

Press Release
31 August 2010



Action Packed Half Term Days Out with the Seven Wonders of the Weald

This half term families can enjoy action packed days out with the Seven Wonders of the Weald, who are hosting a wide variety of events and activities between **Monday 25 and Sunday 31 October** that are suitable for all ages.

The Seven Wonders of the Weald are a unique collection of attractions in Kent and Sussex and include; Merriments Gardens, Chiddingstone Castle, The Hop Farm, Bodiam Castle, Marle Place Gardens and Gallery, Bedgebury National Pinetum and Forest and The Kent & East Sussex Railway.

This autumn, **Bedgebury National Pinetum and Forest** will take on a whole new look as they showcase their 'Electric Forest' between **22 October and 7 November**. The event will see professional lighting illuminate the trees in the National Pinetum in an array of beautiful colours. Visitors will have an unique opportunity to enjoy a magical nocturnal tour of the National Pinetum every evening after the main site is closed.

The medieval **Bodiam Castle** is the perfect eerie location for their Halloween Happenings event, when families can enjoy a whole week of themed activities between 11am and 3pm from **Saturday 23 to Sunday 31 October 2010**. The 'Spooky Challenge' takes families on a spine-chilling tour of the castle where they must search for hidden clues to solve the mystery and hunt down the creepy castle character to claim a ghoulish prize! *Spooky Challenge £2 per person plus normal castle admission*. Between **25 and 29 October** children will also have the opportunity to take part in the castle's 'Dress to Impress', when they can try on a variety of medieval costumes. *Dress To Impress – £2 per child plus normal castle admission*.

The Hop Farm will be celebrating Halloween between **23 and 31 October** with a spooky events programme, packed full of themed activities suitable for all ages. Along with dressing up, party dances and magic tricks, families can enjoy Halloween stories in the Big Top Tent before being dazzled in the Magic Factory by the interactive illusions and tricks, including levitation, the mind-boggling trommel and a disappearing act. As well as all the Hop Farm's usual rides and attractions, such as the Treejumpers Extreme Zone, families can also join in the Haunted Wax Works tour, which is sure to be a memorable experience. *Open 10am and 5pm daily*.

Come to **Chiddingstone Castle** to uncover the ghoulish secrets of the ancient Egyptians during the 'Mysterious Mummies' family activity day on **Monday 25 October 2010**. Inspired by the castle's fascinating collection of ancient Egyptian artefacts, the activity day delves into the past and reveals the spooky secrets behind the Egyptian afterlife. Meet an 'ancient Egyptian' and discover the ins and outs of mummification and why the Egyptians went to such lengths to preserve their dead. Don't forget to explore the castle's Egyptian collection, filled with ancient artefacts and antiquities, including a mummified cat!

Every day between **Monday 25 and Friday 29 October** the **Kent & East Sussex Railway** will be hosting their half term fun week, when visitors to Tenterden station can enjoy a week filled with ghoulish activities. Return train tickets to Bodiam station include all the Halloween activities. On **Friday 29 and Saturday 30 October** the Railway will be hosting their special Fright Nights, when the creepy fun really begins as the clock strikes 6pm and the 'Fright Night Steam Train' pulls away from the station. Families can enjoy a return ride to Bodiam with a variety of spooky on board entertainment to help everyone get in the spirit of things. As the train draws into Northiam station, passengers will enjoy a fantastic firework display, which will illuminate the sky with an explosion of colours.

Merriments Gardens have recently launched a new wild area in their four acre garden and to celebrate, Dan Mead, manager of the Wildlife and Birdcare Centre, has put together a comprehensive programme of wildlife events for families. Between **Wednesday 27 and Sunday 31 October**, visitors can join in the Birds for Beginners event, which offers everyone the opportunity to learn about the many different species of wild birds and discover how to attract them into their own gardens. Visitors will also have the chance to see wild birds feeding from a remarkably close distance in Merriments own bird hide, located in the wild area of the garden. *The day begins at 10am and will last between 1 and 2 hours, depending on the weather. Advance booking please.*

The Seventh Wonder, Marle Place Gardens and Gallery, is closed for the winter but will open again in April 2011.

The Seven Wonders new family pass costs £35 and offers savings of over £120 with free and discounted entry.

For more information on the Seven Wonders, their events or family pass, please visit www.sevenwonders.org.uk

For images or to arrange a press visit, please contact Caroline Edmunds of Pennington PR on 01892 616647 or email caroline@penningtonpr.com

Notes to Editors

The Seven Wonders of the Weald is a successful tourism partnership incorporating Bedgebury National Pinetum & Forest, Bodiam Castle, The Kent & Sussex Railway, Chiddingstone Castle, Merriments Gardens, Marle Place Gardens and Gallery, and The Hop Farm. The Seven Wonders are also affiliated with Royal Tunbridge Wells, Dale Hill Hotel and Golf Club, Chart Hills Golf Club, the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Garden of England Cottages, which together provide a complete package to visitors.