

The Natter

Annual Newsletter
December 2020



SMALL
LUXURY
HOTELS
OF THE WORLD



The Nare

The country house hotel by the sea



An innkeeper's insight - a 2020 vision impeded...

This last year has had the sensation of riding a rather wild galloping horse; really quite tricky working out how to get off, and if one is going to end up in the ditch or land on one's feet. All very scarily exhilarating and dangerous, yet with the growing realisation as you approach what you hope is the end of the course you find in fact you have a very trusty steed that has looked after you all the way. The Nare has certainly been our trusty mare this year. Despite the world changing events the hotel has not only survived but has proven her resilience in adversity, of which I am truly proud. Under the very level-headed and inspiring leadership of Matthew Voyle, the General Manager, the staff should be praised for their steadiness under extreme conditions and their sheer grit in working through the very challenging conditions. I am extremely grateful for their determination. The true character of the establishment has blossomed in extremis.

Likewise we were all particularly heartened by the support received from guests who have been our rock and hope. In the gloomiest days of April, with a revenue of just £122 for the month and a considerably larger 100 employee wage bill, there was an enormous boost to morale in just hearing a loyal guest postponing their deposit with the words "We're definitely coming - just as soon as you can get us in - but make sure we have our booking for next year as well". So thank you all who kept the faith and supported us. Never was it more appreciated than in this year.

A significant consequence of this tremendous guest support brings the satisfaction that I have been able to uphold a pledge given to all staff as they were sent home in March for

their indeterminate enforced spring break. I am very proud to report that we have not had to make one single member of staff redundant. For that fact alone, perversely, I consider 2020 a successful year. So strange are the times we feel blessed that everyone is still here.

Interestingly the last time The Nare was closed during the summer season was when requisitioned during the Second World War. This year we were very fortunate in Cornwall to be able to reopen in July - sadly our hotelier friends in London were not so lucky. Of course in the last few years the country has faced A for *Austerity*, B for *Brexit*, and C for *Coronavirus*. Let's avoid D becoming *Depression* or *Depravity* but rather D for *Do-your-bit-for-Britain*. Therefore I urge everyone please to support British jobs - *Your country needs you!*

Support Britain
Stay at



So rather than continuing to wallow in the woes of the global annus horribilis this Natter contains a few snippets of joy and cheer that are timely reminders of just how lucky we are.

In July I experienced the hospitality equivalent of a sugar-low. I confess I slightly lost my cool with a gentleman who was over-pressing the office for a 15% reduction on his already confirmed booking for the Pendower Suite. Despite a waiting list he was seeking an extended stay claiming as an impoverished banker (sic) he was "struggling to keep shoes on his daughters' feet".

Presuming he might have a sense of humour I could not help myself but quip that they should try flip-flops rather than Ferragamos; and furthermore, for contributions to the last global recession, he should really have a 20% surcharge for being a banker. Luckily he did indeed have a sense of humour. We made up over a glass of Taittinger and they did enjoy their family holiday.

Perhaps the following is also an apt and classic definition of a first world problem; consider relaxing at The Nare on the terrace in the sun and, as the waiter pours the tonic (5%) pondering the dilution of VAT versus dilution of gin (20%). What indeed is the net VAT rate of a G & T? Some things just don't matter - perhaps we should consider these challenges to be trivial? I certainly do.

However the most touching moment of the year, which will remain ingrained in my memory, was the premature departure from the hotel in March of our last guest on lockdown Monday. A charming young doctor with her boyfriend explained how her grandparents, who felt unable to travel, had gifted to her a much needed short break before she resumed duties at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital. The couple had been enchanted and refreshed at The Nare, yet I sensed the real anxiety and trepidation of what she faced going back to the medical frontline. It helped put the situation into perspective when briefing staff 20 minutes

later how lucky we were to be in Cornwall. Indeed would we see her again? She was our heroine, one to follow. Speaking to her recently whilst on night shift she was modest about how tough it had been (her grandfather revealed she had been signing death certificates at the rate of four a day), and whilst weary and tired she seemed chipper. Surely some care at The Nare and the remaining nights of her foreshortened stay would be something to look forward to? So with much appreciation the gesture was accepted – gratis.

Finally I am delighted to announce the good progress of four new hotel suites, constructed below the croquet lawn, which will be ready by March 2021. As you can imagine it has all been a bit stop and start this year, the builders forced to come and go as if they were doing the hokey-cokey. Miraculously though the suites are just about on time, but most importantly they are looking splendid, comfortable and spacious*. They also have stunning sea views, naturally!

