

Deepdene Trail Delights!

Hundreds of visitors braved the rain to explore Dorking's newest destination, The Deepdene Trail.

On Saturday 10th September, over 500 intrepid visitors braved the rain to walk the Deepdene Trail for the very first time! Attendees at Saturday's opening event enjoyed walks through the heart of The Trail, land previously closed to the public for over 70 years and now open every day, free of charge to explore.

Lord Julian Fellowes of West Stafford supported the project by attending The Trail's Partners Preview event on Friday. He thanked those involved and spoke eloquently about Thomas Hope, the colourful Regency era collector, designer, architect and tastemaker before declaring The Trail open by unveiling Coady, the newly installed Coade Stone lion statue on the parterre.

On Saturday, more than 30 local volunteers lined the route to greet and guide throughout the day. Visitors expressed their delight at being able to explore the fascinating, previously hidden landscape full of architectural surprises. Hundreds of people were able to step inside Thomas Hope's magnificent mausoleum and, once inside, admire the stunning newly installed replica of Thomas Hope's Egyptian settee.

Councillor Vivienne Michael, Leader of Mole Valley District Council said, "We are delighted that so many people came to explore the Trail on Saturday. Everyone was greeted by our enthusiastic, volunteers who were integral to the success of the day.

"Despite the rain, music played, characters in Regency costume roamed the grounds and people were able to visit a range of stalls. Many people accessed our new App and learned more about the Estate's fascinating history and the extraordinary family that helped to shape it.

"Again, I would like to thank the Heritage Lottery Fund for their generous grant, all our partners and our volunteers, including the Friends of Deepdene who have worked tirelessly to help us open the Trail on time.

“In future this unique new green space will be looked after by both the Friends of Deepdene and our own parks’ department so that it can continue to be enjoyed by local people as well as by visitors from far and wide”.

-ENDS-

Notes:

What is the Deepdene Trail all about?

The Deepdene Trail is the fruit of Mole Valley District Council’s, Heritage Lottery funded project to relink and repair the once-magnificent Deepdene Estate, begun as the ‘Hope Springs Eternal’ Project.

On the 10th September we revealed, newly reinstated paths amongst the reclaimed beautiful Italianate gardens, stunning views throughout the Trail and architectural features originally created by Thomas Hope (1769 – 1831).

See www.deepdenetrail.co.uk for further details.

Thomas Hope - An Extraordinary Character

Thomas Hope, was a prolific collector, builder and designer of major national and international importance. He is regarded as the definitive Regency tastemaker and played a unique role in the arts, as patron, collector, writer and designer being credited with inventing the phrase interior design. His neoclassical mansion, Deepdene House on the Deepdene Estate was sadly demolished in 1969, however within The Trail we have created a detailed virtual tour to bring it to life, now available to view at Dorking Museum.

The Hope Family Mausoleum

We have taken great care in repairing the remarkable Hope family mausoleum, a highlight of the Trail. It is the only surviving complete structure built by Thomas Hope. The building was buried in 1960 and remained hidden until it was uncovered by the Mausolea & Monuments Trust and Mole Valley District Council. This glorious Neo-Grecian tomb is now restored it to its former magnificence set into the grassy hill of Chart Park.

The Thomas Hope Settee

The settee, which is an accurate copy of Thomas Hope's design, will sit in the recently restored magnificent Thomas Hope Mausoleum for visitors to the Deepdene Trail to enjoy. The settee has been created in Jonathan Sainsbury's Dorset workshop using traditional carving and finishing techniques. Jonathan Sainsbury (UK) Ltd specialises in making furniture inspired by the great legends of furniture design such as Thomas Hope.

www.jonathan-sainsbury.com

Media contact for further information and images:

Liz Rice, Communications and Marketing Officer

01306 879113 / 07506 110 079

liz.rice@molevalley.gov.uk

www.molevalley.gov.uk

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