

Waterperry House Newsletter 19th December 2018



As usual I've left things to the last minute but want to get something out to you all before Christmas so please forgive any clumsy grammar or typos.

I will shortly be dressing up as Santa for the village childrens' Christmas party today. Downstairs Jennie, Allen, David and Jan are putting up twinkling lights, wrapping presents, winding tinsel around the banisters and hiding chocolate money for the treasure hunt. The huge tree in the ballroom is resplendent like a plump debutant in a tight dress with way too many sequins.

If we survive the kids party then tomorrow the estate and gardens party is upon us. We are expecting eighty people. Taste of Tibet will be catering, setting up their gas burners outside the kitchen and producing Yeti sized portions of delicious dahl and curry. Ollie, one of our young shop staff, is providing the musical entertainment with his band and Andy Peters is sourcing the best local beer.

The next day the asbestos removal people are turning up to begin sealing up half the downstairs rooms before the last of the silicosis inducing substance can be removed from the house. Hopefully they will have finished before the first residential weekend of 2019.

Looking back on the year I am proud of what the team here has achieved. By the 'team' I mean everybody that lives and works here and all the great service from members of the School. The family just seems to grow and grow with love under-pinning all of it.

Waterperry Gardens Limited is set to screech gracefully into the black once more which is no mean feat considering some of the hurdles we have had to jump this year.

The garden has maintained it's standard and developed modestly but robustly. We have planted a host of daffodils which will show their heads for the first time in March providing we can keep Michael's blitzkrieg mowing methods under control. The first bunch of the new arboretum trees were planted this year and our sons and daughters should enjoy the full splendour of the autumn colour in thirty years time. We were on mainstream German television this year so I expect a German invasion next year.

The teashop has done really well yet again but the old building is long past it's sell by date and it's time for a new one. The floor fell in under the chiller early in the year, rats got in and ate far too many crisps than was good for them recently, and the state of the electrics, gas and plumbing gives me constant nervous twitches. Luckily we have a plan and full planning permission for a new one now which will be wonderful and beautiful. We just need a bit of money.

Fresco tours have gone really well this year. We do them on Wednesdays and Fridays now. I really enjoy watching people's surprise as they enter the Artist's Hall. It is the best, simplest way to communicate advaita philosophy and what the School is about in three quarters of an hour that I know. I often get asked by visitors if they can come for a retreat.

All the events that occurred at Waterperry this year were very successful and we have loads more next year and even more the year after. You can find out about it all by visiting the Waterperry Gardens website and following us facebook, instagram and twitter. You can sign up to the arts newsletter from the Theatre page of the website if you want also. This is where it's all happening! Follow us. You are very welcome to get involved. Just call me or Jennie. Jennie is running the gift barn now and doing a fabulous job.

Our strap line is "All be Happy": its on the bags and the tea-towels and the garden staff cheekily remind me of it when I'm looking glum.

Those living on the Waterperry Estate now are Doreen, Gordon, Mary Harrison, Jose and Stephan Lanczack, Jan, David and Emma Hockley, Allen Gardiner, Chris Ryan, Andy and Lilli (workshops here), Bonnie Ryan (new apprentice), James Clayton (plant area manager), Chris (fruit manager) and Zena Lanczak, Rosie and Mark and Catherine Nichol and new baby Alexander, Jennie, me and the sausage dog Maggie (sometimes Olivia and Sofia too).

Have a Happy Christmas from all of us here.

I've got to go and be Santa now. I'll be sweating under a nylon white beard and trying to make sure the pillow doesn't slip as I shout "Ho, ho ho!" and stagger across the glass walkway in the Artist's Hall with all the children's presents. I have a horrid feeling that this will be the year that Harry, the next door farmers' son, will recognise me and all his dreams will be shattered.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Bullock". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.