

The Country Diary of an Edwardian Garden



MOUNT EPHRAIM NEWSLETTER
Autumn 2010

They say that it is the Swallow that heralds the arrival of summer, but surely the unquestionable ownership of 'High Summer' must belong to the Swift! The last to arrive and the first to leave each year, these high-octane aerial specialists are here for two short months. Having flown from Africa, they spend all too brief a spell in this country and at the nest. All too brief because it is the only time that they are not on the wing. They spend the remainder of the year in flight! Feeding, mating and even sleeping on the wing. They achieve this remarkable feat by the extraordinary ability to shut down half of their brain at one time, and effectively, sleep at the same time as remaining awake!

So if the swifts are the harbingers of summer, then it can equally be argued that when they leave, they take the summer with them. And they are already long gone for this year! Swifts and cuckoos are the first to make the all important decision of when to leave, spurred on by that mysterious, instinctive urge to migrate.

It is easy to see why the mysteries of animal migration still continue to puzzle and fascinate scientists to this day. True, they have come a long way since the days of believing that swallows hibernate in the mud at the bottom of ponds, but they still only know some of the answers.

Thank you for helping fund this newsletter.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

6 NOVEMBER

FIREWORKS NIGHT -

SAT 23 OCTOBER

**SEASON TICKET HOLDER
EVENT**

SUNDAY 19 DEC

**THE PANTALOONS
PERFORM
'A CHRISTMAS CAROL'**

(See inside for more information)



MOTTO OF THE MONTH

*September blows
soft, Till the fruits'
in the loft'*

MOUNT EPHRAIM GARDENS
www.mountephraingardens.co.uk

subscribe online to the country diary e-newsletter by visiting our website

As I write (the last week in August) the swallows and house martens are still here, gathering in ever increasing numbers. Depending upon the weather they, the swallows at least, could be here for a couple more weeks yet, but their departure is imminent. Countrywide, birds are gathering for the 'Big Push' or have already committed themselves to the gamble of migration.

An influx of Chiff Chaffs and willow warblers in the gardens several weeks ago, was presumably either our birds gathering in readiness to leave, or a wave of birds already on the move, passing through from further north. Birds of all shapes and sizes from Corncrakes to Ospreys, Nightjars to Spotted Redshanks and Garganeys and Redstarts will do just that. Some migrate a relatively short distance, moving across into Europe for the winter, whilst others will push on, and travel vast distances down into Africa or across and down into Asia.

Many of the long distance migrants are small birds. Seemingly ill-equipped to travel such vast distances. And not forgetting that the youngsters reared in the Gardens this year will not only be making the journey for the first time, but completely unaided and unguided other than by the amazing phenomenon of instinct.

As we wave a fond farewell to our summer visitors, we shall soon welcome with the other hand, the heralds from the north – the Redwings, Fieldfare, Waxwings, Geese and Swans. They too are gathering, in northern climes, fidgety and restless, as the changes in light levels and temperature unconsciously trigger their migratory instincts.

The swans and geese, at least, will migrate as a family. The young birds learning traditional routes and stopping-off points from their experienced parents.

Bewick's swans have facial patterns that are as unique as fingerprints, and so individual birds can be recorded and named. At wildfowl centres such as Slimbridge, scientists will be eagerly awaiting the arrival of familiar faces, that may well have been spending their winters there for years.

Although we do not have the pleasure of welcoming well known, familiar individuals to the gardens each autumn, the hundreds of avian visitors that we do receive and who choose to spend the winters with us, will be welcome none the less!

“So if the swifts are the harbingers of summer, then it can equally be argued that when they leave, they take the summer with them”



SEASONAL WORDS

While ripening corn grew thick and deep,

And here and there men stood to reap,

One morn I put my heart to sleep, And to the meadows took my way.

The goldfinch on a thistle-head Stood scattering seedlets as she fed,

The wrens their pretty gossip spread,

Or joined a random roundelay.

Jean Ingelow

ALSO OF NOTE:

It is another excellent season for fungi. Very many different species, of all shapes, sizes and colours.

A new alpine bed being constructed on the Rock garden, to mirror the existing one.



Mark James started working at Mount Ephraim in 1996, after leaving Art College, where he studied wildlife illustration. Whilst he does not have any horticultural qualifications, Mark has always had a life-long passion for natural history, as reflected by his hobbies and interests. Mark keeps and breeds exotic insects, is a collector of insects preserved in amber, and has a large collection of cacti. A regular attendee at the regional meetings of the British Cactus and Succulent Society of which he is a member, Mark is also Vice Chairman of the Hernhill Horticultural Society.



