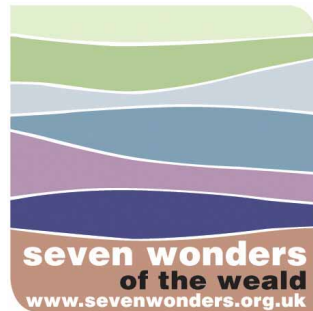


Press release

15 July 2010



Outdoor cultural events at the Seven Wonders of the Weald

The Seven Wonders of the Weald are presenting an array of cultural delights this summer including: outdoor theatre productions, jazz nights, art exhibitions and cultural festivals.

Visitors looking to enjoy a holiday or weekend away in the South East can choose from the variety of accommodation offered by the Seven Wonders of the Weald Partners including: Royal Tunbridge Wells, Dale Hill Hotel and Golf Club and the Garden of England Cottages. The Seven Wonders website also offers details on exclusive accommodation offers and discounts, visit www.sevenwonders.org.uk for more information.

Below are a variety of events taking place at the Seven Wonders of the Weald attractions this summer:

The beautiful **Merriments Gardens** will be opening their *Summer Spectacular Festival* between **17 July and 15 August 2010** with the comic play *The Merry Wives*

of Windsor on 17 July. The dastardly Falstaff tries to seduce two ladies, but fails horribly as the women find out his devious tricks and in turn humiliate him. Bring a blanket and a picnic for the outdoor performance and enjoy a Pimms which will be served at the bar. **Tickets in advance £15 per person booking on 01580 860666.**

Jazz diva Tina May will also be performing a collection of classical American jazz on the restaurant terrace, where you can also enjoy delicious home cooked dishes and a drink from the bar. Performance starts at **7.30 on the 25 July**. Tina May has been described as one of the most expressive singers in the UK jazz scene and this is an intimate performance not to be missed. **Price: £15 per person including a free glass of Pimms on arrival. Booking essential on 01580 860666.**

The Hop Farm will be hosting its annual *War and Peace Show* between **21-25 July**. During the world's largest military show visitors will be able to see all manner of military vehicles and equipment, with the chance to have thrilling tank and helicopter rides. Exhilarating battle re-enactments and live history camps will bring the past to life and teach children about the Second World War. Enjoy the funfair and see the Red Arrows in action and enjoy a 1940's fashion show and live music from the era. With something to do for all members of the family, this is a great way to have fun and learn about the work and sacrifice of the service men and women of World War II. **Gate prices are £18 adult / £16 child / £15 Senior. 10% discount for early booking (before 21 July).** To celebrate the 65th anniversary of the end of World War II - All World War II Veterans who took part in the many campaigns on land, sea and in the air will be admitted FREE to The War and Peace Show at The Hop Farm. Veterans will need to contact The Hop Farm for details.

The comedy *Much Ado about Nothing* and the classic love story *Romeo and Juliet* are both being performed at the wonderfully preserved **Bodiam Castle** near Robertsbridge on the **24 July and 31 July respectively**. *Much Ado about Nothing* is performed by the acclaimed Pantaloons, which tells the story of love and deception and the importance of being true to your word; while the award winning Illyria production puts on the story of *Romeo and Juliet*, two lovers torn between their allegiance to their clans and the love for each other. The outdoor evening

performances will be very special with the castle casting the perfect setting for the plays. **Prices: £17 adult / £9 child, booking is essential on 0844 2491895.**

For the budding actors and actresses, the Pantaloons will also be holding *Shakespeare Theatre Workshops* on the **24 and 25 July 11am-4pm**, a highly entertaining and informal event where you can learn with the actors. There will also be a matinee performance of *Macbeth*. **Included with castle admission: Gift Aid admission (Standard Admission prices in brackets) £6.40 (£5.80) adult, £3.20 (£2.90) child, there is also a reduced rate for those arriving by public transport.**

Why not enjoy the peaceful setting of the award winning **Marle Place Gardens and Gallery** where visitors can view the fantastic gallery which has art exhibitions running all summer. *The Hospice in the Weald's Annual Show* between **3 and 15 of August** will give visitors the opportunity to see some wonderful photographs of nature taken by patients of the Hospice. The gardens, which have been tended since the 19th century, hold many delightful surprises including a beautifully restored 19th century greenhouse with a fine collection of orchids. **Admission to the gallery is free, entrance to garden £5 adult / £1.50 child.**

From **12 to 26 September Marle Place** will be hosting their popular annual *Sculpture Show*, which is now in its seventh year. Visitors can admire and purchase over 100 contemporary art pieces, which will be on display in the beautiful grounds. **For more information please contact Mike Likeman on 01299 896188 or email: mike@thesculptureshow.com. The Exhibition is included in the garden's admission price: £5 adult / £1.50 child.**

