



A BARONET'S DIARY

SIR RICHARD FITZHERBERT

@CHATSWOOF

Each year Chatsworth, on a Monday evening in March, opens its doors to host a drinks party in the Painted Hall to launch the season. Present are the great and the good from all the surrounding local authorities as well as key figures in the tourism industry. Once assembled the Duke of Devonshire gives a 'State of the Dukedom' address that not only promotes the activities of the Chatsworth Estate but also features all that is great about Derbyshire and the Peak District. All his staff wore Derbyshire lapel badges in a



show of county unity and we were then treated to a tour of the house alongside the 2019 exhibition inspired by the Duchess's love of dogs. Entitled *The Dog – A Celebration* the team has collated over 200 paintings, sculptures and artifacts all embracing our canine affinity. It's a fun, fascinating and fantastic tour and well worth more than one visit this season. With loans from collections from all over the country, the exhibition has put together an eclectic mix of canine culture. Check it out @Chatswoof on Instagram!

GOLFING DINNER

The 53rd Annual Dinner of the Society of Derbyshire Golf Captain took place at Chesterfield's Proact Stadium. Although I do not play as much as I would like I am the patron of this august society and say grace prior to the three-course meal, raffle and array of speakers. We were entertained by ITV weatherman Des Coleman, formerly an actor in *EastEnders* and musicals such as *Miss Saigon* and *Chicago*, who gave an amusing account of his life and career. I can report that the Society is thriving and that 93-year-old former president Spen Stanway is as sprightly as ever!



Spen Stanway and Des Coleman

PARKING PROBLEMS AND A HERITAGE RAIL TRAIL

In March I presided over the AGM of the Derby & District National Trust Members' Group and Fiona Bridges, general manager at Kedleston Hall, addressed the 80-strong group about the surge in visitors to the Adam mansion that has seen a rise of 40,000 year-on-year. Fiona commented on the need for increased parking provision and, having been refused planning permission for a car park at Tissington when I applied 30 years ago, it is only a matter of

time before the need here is imperative too. It's a countywide issue (if we are getting our attractions right) and we all need assistance from planners. The evening ended with a talk about the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway by Eric Boulton, highlighting the passion and hard work behind the re-opening of the derelict line from Duffield to Wirksworth. A fascinating tale and another fantastic day out to add to our visitor economy. See e-v-r.com for their latest timetable!

EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION

I never went to university, although I was once offered a place at Kent to study film and politics but turned it down for a career in the wine trade. The last exam I passed was for a Personal Liquor Licence at Buxton in 1995. Now, however, I feel that I could be gaining *three* degrees this summer. First I was approached by a student from Leeds Beckett University to assist in her dissertation on Regulatory Impacts on the Rural Tourism Economy for which she is predicted a first. Second I spent some considerable time answering a questionnaire on the future preservation of British Historic Houses for a student at Newcastle and third I am being interviewed by a Harpur Adams student about the threats posed to farmers after Britain's exit from the European Union. I hope to hear by mid-summer that I have contributed to a trio of Firsts!

AIR TIME

After mentioning last month that in March I celebrated 30 years at Tissington, I was a guest on BBC Radio Derby's breakfast show with roving reporter Heidi Booth. Up bright and early for a 6.30am start, Heidi interviewed me about the Hall and the Estate at regular intervals during Ian Skye's show as I explained how my role had evolved over those years. Interesting reflections but there is still plenty of work to do.