Over 300 years of memories

TO BE CONTINUED... BY YOU

Congratulations to:

3 July	Mr & Mrs Yeoman
10 July	Mr & Mrs Piles
17 July	Mr & Mrs Field
24 July	Mr & Mrs Farrow
7 August	Mr & Mrs Gill
14 August	Mr & Mrs Forber
14 August	Mr & Mrs Jones
28 August	Mr & Mrs Wood
29 August	Mr & Mrs Verwijs
4 September	Mr & Mrs Tullon
11 September	Mr & Mrs Emptage



Right: Becky & Dean (Mr & Mrs Yeoman)
David Fenwick www.davidfenwick.co.uk

Above: Jessica and Tim (Mr & Mrs Field)
Mark Proctor www.markproctorphotography.co.uk



With over 300 years of family history, Mount Ephraim provides a picturesque setting in 10 acres of gardens with unique personal charm. Mount Ephraim is licensed for civil ceremonies in the Grand Hall and the garden pavilion; each with an impressive sweeping staircase. Elegant and formal, the Hall takes 100 guests and the Garden could take up to 500. Receptions/evening parties available in house (120 guests seated / >200 party) or marquee (100-500 Guests).

COMING SOON!

Catering and venue packages in conjunction with Scott Andersons www.chefscottanderson.co.uk.

For more information, contact Claire on
01227 751 496 / 07952 486 015 or email:
info@mountephraimgardens.co.uk.
Visit our website for more details.



MOUNT
EPHRAIM
GARDENS

SCENES FROM A SMALLHOLDING...

ON THE MOUNT EPHRAIM ESTATE



The alpacas stare nervously at the trailer. They are penned up and they seem to realise this time it is not for the benefit of visitors to an event in the gardens. Oh no, this looks far more worrying. There are two muscle bound med setting up what looks like a torture rack. Generators are set up, sacks are at the ready and a small gaggle of ladies on the other side of the fence are having a diet coke break. Shearing day has arrived!

The alpacas are shorn, some with gentle compliance and some screaming objections and spitting. The cuddly teddy bear alpacas are slowly replaced with a herd that look like they are made from pipe cleaners. The wool from the saddle is the best quality and is packed into sacks ready to be sent to a mill in Cornwall. A brisk wind deposits loose fleece on cars, people, the fountain and anything else in the vicinity. The shearer, with vast quantities of the stuff sticking out of ears/nose/ mouth pledges to check the weather forecast more closely next year so he can shear on a calm day. By the end of the day the alpacas are strutting about

with their trimmed feet, tidied teeth and new haircuts, feeling much cooler than they have done for weeks. The alpaca fleece has since returned from the mill, all nicely balled up and ready for knitters to create wonderful winter woollies. Alpaca wool is hypoallergenic and very warm for its weight so it is ideal for baby clothing.

The sunny days of summer seem a long time ago now and we are preparing for the great winter event: tugging. The rams will be fertility tested and put onto a high energy diet in order to gather strength for their upcoming ...well not exactly romances, but you get the idea. The ewes will have their back ends sheared (called crutching, such delightful terminology in farming) to increase their appeal and keep everything a little cleaner. The goat herd has increased, and they will be put to a Billy soon. The kids were (noisily) weaned from their mothers, so that they have the opportunity to rebuild their reserves for pregnancy.

For more information, contact:
Sarah@groovyalpacos.com

EVENTS DIARY

AT MOUNT EPHRAIM

SUNDAY 25 SEPTEMBER

NGS GARDENS OPEN FOR CHARITY.

LAST W/E SEPTEMBER Visit Mount Ephraim and WOODROSE TEA ROOMS before the gardens officially close for the year. Out of season visitors are welcome to enjoy the gardens in the autumn/winter. Reduced rate garden entrance payable via the Main House. *Sunday 12 noon – 5pm*

SATURDAY 23 OCTOBER

SEASON TICKET HOLDERS' EVENT

Entry by invitation only.

For more information, please contact Claire Francis

email: info@mountephraingardens.co.uk

Tel: 01227 751 496

6 NOVEMBER

FIREWORKS NIGHT AT MOUNT EPHRAIM

Dawes Community Association fireworks event at Mount Ephraim on Saturday 6th November at 7:30 pm. – organised by the Dawes Community Association. Help raise funds for the association and support other village organisations at this very well known and run event, there will be an excellent display, complete with a Bar, Food and Music to make your night go with a bang!

Arrive early and get a good spot – the gates open at 6pm. You can get tickets in advance for just £8, which includes 1 adult and up to 3 children under 14. Tickets will be £10 on the night OR Call 07513 750145.

Tickets can also be bought from various businesses in the area.

For more information, please visit:

www.dawesca.co.uk/fireworks

THE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR 2011 WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER, SO KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED AND GET READY TO SAVE SEVERAL DATES IN YOUR DIARIES!

SUNDAY 19 DECEMBER

'A CHRISTMAS CAROL'

performed by The Pantaloons in the Hall of Mount Ephraim.

Posters, tickets and marketing material will be released mid/end October.

More details to follow – see our website.



