

October 2022 Edition

In my role as Chair of the local Tourist Board for the Peak District & Derbyshire I get asked to open a variety of tourism-related experiences. In August I was invited to the home of Karl and Helen Davis at Roston to open the third holiday cottage on their farm in the picturesque hamlet south of Ashbourne. The pandemic was cruel for Karl and his motor business and so he used his assets to 'pivot' converting his large office into two 5star holiday units. This proved successful but the couple needed a third unit to complement the business so that it could run more effectively. And so the Wood Shed was created after planning from Derbyshire Dales District Council was granted. Local businesses and friends were among the 40 of us that gathered at Bank Top Farm where I cut the ribbon to officially announce the cottage open! In recompense Karl and Helen gave me the (very smart) tailor scissors that I used as a thank you so I am well prepared for other 'openings' in the future.

As readers will know I am all for recommending new Derbyshire products. When I was approached by Derby historian Richard Felix to promote his new brew I thought he was having me on! Tea doesn't really grow in Derbyshire; however, his **Derbyshire Tea** is a blend of leaves from Kenya, Sri Lanka and Assam and has been lovingly blended in the county to the taste of Derbyshire folk, packed in Derbyshire with packaging printed and manufactured in Derbyshire, all by Derbyshire folk! At a gala afternoon in the grounds of Tissington Hall Richard, digital whiz Steve Lilley and Northern Tea Merchants mentor James Pogson presented the tea to the assembled tea-testers and tasters as we nibbled on Derbyshire gingerbread. The tea can be bought in attractive packaging with photos of Derbyshire landmarks on the box such as Derwent Dam, Dovedale, Edale and Belper Mills. Further details on their Derbyshire tea website! Cheers!

The late Bank Holiday Sunday took me to Matlock Farm Park high in the hills above the market town to open the Peak District Highland Games. Both the strongmen and strongwomen classes attracted good turn outs as the competitors tossed cabers, towed tractors and lifted logs in the calorie-burning events in the Park's arena. The day started with the procession from the gates to the arena as I accompanied Mr Doodedo, the Park's mascot, in attendance with the Scots Pipe band and the competitors. Once inside the ring I gave a short address about all the other attractions in our county and then the games began! Over 5000 visitors came on the day and they also enjoyed the usual park animals and amusements. A great fillip for the area and especially for Matlock. Why not visit one day?

On the Bank Holiday Monday we opened our gardens at Tissington Hall in aid of the NGS (the National Gardens Scheme). The national charity supports a number of causes from the Queen's Nursing Institute, Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie and Parkinson's UK raising in total over £3m annually. Over our three days in August we had over 250 visitors who much admired the hall and the gardens. Sadly, one couple did not appreciate what we had to offer and posted a critical report on that well-known site TripAdvisor - "£7 was overpriced for a 20-minute walk around fields with bushes and trees". Obviously, this couple had failed to notice the rose garden on the rear terrace and the border of brilliant dahlias to the southern side. Such a shame when over 248 others had seen these and been very complimentary as well as raising £1500 for the charity!

Congratulations to architect and Chairman of the Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust (DHBT) Derek Latham and friends for cycling from Leeds to Derby to raise money but more importantly awareness of the need to rescue what may well be the oldest surviving railway station in the world ..

and it is in Derbyshire !Once praised by John Betjeman as one of the ' most beautiful stations in Britain' the DHBT have managed to acquire this building after half a century of dereliction and aim to raise the funds to repair the shell of the Grade II listed Wingfield Station on the modern Midland Mainline... a huge technical challenge given its obvious proximity to a high-speed railway. The plan is to convert it to a viable new use and the Trust have been awarded a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £667,000 towards the conversion. However, there is a need to raise £250,000 in match funding from private and corporate sources. The cycle ride raised several hundred pounds towards the target and was supported by our able High Sheriff Michael Copestake and others. A film about the project is available on the website via this link

<https://www.derbyshirehistoricbuildingtrust.org.uk/wingfield-station-news>

Photo Sir Richard at Matlock Farm Park with a Competitor

Photo Sir Richard with Mr Doodledo

Photo Sir Richard at Bank Top Farm

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