

Derbyshire Life Baronet's Diary August 2023

Readers will know that I often write about the antics that arise from the 50 or so weddings that we host at Tissington each year. From the morning openings to let in brides and their entourage to get made up from as early as 6am (armed with copious amounts of prosecco) to the 'kicking out' brigade as the stragglers, well the worse for imbibing, have to find and then negotiate getting into the relevant taxi and not end in Buxton rather than Ashbourne !! And these stories are all true. What I do appreciate is the time and thought that some couples take in naming their tables at the reception. Rather than a standard 1 to 10 I like the quirky themes that some choose...this year the best table plan had to be the one based on the popular board game Monopoly....Wedopoly was its name and the board listed all the relevant characters from page boys to best man on the squares and the tables themselves were named after their favourite places in the Monopoly colours ! A great starter for conversation.

We have had a saga with British Telecom (BT) and I hear a groan from across the County as you read this piece. We lost power temporarily after one of the thunderstorms in mid-June but we then completely lost our telephone lines the next day. We happily survived for a couple of days but things became a little more concerning as our attempts to contact anyone in BT proved fruitless. Then on Day 4 we were greeted with an email stating that 'The Network engineers (BTO) are experiencing major problems known as a Major Service Outage (MSO). The faulty equipment is a card within the local Exchange & they are in the process of trying to resolve it. '. How intriguing. So I decided to investigate and drove to the said exchange in the nearby village of Thorpe and found no one there!! Then I posted photos of a forlorn me on the Tissington Hall Facebook page to try and gain some traction! This again had little response and I then used the medium of Twitter to attract attention. Eventually we were reunited with our customers on Day 12 after scores of posts of sympathy on our page. It seems that BT being a 'communications company' is an oxymoron.

I am fortunate to be asked onto BBC Radio Derby most months. Usually you can find me on the mid-morning Ian Skye show spouting off on his chosen subjects of the day in the Your Say segment but in mid-June I transported the 81 year old celebrity author from the village to the studio so that Ian could interview her about her first novel- *The Small Hill*- on his 'Lunch with....' spot. Having just published her first tomb Meryl painted pictures with her wordsmith answers to Ian's insightful questioning as she revealed that *The Small Hill* is the first of a trilogy that she has planned. Ian then asked about her life and times from the Welsh Valleys to Australia and Tahiti and then back to her (and our) beloved Village of Tissington. She and Ron have been devoted members of our community for several years and her adventures are well known to us locals. Now to get Meryl onto BBC East Midlands Today on BBC1!

Everyone should book their tickets for the Culland Hall Garden Opening and Plant Fair for 2024! I had not visited the event for several years and at the height of summer this year I popped along to this lovely garden just off the A52 to the west of Brailsford. Each year Lucy and Simon Thompson and their hard working committee attract a number of local plantspeople to display and sell their wares as well as inviting the public to visit their amazing gardens. Stretching to twenty acres the gardens have several delightful spots to sit in wonderment at the charming creations as well as a buzzing tea tent. It is a great day out for plant lovers in the area as well as those who want a 'Gardeners Day out' in beautiful surroundings. This year over a thousand visitors attended to raise funds for the Mid-
Derbyshire Association for Mobile Physiotherapy a charity started in 1976, in recognition for

the need of a mobile physiotherapy service for the people of rural Derbyshire and still doing sterling work today. Book the date of Sunday 16 June 2024 in your diary.

Each year the auction house Dreweatts of Newbury put on an exhibition of items from members of our association, The Historic Houses. This year the title was ‘ Sport and the Country House’. I decided to enter the famous cricketing portrait from our collection of the first Baronet Sir William painted in 1760 by Thomas Hudson tutor to the great Derbyshire artist Joseph Wright . The exhibition only lasted three days in Dreweatt’s London sale rooms but remains online where visitors can vote for ‘best in show’. Please vote for Sir William who last left Tissington in 1997 when he was part of a retrospective cricketing show at Lord’s when the Australians toured in that summer’s Ashes series. He trusts that England will regain the Ashes this season.