I send you my very best wishes for a deservedly better 2021,



Toby Ashworth
Proprietor

* Image opposite: "Yes! Every room has a different paper"

This architect's illustration shows the south elevation of the four large Whittington Suites that have been added to the western end of the main house



eNatters

Updates from the proprietor are sent by email (eNatters) up to six times a year. Please do let the office have your email address if you have one or, if you prefer, eNatters may be read on the website - simply visit www.narehotel.co.uk/journal or click on the word Journal in the website footer.



We are eagerly waiting for the final two campbellii to reach 50 blooms and Cornwall's Spring Story to announce that spring has arrived in England. Look out for the declaration next week. Meanwhile do check the live bloomometer (see below)...

With best wishes,



An unusual year in



Having cleared the ground during late 2019 work continued on the four new Whittington Suites which will be connected to the west wing corridor (Rooms 36 - 41) and the Pendower Suite, which is to have a new entrance and Lookout snug room.



The blockwork was nearly complete with the upper level showing the splendid views from the first floor balconies. Life seemed normal and 2020 was going to plan. Yet within just a few short weeks the hotel closed as part of the national lockdown. 90 staff were sent home.



Nare postcards, copies of To Snare A Spy and Country Life magazines were sent out to guests to ease the boredom of lockdown. Toby also recorded a personal video message from an empty Carne Beach to bring some relief after six weeks of lockdown.

January

February

March

April

May

June



The Nare hosted the annual party for Cornwall's Spring Story. This was founded by Toby Ashworth to celebrate and recognise the moment Cornish magnolias flower, spring has arrived in England. This year spring was declared on 18th February 2020.



With the hotel closed there was an abundance of tulips from The Nare's cutting garden that were simply not needed. They were delivered to local residents instead to bring some welcome cheer. Dave the night watchman and his Alsatian, Toby, guarded the hotel to ensure its safe keeping. Natives behaved.



Staff returned to prepare for reopening. Joiners made breakfast buffet screens, hors d'oeuvres and carving trolleys take a rest, routines were altered and staff re-trained. The bellboy and bulldog statues were positioned in the front hall to remind guests to maintain social distancing.

the life of The Nare



The first guests were welcomed through the front door and construction went into its summer recess. To keep guests and staff safe and to acclimatise to new rules, occupancy was restricted initially, arrival and departure times staggered, and the hotel was reserved for resident guests only.



Requests for Alice Rose were at a record high since her launch in 2015 despite being restricted to private charters. Carne Beach played host to a touching moment when, at low tide, a huge piece of artwork was raked into the sand to form a romantic and imaginative wedding proposal (see back page).



The government announced another national lockdown for the second time in nine months and over 90 staff are sent home again. There was much joy at the safe arrival of Ivor Carne Voyle, the firstborn child to General Manager Matthew and his wife Jo.

July

August

September

October

November

December



August delivered such sunny weather and a much needed holiday for many. The Nare was comfortably full yet with plenty of space for everyone to spread out, even if the rules meant some of the usual traditions (e.g. the weekly drinks party) were put on ice.



Construction continued after the summer recess with the terraces and balconies completed. Toby and Katie spent time acquiring various antiques and soft furnishings - the four new suites are to be individually decorated in The Nare's traditional country house style.



After lockdown Cornwall was classified in the lowest virus tier. The Nare reopened on 3rd December with Christmas and New Year programmes finalised hastily - head barman, Ken Cracknell, took a rest from the bar to tickle the ivories during the candlelit dinners.

The Whittington Suites

Four exceedingly comfortable sea-view suites available from March 2021



The view towards Nare Head from a first floor balcony

The four Whittington Suites will be decorated in The Nare's elegant country house style and will offer superior comfort complementing the hotel's existing suites. They will however be even more spacious with the benefit of a second double/dressing room and additional bathroom. Set back slightly from the Pendower Suite at the western end of the main house the new suites will have a more secluded feel. There will be a dedicated

entrance from the croquet lawn car park and direct access to the hotel gardens.

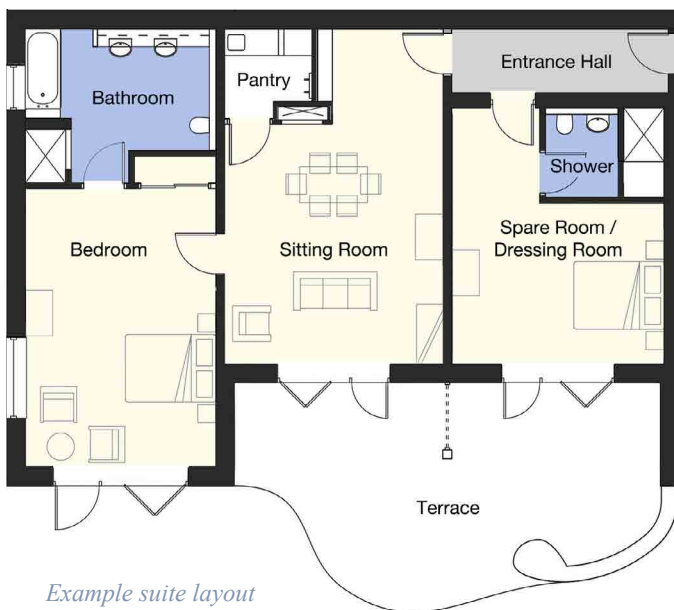
The Nare will always be a small, privately run country house hotel focusing on guests' comfort. Over the years the plan has been to improve quality rather than quantity. There is certainly no desire to become too large and, by adding just four suites, The Nare is



