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THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF
REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 307098

GILBERT WHITE'S HOUSE & GARDEN
and THE OATES COLLECTION

Issue 9



September 2011

Dust Off Your Dancing Shoes!

Following the success of our recent Barn Dance, where participants aged between 20 and 70+ years all thoroughly enjoyed the music, dancing, food and fun of the occasion, we have decided to make this a regular feature of our events programme and have already asked the caller and musicians to keep a September slot in their diary for 2012.

You'll be able to pick up the details for this, along with many other events planned for 2012, on Mulled Wine Day, Sunday 4th December, when we will be launching our 2012 leaflet.



The Barn is so ideally suited to such events that we will soon be enjoying more dancing there, but to a very different style of music. On the evening of Friday, 2nd December the Barn will be filled with the sound of Regency period music, as we host a Regency Dance Workshop from 7.30– 9.30pm.

The workshop is intended to offer some advance tuition for those attending our prestigious Regency Ball, see details overleaf, to be hosted at the Museum the following Saturday, but is also open to anyone who would enjoy the opportunity to learn some Regency dances under the expert guidance of The Hampshire Regency Dancers.



Regency Dance Workshop

In aid of the Oates Project

2 December 2011

7.30 pm to 9.30 pm

at The Gilbert White Field Studies Centre, Selborne

Tickets: £10 to include a glass of wine or soft drink

To book, or for more details, please call

Gilbert White's House and Garden on 01420 511275

Miriam Tong

Oates 2012 – Official Opening

10th March 2012

Throughout the summer months work has continued on the new Captain Lawrence Oates Galleries. In addition to the expertise provided by our appointed gallery designers, Iagemakers, many hours of research, planning and further fundraising have been invested by Trustees Major General Patrick Cordingley and Philip Geddes, led by Chair, Dr Rosemary Irwin with support from General Manager Miriam Tong, also colleagues at The Scott Polar Research Institute, The British Antarctic Survey and, our significant funders, The United Kingdom Antarctic Heritage Trust.

The project is progressing well with the design stage now coming to completion. Following the October half-term holiday, the work of physically preparing the Galleries for the new exhibits will commence. We will temporarily house some of our existing Lawrence Oates display material in the Oates Conference Room whilst work on decoration and re-fitting is in progress. During this process we have an exhibition set up at the Museum to enable supporters to track and influence our plans and progress. Why not pop in, look at the plans and leave a comment card?



Whilst we are delighted with the level and range of support already committed to this project, for those wishing to offer financial or other support, fundraising continues.

Looking ahead, the official opening of the Captain Lawrence Oates Galleries will take place on Saturday, 10th March 2012, a week before the centenary of his death, 17th

March 1912, Oates' 32nd birthday.

Regency Ball & Dinner

In aid of the Oates Project
10 December 2011
7.30 pm for 8.00pm
at Gilbert White's House & Garden



*A welcoming glass of warm Negus followed by a
Four course Regency-style dinner with wine
interspersed with dancing led by*

The Hampshire Regency Dancers

who, accompanied by live musicians,

will demonstrate Country Dances, Cotillions and Quadrilles.

Dance cards provided, a caller will be on hand to talk you through the steps.

Individual Tickets ~ £95

Pre-booked tables of 8 ~ £600 (to include place settings and personalised menu cards)

Dress code: Black Tie or Regency Costume

Carriages at 11.30pm

Limited availability. To book, or for more details, please call 01420 511275

Indian Summer

I am writing this at the end of September so maybe it's too early to be talking about an Indian Summer. This usually refers to a spell of warm dry weather later in the autumn but with temperatures in south-east England currently in the mid 20s and forecast to go higher (above 80F in old money) that is good enough for me. Although I've heard the expression many times, I had no idea where it came from so I turned to that fount of all wisdom, Google. The most common derivations appear to be linked to American Indians, either as the last opportunity for raiding parties to hit settlements before the snows fell or the time when the native population harvested their crops but, as usual with Google, I discovered lots of additional information. For example, I learned that in Europe Indian Summer used to be known as St. Martin's Summer referring to St. Martin's Day on November 11th. So, by means of this convoluted introduction, I have arrived at what I intend to write about – House Martins in the autumn!

