

Friends of Warminster Maltings Newsletter

January 2007

Last year has been a particularly hectic year at Warminster Maltings. Sales of malt continued to expand prodigiously, with production figures exceeding the previous years totals month after month. I think we now have to accept that we are close to the limits of our capacity, serving 223 breweries, not just in the UK, but right across the world.

At the same time we have also had to meet the challenge of an unusually high level of turnover within the team of maltsters who work the floors. It is not that we are poor employers or poor payers, but that the work is physically hard. From time to time we have to accept that maltsters move on to work, which is less physical. New recruits require weeks of training before they can handle any responsibility, which puts the management of the maltings under enormous pressure.

I regret that over the last 12 months all of this has got in the way of us developing the public face of Warminster Maltings and building our relationship with our 'Friends'. I hope you will forgive us for that. But I



can report that your subscriptions have been used to good effect – they have contributed to valuable restoration works which have been completed, so preserving and enhancing our unique heritage site.

New garden terrace adjacent to kiln no.1

In this quest we have been very lucky to have the help of local craftsman Andy Mead, who began last year by completing the restoration of Kiln No 1, the only complete example of the original four coal fired kilns. Andy restored the slate roof and built the oakwood vent at the apex. Situated alongside our working gas-fired kiln, some days when the right vent on the gas kiln is open, steam escapes across to Kiln No 1 and can be again seen pouring from the top vent like it used to for 100 years or more.

Andy has also terraced the garden next to the offices, restored the gateway entrance off Pound Street, all of which has been constructed with brick and stone to match the surrounding fabric. All of this work arguably contributes little to the commercial viability of the maltings, and so has to be funded over and above the annual company budget. So this is why any help we can get with these projects, via Friends or any other ideas we can come up with, is so very much appreciated.

But we do want to reciprocate the support from our Friends, and this is where we struggle. Tours of the maltings are on going, via private parties or commercial interests, but the content remains the same as it has been forever. What we seriously lack is space for any other gatherings/events until we can use the garden in the summer. So I must ask you to bear with us until then when it is our firm intention to lay on an evening event which will encompass our past, our present and our future.



Meanwhile, on behalf of all of us at Warminster Maltings Ltd, may I take this opportunity to wish you

A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR