*





COWDRAY
PROPERTY

*A tenant with an international order book,
English Woodlands Timber*

Not only has English Woodlands Timber Ltd been a long term Cowdray tenant, but the company also buys timber from the estate. Managing Director Tom Compton says: "In a world where products are transported globally, it is truly satisfying to have a link between local forests and local customers. We value our long association both as suppliers to and customers of Cowdray."

Located on the former site of the old Sussex Resaw Mills, at Cocking, English Woodlands Timber Ltd has been in existence since 1986. The 'great storm' of 1987 provided massive amounts of windblown timber and years of processing but once the volume of recovered timber was cleared, Tom Compton was appointed to diversify the business and bring forest management back into it. Ian McNally was later brought in as a partner to streamline the site at Cocking and grow the online stock and e-commerce side, leaving Tom to develop and support productive woodland management.

As the name suggests, the company sells a huge variety of quality English timber although French oak and certified wood from Northern and Eastern Europe are also bought in. Fresh-sawn oak for beams and cladding form the daily bread and butter of the business. Character, prime and super prime oak is available in all thicknesses, widths and lengths, with Tom's log buying expertise bringing in rarer feature grades which are quickly snapped up. Purchasers from the building trade, designers, joiners and cabinet-makers are able to walk around the yard to select exactly what they need. A wide range of soft woods, including fresh-sawn Douglas Fir, Larch and Western Red Cedar from Cowdray, also goes mainly into the building trade.



A huge biomass boiler efficiently converts all the offcuts from the sawing and milling processes and efficient energy management has seen a massive reduction in energy costs. Even sawdust is efficiently sucked away and sold on to make pelleted products. A formerly open central yard has recently been roofed over, and, with outside walls clad in waney edge Douglas Fir grown in Cowdray woodland, now complements the overall handling and storage facilities.

The company's reputation is built on the extremely high quality of timber processed, much of it for bespoke building work - a recent visitor from California travelling further than most to find what he was looking for. Having 'viewed' stock online, he made the trip to the UK and purchased exactly what he needed for bespoke work in a wealthy client's home in Hawaii. A sea container is now making its way half way round the world to deliver a truly hand-picked cargo.

*Above: Tom Compton and Ian McNally
Below: Timber in the yard at the Cocking based firm*



Junior Golf at Cowdray is thriving

Cowdray's Director of Golf, Tim Allen, has been steadily implementing improvements to the course in recent years. Now, attention is being focused on the growth of a thriving junior section.

Matt Watson joined the club in 2016 as Cowdray's PGA Assistant Teaching Professional and his enthusiasm is palpable. His regular Saturday morning coaching sessions for both Under 12 and Under 16 age groups are popular as are the holiday golfing camps offered during all the main school holidays and half terms by Matt and colleague, Hannah Ralph.

The club is now taking a massive step forward for 2018 with the launch of the Cowdray Griffin Academy which will run parallel with the Junior Membership currently offered.

The Academy will offer youngsters the opportunity to receive coaching through the structure of the "Junior Golf Passport", the national and county recognized structured learning programme for children aged 4-15 years, endorsed by the PGA, Sport England and Sussex Golf. The programme has three key levels: START, LEARN and PLAY. The PLAY level teaches the junior to apply their learning to the golf course. There is also a web-based resource to track performance and progression. Each young golfer can create a page with a player profile, locker room, games, quizzes and much more. After each session they can log in to update their progress chart. Each golfer will also get their own Passport to fill in along with coloured wrist bands and certificates when they pass each level. The club is already benefitting from helpful advice from England Golf on the best ways to increase junior participation

and key strategies to assist in the retention of junior members.

From March 2018 Matt will be increasing the amount of existing coaching that is available, with after school sessions every Tuesday and Wednesday. He will also be organising and running a monthly Stableford so that juniors can get used to playing the course, marking a scorecard and learning the rules and etiquette of the game. Fun team and family events will be in the 2018 calendar as well as fixtures with other clubs, for example Seaford College.

