

CONGHAM LIFE

Life in Norfolk and Beyond

Guests often ask us to recommend places to visit whilst staying with us here at Congham, so in this issue of Congham Life we catch up with a few friends to find out what they have been up to and to reveal their one special place in Norfolk...

Congham Hall continues its evolution

The refurb team, led by Steve (Tallie) Tall, have been busy refurbishing 11 bedrooms and bathrooms over the past year, all designed by Adi Ellis. Not an easy task due to the nature of the building and having to work around a hotel operation that prides itself on being tranquil and relaxing! But Tallie and his 'partners in grime', local craftsmen Paul Underwood and Michael (Macca) McDermid, never moan even when Adi asks them to create the impossible! Adi draws her inspiration from the classic Georgian building whilst introducing a modern, fresher look to the bedrooms.

Our rooms Angelica and Anise now have a more contemporary feel with a feature colour bath in yellowcake and striking wallpaper by Clarissa Hulse. The jewel in the crown has to be the Achillea suite (pictured) with a wood burning stove as a central feature to the sitting room, Harlequin wallpaper and crushed velvet curtains from Sanderson. The bathroom has a large double ended Magnus bath by BC designs. Adi's favourite place in Norfolk is "Wiverton café on a sunny day", whilst Tallie says there is "nothing better than a stroll on Brancaster beach."



Changes on the menu

Executive Chef James O'Connor has worked at some of the best establishments, from Claridges in London to Longueville Manor on Jersey and St Moritz in Cornwall, but four years ago he decided that Norfolk was the place to settle and now lives in King's Lynn together with his wife, Monika, and their daughter, Verity. James' Spring menu continues to take inspiration from Congham Hall's kitchen garden and locally sourced produce. Dishes such as baby beetroot, goats curd, pickled shallots and pine nuts or grilled hake fillet, crushed new potatoes, buttered spinach, calamari and sauce vierge are already being enjoyed by our guests. The mini pudding plate has also become a firm favourite. When he can get away from the kitchen James likes nothing more than visiting one of the many historic houses in Norfolk, his current favourite being Oxburgh Hall.



We could be heroes

The Queen has often remarked that it's the quiet dedication of unsung heroes that makes them so special. At Congham we always recognise our own heroes with a special award and this year it went to Syd Spanswick who looks after all our maintenance needs. Syd is often called in on his days off to unblock a drain or fix a leaking sink and he even decided to rebuild the hot tub seat during his holiday last year! Syd loves to take his grandchildren to Sandringham Country Park.

Julie manages 20yrs

Julie Woodhouse, our General Manager, recently celebrated 20 years at Congham with a champagne tea and was honoured to be joined by our original owners, Christine and Trevor Forecast, who first employed her as a receptionist back in 1996. There isn't much Julie doesn't know and she has many interesting stories to tell from her years at the helm! Hunstanton is a firm favourite for Julie to visit with her daughter Eloise: "There is so much to do - beach, crazy golf, arcades, fish & chips and watching the sunset." Julie is quick to mention that she avoids it in the height of summer as it gets so busy!





Spring is springing

“Spring is on its way”, comments Bryone Dillow, our garden designer extraordinaire! “If you take a wander round our gardens you will notice spring bulbs starting to appear. Snowdrops, daffodils and crocuses are all peeking through. Preparation for our spring garden started back in the summer. Over 2,000 tulip bulbs were chosen and hand planted by our gardening team in November. Wallflower seeds were sewn in nursery beds back in July and then also planted out in November. Winter bedding plants were purchased from local nurseries to replenish the planters on the terraces. A succession of winter vegetables were planted in the late summer and autumn for harvesting during the winter. Meanwhile we will be starting to plan our summer garden and so the never ending cycle continues!” Bryone loves the circular walk from Wells-next-the-Sea to Holkham.

Forthcoming events

14th - 17th April

Easter Fun at Holkham Hall

30th April - 30th September

Norfolk by Design at Houghton Hall, a pop up exhibition to coincide with the sculpture exhibition in the grounds

4th June

Ladies Day at Fakenham Races

26th July

Sandringham Flower Show

11th - 13th August

Houghton Festival of Art and Music

12th August

Great British Proms at Blickling Hall



An experience worthy of many tweets

Our visiting ‘twitcher’, Sue Bryan, comes over to Congham to take guests on escorted nature walks. Sue says: “The walks take about 2 - 3 hours; a ramble out in the open air away from the hustle and bustle of life giving an opportunity to enjoy a little bit of wildlife taken at a leisurely pace. Guests borrow the hotel’s binoculars so that we can admire any birds that we see. On one of our walks we saw three different Stonechat sitting on top of gorse bushes and were lucky to catch a glimpse of a Marsh Harrier being mobbed by Carrion Crows as it quartered the ground for prey. On another walk we were treated to good

views of a Green Woodpecker as it flew away from us and on another we had close encounters with a small group of Roe Deer that kept an eye on us as we approached. In March some Northern Wheatear should be arriving and we may be able to hear Woodlark singing if we have sunny weather. We should also be able to see Common Buzzards soaring overhead and watch the local Kestrel hunting.” Unsurprisingly, Sue’s favourite place in Norfolk is Titchwell Marsh RSPB, where she works, as it gives wonderful bird watching opportunities all year round!

Win dinner, bed & breakfast for two

Congratulations to Julie Davies from Norwich who won last season’s competition.

In this season’s competition we are asking you to tell us a bit about your favourite place in Norfolk and why you have chosen it (include a photo if you can). The most interesting or amusing story, as chosen by our panel of judges, will be published in our next newsletter and the winner will enjoy one of our Sunday Sleep Soundly packages which includes dinner, bed and breakfast at Congham Hall for two people.

Email your entry to reply@conghamhallhotel.co.uk and we will notify the winner and publish their name in the next edition of our newsletter.



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