



FIRLE ESTATE

Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2024

Welcome to the May Firle newsletter and a chance to update you on some up and coming Estate news.

Filming

We have recently been the setting of a couple of very exciting TV shows and advertising campaigns. The wide range of locations we are able to offer to film location companies makes the Estate an attractive option for filming services. Filming provides an unpredictable but useful revenue stream to feedback into the Estate with relatively minimal impact on village life. The old chalk quarry at Southerham was the location of choice this February and we will share more information about these programmes, where we can, when broadcast timings are announced by production companies.



Firle Opens its Gardens



On 23rd June this year a number of Firle villagers are opening their gardens as part of a trail in aid of the St Peter's Church Restoration Fund. As the oldest building in the parish, Grade I listed St Peter's requires a regular programme of works to ensure its continued upkeep and preservation. With fifteen gardens taking part (so far!) the trail is expected to be an eclectic mix of green spaces, from the well tended labour of love, to the smaller wilder plot where the dandelions rule! The gardens will be open from 12-4pm as part of a fun and diverse route through the village to celebrate and share with the local community and friends some of its special and often unseen green corners.

The ticket and route map will be available from the Firle and Glynde village stores and The Ram Inn towards the end of May and on the day with refreshments and a raffle.

Whole Estate Plan

The Firle Estate Whole Estate Plan (WEP) is a document that has been worked on for a number of years. This is partly due to the level of work and consultation it requires to pull together a document like this but also due to a delay caused by Covid and the restructuring of the management of the Estate.

Consultations were held across the three parishes that make up the Estate with the Parish Councils, the South Downs National Park and other stakeholders being consulted separately. Our approach was ratified by the National Park Officers and Members in 2021 and we received positive feedback subject to some suggestions. The Estate's WEP was scheduled for endorsement later that year but held by the Firle Board to allow the new management team to review it alongside the Estate's then emerging strategic plans. The drop-in will provide an opportunity for us to update you on this work and answer any questions you might have as well as listen to any feedback.

The drop in for Firle will take place on 17th June at The Ram from 4 – 8pm and we hope you will join us.

What is a WEP? (Whole Estate Plan) - Summary Description

- Whole Estate Plans are a document prepared by individual landowning organisations. They set out the assets of the organisation and the opportunities and threats which the organisation may encounter and describe their plans for the future.
- A Whole Estate Plan should include environmental and social assets and issues as well as economic development projects.
- The concept is to encourage open dialogue between land owning organisations and the National Park, to look at land holdings in their entirety in order to be as holistic as possible.
- The intention is to provide clear baseline information which can then be used to identify opportunities and aid decision making for both landowners and the National Park Authority.
- Whole Estate Plans should help to identify mutually acceptable and proactive solutions which serve the wider purposes of the National Park.

Painting time!

The Estate's annual painting and preventative maintenance programme has started with the arrival of the Spring. The South elevation or back of Firle Place has been underway since March and we are pleased to have had local contractor John Parnell and his team on the job. There is a dedicated annual programme of painting and maintenance across the Estate that we have reviewed and stepped up in recent years to ensure that the enormous heritage asset we manage including numerous houses and other buildings are protected for the future. This year some works and scaffolding is likely to be particularly visible as we undertake work to a number of houses in the centre of Firle village. Clerk of Works

Alan Soutar comments: *"the size of the heritage assets the Estate maintains across its ownership as well as the financial cost, means that preventative painting and maintenance is essential to plan and budget for this work over a number of years. A significant proportion of the cost can be the scaffolding safety requirement, but an average property on the Estate now costs about £8k, a farmhouse £25k. Building and material costs have soared since Covid but regular maintenance prevents costly repairs down the line. The Estate has protected the fabric and character buildings for hundreds of years, it's why the place looks like it does, and I intend my watch to be no different."*

Simulated Clay Shooting



Simulated Clay Shooting captures the traditional format of game shooting but with clays and not live game. We move from location to location with different landscape and terrain simulating the changing environment that you would expect in traditional shooting.

We are very happy to have Will Fenner on board. Will is a Gamekeeper throughout winter but a competitive clay shooter throughout summer, travelling the globe competing in multiple World and European championships. Will has represented Great Britain eight times and is a Junior World and European Champion, as well as an overall British Champion.

Packages are available in various group sizes (8 - 14 people) and run several times per week from April through to October, weather permitting. This is a truly unique experience in the hands of well-seasoned professionals and in within the beautiful extended grounds of Firle. If you would like to try your hand please contact Will Fenner directly on telephone 07795522567 or email shooting@firle.com

Lord Gage Village Celebration

We are looking forward to seeing you all to celebrate Lord Gage's 90th birthday on the 15th June. We are excited to confirm the Black Kat Boppers will entertain us, between their shows in the US and their appearance at Glastonbury this year. They are a Hot Boppin, Groovin' 4 piece group playing Rockin, Roots Music with a Guitar, Double Bass & Stand Up Drums. They have played with Florence and the Machine, Damon Albarn and The Clash. Join us at the newly refurbished Nine Elms Barn for an evening to remember. Please RSVP so that we can confirm numbers for food. RSVP to enquiries@firle.com



Reminder of key times and dates:

- Lord Gage's birthday on the 15th June at New Elms Barn
- House opens to the public from 26th May
- WEP drop-in at The Ram 17th June 4 - 8pm
- Firle Open Gardens 12-4pm 23 June

Firle Cinema Club

Caroline Lovett and Chris Poplett have reinvigorated Firle Cinema Club. They screened their first film, **Children Galore which was filmed in the 1950's in Firle**, and shows that the village has changed little since that time. There's also an appearance from our very own Jimmy Piper as a young lad. Next up will be Summerland starring Gemma Arteton so watch this space for the date. They are hoping to run a series of films with a Firle connection so watch out for more news on the latest films. You can contact Caroline directly with suggestions for films and any particular flavour choc ices that you would like at carolinelovett@googlemail.com

If you have any news that you would like us to include please send it through to our new team member Helen to HelenT@firle.com