

PRESS RELEASE

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Children have fun learning about history and culture at Chiddingstone Castle

Chiddingstone Castle in Kent is both unspoilt and different. It is full of exciting treasures for children and adults to explore. It has recently re opened after a period of restoration and has increased the days it opens to visitors in 2009 to Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, Good Friday and some Thursdays for special events.

Stunning Egyptian and Buddhist artefacts, magnificent Japanese armour and beautiful Jacobean paintings are on display in the many outstanding collections. Set in 35 acres of grounds including a lake open to fishermen, a rose garden and magnificent woodland. Younger visitors can discover Samurai Warriors, Egyptian Tombs and Castle Ghosts with the help of 'Alex the Explorer' back packs. There is also a charming café and tearoom with outdoor and indoors seating. Not to be missed are the wonderful daffodils in April.

Great savings can also be made in 2009 as Chiddingstone Castle has launched a new family season pass which gives free entry to the castle, its grounds and the 15 themed activity days taking place throughout the season for just £38.50 for a family of four (2 adults and 2 children or 1 adult and 3 children).

The castle opens on 10 April 2009 but a special activity day has been planned for February half term.

Get your hands dirty with the Victorians! (19 Feb and 25 May)

Children can step back in time and take part in Victorian activities including baking in Chiddingstone's very own Victorian kitchen. Charlie the shoe shine boy will be performing at 2pm before children enjoy authentic games and races at 3pm. *Dates: 19 February (half term) and 25 May (bank holiday) 11am – 5pm*

Walk like an Egyptian! (10 Apr and 9 Aug)

Chiddingstone's Egyptian collection is the perfect back drop as Ancient Egypt is brought to life with face painting and authentic costumes for children to dress up in. Children will learn about this fascinating culture as they write their name in hieroglyphs and make their own match box mummy or amulet to take home. Rising from the dead will be Chiddingstone's personal Egyptian Pharaoh who will be doing interactive performances at 2pm. *Dates: 10 April (Good Friday) and 9 August 11am – 5pm*

Easter hunt and springtime fun (13 Apr)

In April the castle grounds will be home to spring lambs which children can pet. There will also be a bouncy castle and a guided nature trail where children can hunt for yummy treats among the trees. New for 2009 families can take Chiddingstone's springtime bingo spotter sheets with them round the beautiful 35 acre grounds - each child completing the game will receive an Easter egg prize! *Date: 13 April (Easter Monday) 11am – 5pm*

Crafty stories: Princesses and knights at the Castle (16 Apr)

Children can make their own wand or crown to take home and listen to exciting stories as well as have their face painted perhaps as their favourite fairytale character. *Dates: 16 April (Easter school holidays) 2-5pm*

Creepy crawlies at the Castle (4 May and 31 Aug)

Children will be able to create pom pom bugs, pet snakes and paper plate frogs as well as enjoy a bouncy castle and face painting. A guided nature trail at 2pm will allow them to experience a bug's life first hand! *Dates: 4 May and 31 August (bank holiday Mondays) 11am-5pm Bingo spotter sheet available with prize on completion.*

Crafty stories: discover the Dinosaurs! (28 May)

Jurassic park comes to Chiddingstone as children enjoy face painting and listen to enthralling stories after they have made their own dinosaurs to take home! *Dates: 28 May (half term) 2-5pm*

Crafty stories: under the sea (23 Jul)

An afternoon of arts and crafts allows children to make their own pet sea turtle or fish, compete with fish bowl, plants and gravel. Face painting and story telling will bring the sea to life. *Date: 23 July 2-5pm*

Japanese day: Samurai drums and mask making (2 Aug)

In dedication to their famous Japanese Armour and Swords collection Chiddingstone is again hosting the popular Taiko drumming workshop. Children can have a taste of the culture making their own Samurai mask and swords, and wish fish to tie around trees in the grounds. A special treat will be learning to write their own names in Japanese. *Dates: 2 August 11am-5pm*

Crafty stories: Spectacular space (16 Aug)

Children will have the opportunity to learn about our universe as they make aliens, model rockets and solar system mobiles to take home. Everyone can also listen to exciting stories and enjoy face painting. *Dates: 16 August 2-5pm.*

Walk on the Wild side (23 Aug)

A guided summer nature trail and bingo spotter sheet will draw families to Chiddingstone's stunning grounds. Children can also enjoy a bouncy castle and take part in face painting.

Dates: 23 August 2-5pm

Crafty Stories: Horrible Halloween and lantern-lit trick or treat (29 Oct)

Chiddingstone Castle will be calling all budding witches and warlocks to an afternoon of spooky fun where they can make scary masks and trick or treat bags to take with them on a lantern lit walk through the grounds to collect yummy treats. *Dates: 29 October 2-5pm*

A Victorian Christmas (29 Nov)

Enjoy an afternoon of Nostalgic Christmas fun as Chiddingstone looks back on our Christmas customs. Children can bake sugar mice in the Victorian kitchen, and Christmas

decorations and cards with authentic dip pens before parents take them on a stroll around the grounds. Carols will be sung in the great hall and there will be a warm drink and a festive mince pie afterwards for families. *Dates: 29 November 2-5pm*

Families who purchase a family season pass costing just £38.50 for two adults and two children will be able to enjoy access to the grounds, the castle and its unique Egyptian, Japanese, Buddhist and Jacobean collections as well as these exciting activity days throughout the season. Non family pass holders can also enjoy the events which are included in the admission price.

To purchase a family pass for £38.50 please call 01892 872746. Chiddingstone Castle is open from Good Friday, 10 April 2009 until 27 September 2009. Chiddingstone's grounds and tea room, offering home made refreshments, can be accessed without a castle pass. For more information about the Castle and all events please visit

www.chiddingstonecastle.org.uk

Editors Notes

- Chiddingstone activity days are free for family pass holders. All arts and crafts will take place on the lawns in fine weather or in activity rooms if raining. To purchase a pass please call 01892 872746.
- Chiddingstone Castle is open between 10 April and 27 September on Sunday's, Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Good Friday, and some Thursdays for special activities between 11am – 5pm. Please check what's on page on the website for forthcoming events and activity days and any changes to opening times and days. Admission: Adult: £6 Children: (aged 5-13) £4 (children under 4 are free) Families: (2 adults and 2 children) £18 Adult season ticket: £20.00 Family season ticket: £38.50. Groups are welcome by prior arrangement: £5pp (min 20 people) All visitors visiting the grounds and the café only are free. The bingo spotter will be available throughout the season and are themed for particular activity days.
- Chiddingstone Castle is located on the outskirts of Chiddingstone, and is best approached via the B2027 road from Tonbridge to Peshurst, turn into Mill Lane when you reach Bough Beech and keep straight for one mile.
- Chiddingstone Village has been used as a location in many films, most notably *A Room with a View*, but also in *The Wicked Lady*, and *Elizabeth R* starring Glenda Jackson.
- The Castle can be hired for weddings, corporate and private functions and as a conference centre.
- The k in Gothik is the correct architectural term to describe the Castle, since it is part of the Victorian Gothik Revival and not actually Gothic