

## **Knebworth House Hosts Another Groundbreaking Event With Hedgestock**

### **Impeccable catering support through Relish The Experience and Sodexo Prestige hosted by Knebworth House ensured Hedgestock was a success**

Knebworth House again demonstrated itself as the premier venue for delivering exceptional events when it hosted Hedgestock on 7-8 June 2006, headlined with a charity concert led by Roger Daltrey of The Who.

The catering was a feat in itself - Run by Jason Richards and Marcie Warden of Relish The Experience and Niamh Long of Knebworth House, they managed 18 operational areas and ensured that the food, drinks and service for 3,000 guests and 1,000 support crew were of the highest order. On site, golf buggies, bikes and vans were used to cover the ground quickly due to the large distances at Knebworth between the kitchens, stock room, gazebos and exhibition stands.

Created/produced by Albourne Partners, the world's largest hedge fund advisory firm, and supported by ten leading investment banks, Hedgestock included flower-power vans and beach huts for meeting rooms, while prime brokers, including Bear Stearns, Merrill Lynch and UBS sponsored tents. 3,000 people took advantage of the love-in and all profits were donated to the Teenage Cancer Trust.

Hedgestock also had its own radio Radio Hedgestock, which broadcasted to a five-mile radius for the two days, and gave updates from the Polo, the Cricket and the Poker Competitions, The Longest Drive and Nearest the Pin and even from the Laser Clay Pigeon Shooting and SingalongSound of Music.

The whole event was very informal and this meant that the catering requirements on the day had to match the experience by providing a wide range of options. Relish The Experience was working across 18 sites including a barbecue for 90 guests on the cricket pitch for the Bank of Canada; cheese, wine and ale tasting in the Knebworth Barns for Barclays, the Knebworking restaurant catering for 1,000 guests in under 90 minutes; high tea served by butlers on the front lawn in the gazebos; orders for 1,000 Solero ice-creams, Pimm's served in the Bear Stearns hot air balloon; and canapés and drinks in 6 hospitality double-deckers. In addition to this Knebworth operations team catered for over 1,000 in crew catering as well as backstage catering for The Who, which involved sourcing the rare energy US drink, Gatorade, specially driven from the only UK supplier in Slough .

Feedback from the event has shown that the Relish the Experience team exceeded expectations. Nora Quain, Corporate Events Manager, Bear Stearns Europe says,

"I just had to say something once to the Relish team and it got done – I would give them 11 out of 10 for their service. They were really professional, tuned in and approachable. We decided the

numbers and budget and tentatively confirmed them to Jason. We realised that the numbers had to then be increased and he reconfirmed this in writing. At the last minute we also had to make a change by adding canapés. This was no problem for the team and they were flexible and responsive to our needs. On the first night we had a barbecue for 90 in the rose garden but we realised the day before that this was likely to rise to 120. I spoke to Jason and he said that he could accommodate up to 100 guests. On the evening we actually had even more guests and we were able to cater for 155 – the staff on-site were very calm under pressure.”

Jason Richards of Relish The Experience says,

“Hedgestock has been a great opportunity and a challenge as it started from something small and grew to something on this scale. Teamwork has been the highlight for me with both management and staff coming together to create a truly memorable event. All the marquees were full to capacity and we had a lot of last minute requests which kept us on our toes - we have had everything thrown at us with barbecues doubling in size and people drinking more beer during the first day during the hot weather. We have delivered a great service and our clients are happy. The feedback we have had to date has been overwhelming. Everyone in the restaurant has said that the food and the service was excellent and it was likened to eating in a 5 star restaurant. Despite the heat all the staff had a smile on their face throughout the event.”

Martha Lytton Cobbold of Knebworth House adds,

“The event has been run extremely well and it has been a fine example of different teams pulling together to deliver a fantastic event with such a heart-warming objective. Everyone has had a good time, objectives were met, the theme was well received and it is always nice to see the house and the park being enjoyed in such an all -encompassing way.”

Niamh Long of Knebworth House says,

“It has been incredible to be involved in Hedgestock from taking the initial exciting enquiry by phone in June 2005, to one year later walking through the crowds, seeing them getting into the spirit of the event with the backdrop of Knebworth House. It was a moment to savour and to reflect on all the team work, goodwill and good fun that made Hedgestock, such an amazing festival of colour, with lots of stories to be told. It was an event that grew from an interesting enquiry to an amazing event where all boundaries were pushed and everyone entered the spirit.”

The striking exterior of Knebworth House with its turrets, domes and gargoyles and its 250 acre estate made it the perfect venue to host Hedgestock. Steeped in 500 years of British history, Knebworth was originally a redbrick Tudor manor house, Knebworth was transformed in 1843 into the Gothic fantasy we see today. There have been gardens at Knebworth since the 1600's. The present layout dates from Victorian and Edwardian times, with more recent additions and improvements. The Gardens feature the Lutyens-designed Pollarded Lime Avenues and Brick Garden, the Gertrude Jekyll Herb Garden, the Golden Garden, the Rose Garden, the Maze, the

Kitchen Garden, the Pets Cemetery and the Wilderness. Knebworth is synonymous with live music, playing host to over 100 major artists who have played Knebworth Festivals since their inception in 1974, including The Rolling Stones, Queen, Oasis, Robbie Williams and now The Who.

**Ends**

**For more information or images contact Camilla Hutchinson on 07810 204071**



Photo: from left to right Jason Richards (Relish), Sarah Blakemore (Sodexo Prestige), Martha Lytton Cobbold (Knebworth), Marcie Walden (Relish), Sue Creed (Sodexo Prestige), Niamh Long (Knebworth Sodexo)

**Notes to Editor**

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