Jeanni, The Nare's artist in residence, was commissioned to paint an impression of the spacious sea view suites



The westward view from the new suites



Example suite layout

simply being restored to the same number of rooms that were present when Toby's grandmother acquired the hotel in 1989. The difference now is that all rooms are larger, upscale and many more benefit from the stunning sea views.

"...adding just four suites...the same number of rooms in 1989"

The new suites have been designed with flexibility in mind. Whilst primarily for existing guests who already appreciate the luxury of

additional space and seclusion they are also very suitable for multi-generational families or even two couples who choose to holiday together and would like to share a sitting room. If taken together two suites will form a private apartment on one level; or all four suites a secure private wing.

Both Toby and Katie Ashworth have been intimately involved in the design of the suites from the start. Toby, an engineer and a self-confessed frustrated architect by nature, took the opportunity of lockdown and the architect's resting pencil to make some design improvements; whilst Katie pressed her contacts in London design houses for interesting fabrics and wallpapers. Each suite will be individually decorated.

"...he chose to name these suites after his grandmother and great-grandmother"

Although The Nare is already considered by many to be one of the most comfortable country houses in the West Country, it may be surprising to learn that The Whittington Suites are expected to be the largest sea-view suites of any hotel in Britain.

The launch of these suites will represent another milestone for the hotel as it continues to lead the way. They will help to ensure The Nare is relevant for the next 25 years and the following generation. They have been part of Toby's long-term vision for the hotel since he took over the reins from his grandmother on millennium eve. In her honour and with a nod of recognition to his family's heritage he chose to name these suites after his grandmother and great-grandmother. Bettye (1916 – 2011) and Olive (1887 - 1971) Whittington. Each were significant inspirational characters and set the pace for the family's 100+ years of Cornish hotel keeping.

2020 Nare snippets



The big reveal...

The Nare Guests' Digital Photobook is now available to view in the journal on The Nare website. Thank you to everyone who sent in their pictures. How lovely to see so many happy memories. Simply go to www.narehotel.co.uk/journal

A sandy proposal...

Early one September morning a man started forming patterns on Carne Beach. Two enormous rings followed with the words 'Helen will you marry me?' This imaginative proposal was captured from the air by drone. Watch the video online in the journal on The Nare website.



If visiting London...

If you are thinking of visiting London in 2021 why not stay at The Goring? This fellow member of Pride of Britain Hotels is offering Nare guests a £125 voucher for a stay of two nights or more. For more information visit: www.narehotel.co.uk/journal

A helping hand...

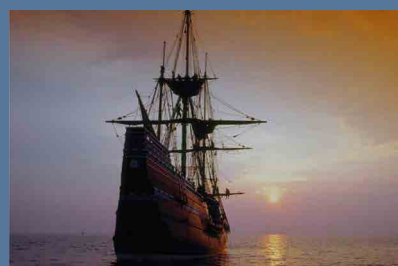
Herbert, The Nare's new robotic lawn-mower, works day and night to keep the grass continually well groomed. Don't worry he hasn't made anyone redundant but does leave Karl, head gardener, a little more time to do other things... really?



2021 at The Nare

Spring gardens...

A visit to Cornwall's Great Gardens on a Nare four day break would make for a fine spring holiday. Local garden Tregothnan have a new waterfront garden opening in 2021. Nare guests can enjoy a private tea workshop and take away their very own blend of Cornish tea.



Mayflower sights...

Celebrate the 400th anniversary of an iconic voyage and book a private guided tour of the Mayflower sights in Plymouth with local expert Charlie Keeler. Travel comfortably with The Nare's Range Rover Chauffeur Service and visit the national exhibition.

Coastal walking...

Cornwall has such beautiful coastal scenery and a footpath that follows the entire coastline. One can walk independently from The Nare or book a private guided walk on further parts of the Cornish coast. Weekly scheduled walks also take place in the autumn.



Tall Ships Race returns...

40 tall ships are expected to gather on the Fal River for a maritime festival before the start of the race on 19th August 2021. Alice Rose, The Nare's own launch, is already being booked for guests to see these magnificent vessels.