

Institute of **Physics**

LONDON AND SOUTH EASTERN BRANCH REMS SECTION

Visit to Chartwell, Thursday 9th June 2005

This visit has been organised by Steve Lane

Visit the family home of Sir Winston Churchill, and gain an insight into his private world, in the year when we commemorate the fortieth anniversary of his death!

Sir Winston loved Chartwell as the place where he could truly escape the pressures of his public and political life to be with his family. He purchased the estate in 1922 and, except during the Second World War, spent as much time here as he could. Visitors are welcomed into the house, which is kept very much as it was in his day. Twentieth century history comes to life in rooms containing many reminders of Sir Winston and his time. A new exhibition in the museum room offers the opportunity to see a range of gifts offered to him from around the world, some never previously displayed.

The grounds command magnificent views over the Weald of Kent, and visitors in 2005 can see work in progress to restore the kitchen garden to the appearance in its heyday of the 1930s to 1940s, when it provided food and cut flowers for the Churchill family. Seek out the Nemon statue of Sir Winston and Lady Churchill, or the Marycot play-house he built for his own children. Enjoy the tranquil atmosphere of the water garden where he sat to feed his golden orfe, or the fragrance of Lady Churchill's rose garden.

Many of Sir Winston's paintings are to be seen in his garden studio, while nearby are the garden walls which he built with his own hands over a period of about seven years, and the Golden Rose Avenue created in 1958 by Sir Winston and Lady Churchill's children to celebrate the golden wedding anniversary of their parents.

Programme

- 10.30 - 11.00 Assemble in the car park, next to the Visitor Centre (stay in car if cold or wet!).
- 11.00 - 11.10 En bloc purchase of tickets (not pre-bookable).
- 11.10 - 11.30 Introductory talk and refreshments (tea/coffee and Chartwell cakes & biscuits).
- 11.30 - 14.00 Self guided tour of gardens, studio, shop, etc. (take lunch when you choose).
- 14.00 Entry to the house.

I will be at the Visitor Centre to greet you and collect National Trust membership cards (if you have one, be sure to bring it!) or ticket money (£8 for non-members). This will speed up payment for our party and avoid registration delays. We will be given tickets for entry to the house at a set time, which we hope will be 14.00, but this may differ a little depending on how many other visitors there are that day. Latecomers will need to pay individually, and will probably receive a differently timed ticket.

Notes

There is an area to picnic (bring your own) in the meadow off the car-park, but this is not permitted in the gardens. Alternatively, if you do not want to trust to the vagaries of the weather, there is a licensed restaurant serving a range of hot and cold meals, with dishes priced at approximately £6. However the restaurant gets very busy from 1.00 onwards, so if you lunch there I recommend you do so as early as possible.

The Visitor Centre or the Shop or the House should all have copies of the Chartwell Guidebook, room guides in English, and a Welcome leaflet (free) showing a map of the grounds.

Keep an eye on the notice board at the Visitor Centre or the Studio, which gives timings for informal talks (duration approximately 20 minutes) on 'Sir Winston Churchill : the Artist'. These are given in the Studio itself, and exact times are advertised each day. I gather that there is often a slot around 3.30, which may fit in with the end of your house tour.

There is no bus link to Chartwell on weekdays, so travel by car is the recommended option. Leave the M25 at junction 5 or 6 (depending on the direction you are coming from) and pick up the A25 (actually quite a minor road) towards Westerham, followed by the B2026 towards Edenbridge. After approximately 1 mile bear left onto Mapleton Road, then after a further mile look out for the Chartwell car park on your left.

For those coming by train, there is a good service to Sevenoaks, provided we can arrange for you to be met at the station. The 9.45 from Charing Cross arrives at 10.17, while the 10.00 train arrives at 10.35, but anything later than this would not leave sufficient time to catch up with the rest of our party.

Numbers and costs

Numbers are limited to 30. The entry cost (pay on the day) is £8 per head, or free to National Trust members. Remember to bring your own picnic, or pay on the day at the restaurant. All applicants please enclose £6 per head for the introductory talk and refreshments.