The fantastic **Bedgebury Pinetum & Forest** will be holding a *Wild Life Safari* on **Wednesday 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th August from 10.00am – 12.00 noon**. Bedgebury's Pinetum and Forest provides a haven for many wild animals and a mini-beast hunt will introduce visitors to some of the smaller inhabitants, before looking for evidence of other inhabitants in the area around the Walled Garden. As the morning draws to a close, children will have the opportunity to make a beautiful dragonfly to take home. **Ages 5+ years. Price: £6 per child, pre booking essential.**

Bedgebury also has a performance of *Great Expectations* brought to life by the Quantum theatre group on the **17 August** in the walled gardens. Tickets to see the adaptation are **£12 adult / £7 child. Booking essential 01842 814612.**

For something completely different come to **Chiddingstone Castle** on the **30 August** for their *Japanese Festival*. The programme of events includes an energetic live Taiko Drum performance, the chance to learn and see different bonsai trees and the traditions of the Samurai demonstrated by Mr Nakagawa (a practitioner of the Tameshigiri sword art who is visiting from Japan). See the fantastic collection of Japanese artefacts and ancient Samurai armour and swords on display in the castle rooms. Explore the beautiful grounds and award winning orangery and enjoy lunch or tea in the Tea Room. **Prices: £7 adult / £4 child, £2.50 for parking.**

On **11 and 12 September** visitors to Bodiam station can enjoy a whole weekend of “opping nostalgia” as the **Kent & East Sussex Railway** hosts its tenth annual *Hop Pickers Weekend*. Bodiam was an important area for hop picking and the weekend offers visitors the opportunity to experience a hop picker’s way of life in the recreated hop garden and hopper’s hut and try their hand at the testing skill of hop stripping. There will also be memorabilia on display at the station along with period tractors and steam driven road vehicles. Visitors can enjoy a variety of live entertainment throughout the weekend, including Morris Dancers and refreshments will be available from the tea tent, bar and BBQ. **Prices: £12.80 adult / £7.80 child / £11.80 senior (price includes event entry and an All-Day Rover ticket to explore the railway)**

For details of all the Wonders and to take advantage of the **£35 Seven Wonders of the Weald annual family pass** during the school summer holidays visit www.sevenwonders.org.uk

Press enquiries to Caroline Edmunds at Pennington PR 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 Hop Farm 'World of Activities'. In order to provide a complete package the Seven Wonders Group has also affiliated some complementary partners including: 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. This new partnership is designed to enhance the High Weald's position as a top tourist destination.

The Seven Wonders provide something for all members of the family, from beautiful gardens at Marle Place and Merriments to healthy outdoor activities in Bedgebury Forest and at The Hop Farm. Choose from the many hands on history lessons at Bodiam Castle, the Kent & East Sussex Railway and Chiddingstone Castle.

Below is a listing of all cultural activities happening in the Seven Wonders this summer.

When	Event	Location	Booking
17 July	The Merry Wives of Windsor	Merriments Gardens	£15 p/p, booking essential 01580 860666
17 July	Pride and Prejudice	Bodiam Castle	£17 adult / £9 Child booking essential 0844 2491895
21 to 25 July	War and Peace Show	The Hop Farm	£18 adult / £16 child / £15 senior
24 July	Much Ado about Nothing	Bodiam Castle	£17 adult / £9 child booking essential 0844 2491895
24/25 July	Shakespeare Theatre Workshops	Bodiam Castle	Normal admission charges, booking not needed
25 July	Jazz Diva Tina May	Merriments Gardens	£15 p/p, booking essential 01580 860666
25 July to 1 August	Marle Place History Show	Marle Place Gardens and Gallery	Admission to gallery free, entrance to garden £5 adult / £1.50 child
31 July	Romeo and Juliet	Bodiam Castle	£17 adult / £9 child booking essential 0844 2491895
3 to 15 August	The Hospice in the Weald's Annual Show	Marle Place Gardens and Gallery	Admission to gallery free, entrance to garden £5 adult / £1.50 children
17 August	Great Expectations	Bedgebury Forest	£12 adult / £7 child, booking essential 01842 814612
30 August	Japanese Festival	Chiddingstone Castle	£7 adult / child £4

11 to 12 September	Hoppers Weekend	Kent & East Sussex Railway	£12.80 adult / £7.80 child / £11.80 senior (price includes event entry and an All-Day Rover ticket to explore the railway)
12 September	Woodland Craft Day	Chiddingstone Castle	£7 adult / child £4
12 to 26 September	The Sculpture Show	Marle Place Gardens and Gallery	Admission to gallery free, entrance to garden £5 adult / £1.50 child
25 October	Mysterious Mummies (Big Draw event)	Chiddingstone Castle	£7 adult / child £4
26 October	Big Draw	Bedgebury Forest	£8 car booking essential 01842 814612
Various Dates	Wild at Art Courses	Marle Place Gardens and Gallery	Call Lucy Williams on 01892 724375 to book.