



**This** spring and summer Dorset who receives £100 of gifts from the gift shop. Both have been busy at Forde Abbey of these competitions will with a host of events taking place. It has also seen some firsts for us and some new features not least of which have been two competitions. Firstly children visiting found the letterboxing stamps hidden round the garden. The completed maps were entered into a prize draw won by 11 year old Sinead Shephard from Langport, Somerset.

Our online photographic competition, run through our website, was won by Mark Hannaford from Thorncombe,



continue to run with prizes awarded at the end of next season. Visit our website to see more of the best photographs we received.

## Newsletter

AUTUMN 2006



### CHRISTMAS OPENING



**I**ncredibly it is now (10am-4pm) until the almost the end of the 17th December with free season with the house entry to the gardens on closing to visitors on the 31st October. This also means that Christmas is just around the corner! From 2nd November the gift shop and tearoom will be open on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays

(10am-4pm) until the 17th December with free entry to the gardens on these days. As all the most organised people will tell you, it is never too early to start the Christmas shopping and there is a wide range of gifts and decorations in the gift shop to help you enjoy the festivities.

### GREAT COUNTRY HOUSES

**M**any of you will have seen the Great Country Houses programme on Forde Abbey on 3rd August. It followed a tight filming schedule in May and formed part of a series, hosted by Chris Searle, investigating the ingenuity of the owners of some of England's most beautiful historic houses. It gave a glimpse of what goes on behind closed doors to keep these marvelous houses in such fine working order. It also gave us an insight into the frenzied activity involved in television production!



### RAINBOW TRUST

**S**o far this year our visitors have donated £1,164 to the Rainbow Trust by leaving money in the Chapel jar. This brings the total raised at Forde Abbey since 2000 to £10,362. The Rainbow Trust provides support to families with children suffering life-threatening or terminal illnesses. On their behalf thank you!



### AWARD WINNER!

**F**ollowing a very positive inspection by the Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Service, praising our knowledgeable and friendly staff and the high standard of presentation and interpretation, Forde Abbey was awarded the status of a Quality Assured Visitor Attraction, one of only a handful in Dorset. This is not a finished process though and Forde Abbey will be inspected annually to track improvements!



### THE SUMMER FAIR

**O**nce again Forde Abbey hosted a charity Summer Fair in July to raise funds for the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institute (RABI). Approximately 3500 people enjoyed the beautiful weather and the vast array of stalls, sideshows and exhibits. Particular highlights included a falconry display, the Heaven's Gate Rescue Centre Dog Agility Display Team, the Chard Gold Star Majorettes and both the Cotley Harriers and the Park Beagles. The collection of tractors (both vintage and brand new) and vintage cars, including Model T Fords dating from the first world war, also created great interest. The event raised an amazing £11,000 for the RABI with a further £10,000 given through donations.



### FORDE ABBEY RUN

**T**he annual Forde Abbey 10km cross country run took place on 29th June. 216 runners took part with the junior's 1 mile race won by 9 year old Isobel Glaisher. The men's winner, Paul Holley, set a course record of 36.5 minutes. Lucy Owen was the fastest lady in 46 minutes.

The run raised an amazing £1218 for local charities; Thorncombe Jumping Beans Playgroup and The Magdalen Project, Winsham.



## SEASON TICKETS

Many of you have enjoyed the ever changing gardens over many visits this year thanks to your season tickets. Hopefully, you also took advantage of the discounted ticket price at Lower Severalls, Hestercombe and East Lambrook available to Forde Abbey's season ticket holders. Now is the time to renew your season tickets for next year to enjoy uninterrupted access to the gardens. Tickets bought from October are valid until December 2007 with prices held for 2007 so that a single season ticket remains at £17, a double £30 and guest tickets £3. Tickets are available from the gift shop and the estate office. If you pay by Direct Debit not only are your tickets renewed automatically each year you also receive your 2007 guest tickets absolutely free! Please ask for more details.

## MAKING MUSIC

The Forde Abbey Concert Society enjoyed truly outstanding musicianship this year with performances from the Endellion String Quartet, the Schubert, Gaudier and Forde Ensembles. These very popular concerts sold out within weeks of the programme being published. This was particularly true of the Gaudier Ensemble concert in July which included Mozart's wonderful Serenade in B flat for 13 Wind Instruments.

The garden also played host to a concert this year with

the Rotary Club of Chard's Proms in the Park featuring the Kingsbury Episcopi Concert Band and other local groups showcasing the talents of young musicians in the area. This enjoyable event raised almost £3,500 for the Alzheimer's Society. There is already talk of a similar event next year.



## THE FORDE ABBEY HERD

The Forde Abbey herd of Red Devon Cattle has again been represented at some of the country's biggest agricultural shows this summer including the Devon County, The Bath and West and the Royal Agricultural Show at Stoneleigh. It also made its first appearance at the Royal Welsh Show.

However, it is not just the animals that were well travelled in 2006. Mrs Roper flew out to Brazil at the end of August to judge at their premier livestock show in



Porto Alegre. Not only is it unusual for a non-Brazilian judge to be given this honour, Mrs Roper was also the first lady to have been invited into the Devon rings. The Brazilian press hailed Mrs Roper as one of the world's top breeders with her renowned herd!

For more details about any of the events to be held at Forde Abbey or to enquire about concerts, group visits, weddings, receptions or private parties please contact the Forde Abbey office or go to our website.

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## QUESTIONNAIRES

We are continually trying to improve the experience of our visitors and this year we asked for your opinions through the visitor questionnaires in the Undercroft. There have been both marvellous compliments and useful suggestions for improvements. Some have already been implemented while others are due to be completed over the winter months so please look out for the following:

- \*Chairs and tables outside the Undercroft
- \* More labelling of plants in the garden
- \* More cream in the cream teas
- \* More information on the monks in the Great Hall
- \* More seats around the garden

## DEDICATED TO YOUR LEARNING!

Many comment on our knowledgeable room stewards who go to great lengths to learn more about the house. For example, Fred Smith, a much loved member of the team who sadly died this year, became our resident expert on the Mortlake Tapestries and even visited the site of the factory where they were made. Should they be stumped by a question the stewards do their best to discover the answer and pass it on. Peter Townsend tells this story about the day he was

asked where the monks were buried. Not knowing the answer he took the visitor's telephone number and contacted the Cistercian mother house in Leicestershire. After waiting for the Abbot to return from Rome, he received a plan of 1530's Forde Abbey with the place marked. Peter duly contacted the original enquirer who rather abruptly thanked him, announced he was entertaining and rang off! After going to so much effort he has never been asked the question again. So, next time you visit, please ask!

## MARRIAGES

The beautiful house and gardens means that Forde Abbey is becoming more popular as a wedding and reception venue with 2006 being our busiest year to date!



Photo by Tessa Gilks

## AND FINALLY...

This year 7 chicks have joined the brood of Forde Abbey chickens and 2 cockerels have left Forde Abbey to rule the roost elsewhere. Of course, it may be a coincidence but ever since the tables and chairs appeared allowing visitors to eat outside the chickens have become very fond of gathering near the Undercroft!