After a very successful debut performance at Mount Ephraim Gardens in 2009, The Pantaloons were welcomed back with open arms this year by a growing base of loyal fans and followers who crave their unique and vibrant style of theatre. The Pantaloons performed their own take on 'Much Ado About Nothing' on August Bank Holiday weekend and attracted an audience of around 250 people. Those who had not experienced this unique theatre company before were already putting their names down for tickets to see them perform 'A Christmas Carol' at Mount Ephraim Gardens on Sunday 19 December. The Pantaloons are a young, vibrant theatre company whose style draws from a wide variety of popular theatre traditions from commedia dell'arte and clowning to stand-up comedy and silent movies, to bring what they consider to be a vital sense of "play" back to Shakespearean performance. In The Pantaloons' theatre, your imagination is just as important as theirs. For more information, visit their website: www.thepantaloons.co.uk.

EXCITING NEWS! Mount Ephraim Gardens are excited to announce that The Pantaloons have been booked to return next August Bank Holiday summer to perform 'The Canterbury Tales' as well as a pre-Christmas come back with 'A Christmas Carol'. For more information, please check the Events page on the website for updates.

Delicious updates from Woodrose

by Dianne Haworth

Once again, we have come to the end of another season. Mount Ephraim has been particularly stunning this year and many visitors have taken advantage of our light lunches, fresh cream cakes and afternoon teas whilst taking in the splendor of the beautiful gardens. Henry's Asparagus Quiche is still a real winner for the summer season whilst the home-grown fruit from the Dawes family farm now on sale in our gift shop, has become a firm favourite.

The highlight of our year must be our fundraising event, which featured a performance from the well-known Counterfeit Beatles and support group: The Muswells. We would like to offer our sincere thanks to everyone who supported the event and most of all, to both bands for providing a fantastic evening of excellent music and entertainment - a great time was had by all.



We raised £800 for charity group 'Clic Sargent - Children with Cancer', where we know every penny counts!! Thank you to everyone who assisted us with tickets sales posters etc, we really appreciate your help. A very special thank you goes to the Dawes Family for the use of their beautiful gardens, without their help and generosity our charity events would not take place.

Season tickets are now available for next year (contact Claire 01227 751 496) they make a great Birthday or Christmas gift for those who enjoy a breath of fresh air in the gardens... not to mention the odd slice of cake or home-cooked lunch with us! We would like to thank all our customers for their support this year and wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. We look forward to seeing you again next season. Dianne & Milton

For more information on bookings, menus and celebration cakes, check our website: www.woodroserestaurant.co.uk email: info@woodroserestaurant.co.uk or telephone: 01227 751 168.

The Art of Childhood...



Michelle Gage of Darling Art Photography is a very keen children's photographer who has been practicing her photography in the beautiful surroundings of Mount Ephraim Gardens. Michelle specializes exclusively in photography of babies and children up to 5 years of age and has been bringing many of her clients to the Gardens for photo shoots, capturing wonderful memories of their child against the backdrop of these enchanting Edwardian gardens.

"I feel very honoured to be a part of their small world for a couple of hours! All photo shoots are held on location and last up to two hours. I like to work at my preferred location such as Mount Ephraim Gardens, but I am happy to discuss other locations in my local area."

Michelle approaches her photography with a keen sense of observation, looking for the moment that communicates something magical. It is important to her to have an acute awareness of the different personalities her little models have and to create a photo shoot captures something unique and meaningful.

"Everybody that I have introduced to Mount Ephraim has been delighted to discover it and I'm sure they will visit again and tell their family and friends. I would feel lost without your gardens as they are a huge source of inspiration to me and children love discovering every place they can! They truly enjoy their visit and I am able to capture some lovely photographs in return as a reflection of this."

For more information, please visit:
www.darlingartphotography.co.uk
or call Michelle on: 01795 426 856.

A marriage in food heaven



One of the South East's top Chefs and leading caterers has teamed up with the crown jewel of Kent that is Mount Ephraim Gardens. Mount Ephraim is one of Kent's hidden treasures and has been owned by the Dawes family for over 300 years, it has New Zealand links dating back centuries and this is the perfect platform for an unforgettable dining experience with New Zealand chef Scott Anderson and his team of culinary experts and experienced event managers.

Scott and Caroline Anderson chose to team up with Mount Ephraim as their new venue as it is situated in the centre of the food triangle of Kent. It has a beautiful and elegant dining room, stunning gardens with exceptional views around the surrounding areas and is steeped in a rich history, it has all the elements to compliment the delicious food and exceptional service that Scott Anderson Ltd provide "We are very excited to be part of one Kent's finest and oldest venues and to be creating wonderful memories that will stay with event holders forever. Our friendly team takes such pride in what they do in order to ensure everything is perfect on the day. We feel that working in partnership with Mount Ephraim by being the sole hospitality provider will offer clients continuity between the venue, catering and beverage aspect, combined with an excellent choice of menus with locally sourced ingredients and consistent quality of service both in the planning process and on the event day."

www.chefscottanderson.co.uk

More information about events at Mount Ephraim Gardens is available soon on our website and as new wedding brochures and other marketing materials are developed for the New Year.

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