

January 2022 Edition

In early December for the first time since the pandemic took hold the eminent body that I chair ,namely Marketing Peak District and Derbyshire (otherwise known as the local tourist board) held a gathering to thank all our members and hear ‘ state of the industry ‘ addresses, amongst others, from Derbyshire County Council Leader and Board Member Barry Lewis and marketing director Lindsay Rae. Hosted at Chatsworth in the Carriage House it was a joy to properly celebrate with fellow colleagues the vast range of tourism hosts that operate in the area from Glossop to Swadlincote and from Burton to Buxton. I had the honour of drawing the raffle with prizes from days out to the Great British Car Journey at Ambergate to cases of Thornbridge Brewery ales. A lively event and in addition it was lovely to properly meet the team that work so hard for the membership in the organisation. Let us hope for more visitors ,both domestic and overseas , in 2022 !

The opportunity to rekindle my friendship with wine merchant Robert Boutflower was not to be missed. The CLA (Country Land & Business Association) had arranged for me to meet Robert at the cellars in Shrewsbury of family firm Tanners Wine Merchants and participate in a Zoom broadcast tasting of festive wines with both Robert and his colleague Alix Chidley-Uttley . Viewers purchased a half case of single wines prior to the event and were invited to imbibe as the incorrigible threesome chatted our way through these vinous delights and their suitability for a variety of Christmas meals and dinners. A trip to the cellars of Tanners in the heart of Shrewsbury is thoroughly recommended and the wines taste just as good in Derbyshire as in Shropshire. Of course, I did not forget to plug the fine hospitality in our county!

We are to host foraging courses on the Estate. Inspired by her love for nature and the things we do not use in our gardens, expert forager and instructor Kerry Bowness aims to enlighten people to the wonderful world of wild edibles. Kerry explains ‘We believe it helps people not only to experience new flavours, but to reconnect with and discover a new appreciation of the natural world. We are passionate about natural history and conservation, and will highlight how rewilding can encourage wild edibles to grow. Our knowledge has been gained over a lifetime of study of plants, fungi, and outdoor crafting and can provide a tasty and varied diet.’ Kerry has already found hundreds of edibles in the gardens and will lead tours of the Estate in the Spring. For more details check out her website www.foragingcoursecompany.co.uk/.

I love a good ‘Castle Creep’. With the contacts I have made over the years I am incredibly fortunate in that I can visit any County in the country(virtually) and find a hall, mansion or castle that shares similarities with Tissington such as dead flies in the third floor windows, leaking billiard room roofs as well as forlorn and overcrowded outhouses and cellars . I know where to look and a recent trip took me to Nottinghamshire and the magnitudes of Welbeck before we traversed the midlands to Yorkshire where we visited Scampston, Birdsall and Castle Howard in a quest to discover the ultimate house. My mission was to introduce a fellow inheritor to houses that had ‘got it right or got it wrong’ as we all strive to bring these monoliths into the 21st century. I trust that I might have opened my colleague’s ‘eyes’. I do hope so. If I failed it was still a fascinating trip.

During Lockdown a great pal of mine spent hours perusing the half empty bottles in his cellar and decided to start an Instagram account creating cocktails from the remnants . From his home at Breedon on the Hill Charles Meynell posted regularly through lockdown the amazing concoctions that he served up to his wife Charlotte and the rest of the family. In the summer Charles realised his

dream and published a book of his 100 Lockdown cocktails in his tome 'Charlie & the Cocktail Factory.' It proved to be a bestseller in all good Derby bacchanal outlets over Christmas especially so after his long lunchtime interview on BBC Radio Derby with Ian Skye. You can get your copy from his website at www.breedonhall.co.uk. Cheers!