Meanwhile, keep your eyes open for a young star who is already a world-ranking golfer. Twelve year old Lille-Beau Thorpe from Easebourne can be seen playing and practicing at Cowdray. She was the youngest ever lady club champion in 2016 but was unable to defend her title during 2017 because of her playing commitments worldwide! Hopefully she will be an inspiration to many more young Cowdray golfers.

*Top image: Matt Watson and Hannah Ralph
Bottom image: Young Cowdray golfer Lille-Beau Thorpe*





COWDRAY

POLO ACADEMY

The completion of a third active season

As Cowdray Park Polo Club Academy completes its third season, proprietors Guy and Charlotte Verdon can look back on another satisfyingly varied programme. Charlotte comments: "No matter how clear a plan we intend to work to, Cowdray has an uncanny ability to offer unexpected opportunities, all of which are stimulating, surprising and rewarding. However, our core ethos remains the same: to deliver polo tuition to the local and wider community of all ages, proving that the sport is accessible and affordable. Indeed, many new clients have gained entry from an initial gift voucher."



Above: Charlotte and Guy Verdon

The Academy season began with a double success in the form of Seaford College's outstanding performance at both their arena and grass polo tournament debuts. Having only begun training with Guy a few months earlier, their determination and his strategic coaching resulted in a double victory at both SUPA (Schools & University Polo Association) tournaments. Windlesham House has also introduced polo as an extra-curricular subject and hopefully a strong squad will be created for them too.

Working with Cowdray-based US Polo Captain, Nic Roldan, and his Sunset Polo charity event, resulted in polo lessons being taken by Olympic Gold Medallist William Fox-Pitt, Michelin Star Chef Tom Sellers and comedian jockeys Mattie Batchelor and Marc Goldstein of Wocket Woy, the evening benefitting local children's hospice, Chestnut Tree House.

Cowdray Park Polo Club's introduction of Weekend Polo in 2017 assisted in the transition from lessons to match-play on the Club's exceptional grounds, where Academy players have had the privilege of playing alongside professionals including England Captain, James Beim, in their first matches.

Indicating the Verdon's flexible approach to tuition, they also introduced polo to corporate guests, whilst watching a high goal polo match at the club's Ambersham polo grounds. They also showcased the sport in front of Loseley House at the Surrey County Game Fair, to an audience which almost without exception was new to polo.



Above: Polo lesson at The Stafford Hotel corporate day at Cowdray House

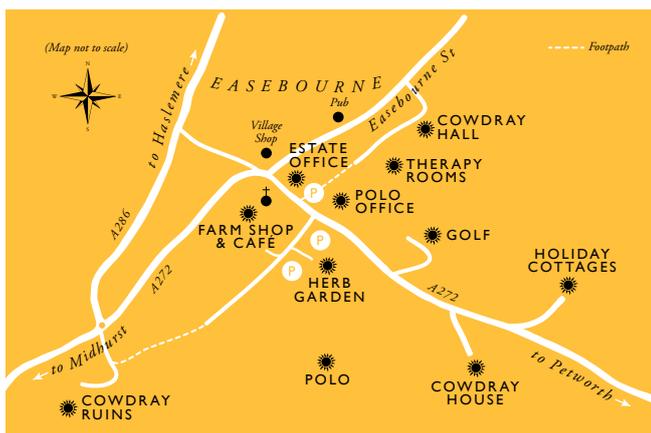
The Verdon's are proud to be a part of Cowdray and to have the opportunity to work with other estate enterprises. Not only are the Polo Club facilities exceptional, but the resurgence of the historic House Ground at Cowdray House for corporate days ensures there is no place more spectacular to play, teach or learn.

A FINAL NOTE

We hope you have enjoyed this Winter edition of our newsletter. The articles give a glimpse into the wide range of activities undertaken by the Estate team and we are fortunate and proud to be able to achieve what we do through the support and dedication of so many fantastic staff.

However, whilst the Estate can be a fast paced environment, it is important that we provide our team with the opportunity to enjoy their roles and all the benefits Cowdray has to offer. Whilst Wellbeing is a key value across all we do, our focus will always be to ensure that at its core, the welfare of our staff and our commitment to them is paramount.

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