Why House Martins? A few days ago I was phoned by a bird-watching friend who told me that one of the artificial martin nests under the eaves of the Selborne post-office still held young birds. He was surprised that they were still there in mid September but in fact it's not that unusual. Young House Martins remain in their nests longer than many other similar-sized species. It makes sense because birds that live in high places have to be sure they can fly before launching into space!

On September 27th, I walked past the Post Office myself and saw that the nests were now empty.



I was in Selborne with a class of school children from Farnborough. They were attending the Gilbert White Field Studies Centre to learn about the buildings and life in the village. I had hoped to be able to point out House Martins as an example of a bird that has benefited from houses and other man-made structures. Without them they would be restricted to nesting on cliffs and would be far less common than they now are.

Pictured in photograph pupils from Cherrywood Community Primary School with adults from left to right: Kirsty Gillatt, Class Teacher; Simon Millard, Principal Teacher at Gilbert White's Field Studies Centre; Damian Hinds MP, visiting the project and Dr John Eyre, Trustee.

As things turned out I didn't see a single House Martin in the village yet this is the time of year when you may come across large flocks gathering before they set off on their return migration that will take them across the Sahara to winter in central and southern Africa. This reminds me of one on my favourite Gilbert White stories. In October 1780, he watched House Martins going to roost in low shrubs at the end of the Selborne hanger. He wondered whether they might choose the area to spend the winter so the following spring he employed a gang of young men to look for them. *They examined the beechen-shrubs, & holes in the steep hanger* without success. A few days later the search was repeated and while it was in progress *a House Martin came down the street & flew into a nest under Benham's Eaves*. So despite his efforts to shed some light on the migration versus hibernation mystery, he was left wondering whether the search of the hanger had disturbed the bird from its hibernaculum. Science can be frustrating!



Autumn / Winter Events



Saturday 22nd–Sunday 30th October 10.30am–5.15pm (Closed Monday 24th)

***Ghosts & Ghouls at Gilbert's!* Children's Activities during Half-Term Holidays**

Please see our website for more details – www.gilbertwhiteshouse.org.uk.

Standard admission charges apply

Saturday 18th November 10.00am – 4.00pm

***Keeping Bees in your Garden* Workshop led by Esther Grosskopf**

Please see our website for full details – www.gilbertwhiteshouse.org.uk.

£34 includes refreshments but bring your own lunch. Booking essential – 01420 511275

Friday 2nd December 7.30pm – 9.30pm

***Regency Dance Workshop* led by The Hampshire Regency Dancers**

Please see our website for full details – www.gilbertwhiteshouse.org.uk.

Tickets £10.00 – includes a glass of wine / soft drink – To book phone 01420 511275

Sunday 4th December 10.30am – 5.15pm

Mulled Wine Day – Our Traditional Celebration of the Festive Season

Please see our website for full details – www.gilbertwhiteshouse.org.uk.

Admission £5– includes a glass of mulled wine / soft drink (Free admission to Friends and Selborne Residents on production of valid cards.)

Saturday 10th December 7.30pm – Carriages 11.30pm

***Regency Ball & Dinner* Black tie fundraising dinner with period music and dancing**

Please see our website for full details – www.gilbertwhiteshouse.org.uk.

Tickets £95 or £600 for a table of 8 Advance booking essential – 01420 511275

Friday 27th January 7.30pm – 10.00pm

***Burns at the Barn* – An evening of music, conversation, poetry & laughter**

Please see our website for full details– www.gilbertwhiteshouse.org.uk.

Tickets £15.00 – includes a taste of haggis with a wee dram.

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