



A letter from the Master

July 2020

As the government eases lockdown restrictions, normal life seems a little bit closer than before. However, some of us may still be worried about venturing out, whether for a meal, shopping and more. In these changing times, it is important to stay healthy both physically and mentally.

I am delighted to report that Past Master David Hamilton is now out of hospital and taking it easy at home. But sadly, Past Steward Tom Thackeray's wife, Patricia, has died and our thoughts go out to his family. The last time I saw Tom was when the Duchess of Cornwall was installed as a Liveryman at Skinners' Hall.

For the past week Bridget and I have been in St Mawes re-scheduling the Master's Break for two nights at the Hotel Tresanton on Tuesday 28 and Wednesday 29 September 2021. Incidentally, St Mawes has just been voted the best seaside resort in the UK by a 'Which' Survey. Oh dear, now it will be packed, and we need it to be kept a secret! We will be arriving at the Hotel Endsleigh at 2pm on Tuesday 28 to visit the magical Humphry Repton Gardens and to take afternoon cream tea and sandwiches; not to mention a reception at Caerhays Castle.

Endsleigh: Queen Victoria's Journal Wednesday 13th April 1856

[On Board the Royal Yacht] A quiet, good night, but the weather continues the same. — Breakfast at 8, after which, busy writing & reading Despatches. — At 11, we went on board the "Fairy", with the girls, Bertie, & the Ladies & Gentlemen, & steamed up the Tamar, seeing the commencement of a fine new bridge, at Saltash, a tubular one, which will be a great height. At Cotehele, the situation of which is so fine, though the house cannot be seen from the river, as it is hidden by the woods, — we took a little river steamer (a dirty little thing) to go higher up the river. The river became very picturesque, with high wooded banks & winding in & out. We stopped at a small mining village Morwellham, where a great deal of ore, — lead, & even some silver was lying about in heaps, & where the small population was congregated, & very friendly. We got into 3 hired carriages, Vicky & Bertie with us, Gen: Buckley & the footman on the box & drove on 9 miles to Endsleigh. The whole road hilly, as is the case throughout Devonshire & between such high hedges, that one can hardly see over them, excepting now & then. We could however see the wild Tors of Dartmoor Forest, in the distance. Endsleigh is approached by a pretty lodge & avenue of evergreens, & suddenly a most magnificent extensive view opens out before one, — a perfect basin of woods, closed in by wooded hills, the Tamar, at this point, became quite a small stream, flowing below. I never saw anything finer, of its kind. The house, is a sort of large cottage, standing on a terrace, overlooking this splendid view, surrounded by flowers of great brilliancy. The gardener took us through the Dairy & a portion of the beautiful pleasure grounds, full of fine & rare trees plants. The late Dow^r Duchess [Devonshire] created the whole. The Housekeeper had prepared our cold luncheon for us, which we much relished. At 3 we set off again, driving along to a Swiss Cottage, where there's a very fine view of the river, on one side, & of the house, on the other.

Future events, such as the Installation and Ladle Dinner, are uncertain at present although we are planning one or two modest virtual happenings. As time moves forward we will have a greater understanding of what is and what is not possible. The social events for the year 2020-21 are being rearranged and, hopefully, we will be in a far better place.

On our way back from St Mawes we passed the Amberley Museum. I caught a glimpse of a sign at the entrance – *Cough and Sneezes Spreads Diseases*. At least someone remembers the phrase!

I hope you all enjoy the summer and both Bridget and I will very much look forward to seeing you all at the end of the year.

With my very good wishes, wherever you may be....

Peter

PS There are still no curtains at the windows, and I have given up standing on a chair to fix dust sheet drapes. The postage stamp garden is full of tomatoes, lettuce, courgettes (in pots), mixed with ferns and rambling roses. Somewhat reminiscent of a potager. Plans are underway for an extension and the removal of a ghastly wooden fence for a lovely multi-stock Flemish bonded brick garden wall.