

PRESS INFORMATION

25 September 2009

NEW SCULPTURE UNVEILED AT PENSURST PLACE & GARDENS

In order to mark the centenary this year of the birth of William 1st Viscount De L'Isle VC KG (the previous owner of Penshurst Place), a grandson, Robert Rattray, has sculpted a stunning metal sundial in the form of a life-size archer, which was unveiled in the Demi Lune in the public gardens on Thursday 24th September 2009.

The theme for the sundial is the quotation:

*“Who shoots at the midday sun, though he shall be sure he shall never hit the mark;
yet as sure as he is he shall shoot higher than who aim but at a bush”*

Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586)

The Honourable Philip Sidney, son of the current Viscount De L'Isle, has written a sonnet, which accompanies the statue:

*Duty took a bow, aimed at the sun
And loosed a shaft across a century:
For eighty-one years, valorous, alone
It flew through gathering clouds of history.
It flew through beachhead fires at Dunkirk,
Through cordite fog at Anzio, through the mist
At Canberra, that rose up Naiad-like
Beside the lake, its every touch a kiss,*

Continues..

*And came to rest at Penshurst. Now, as we
Wonder at its sublime trajectory,
The golden trail it left begins to fade,
Leaving to us the new paths to be made.
The skies are less clear now, but still they're ours:
Though in a quiver, let's shoot for the stars.*

Philip Sidney (1985-)

The late Viscount De L'Isle VC KG was born in 1909 and inherited Penshurst Place in 1945, at a time when the house had been badly damaged by VI flying bombs. Little had been done in the garden during the war except the clipping of the yew hedges and

pruning of the fruit trees. In the ensuing 46 years Viscount De L'Isle worked, without ceasing, to repair the house and re-instate and extend the formal gardens, both of which can now be enjoyed by more than 60,000 visitors each year.

The current owner Philip Sidney, 2nd Viscount De L'Isle MBE, son of the late Viscount, said "Robert and Philip's grandfather would have been very proud that the centenary year of his birth should be marked by two such talented descendants".

- Ends -

If you would like images of the event, please contact Tamsin Leigh at Penshurst Place: 01892 870307 or email: tamsin@penshurstplace.com.

Notes to editor:

Robert Rattray trained at the City & Guilds of London Art School, from where he graduated in 1995. He now works from his base in South Wales with a studio looking out to the Brecon Beacons - a constant source of inspiration. His work has been exhibited continuously, both at home and abroad, and is in both private and public hands.

www.rattraysculptures.com

Philip Sidney graduated from Durham University with a First Class degree in English and has more recently completed a Masters Degree at York University in 2008. Philip will be taking up a Research post at Trinity Hall Cambridge to complete a Doctorate in English this October.

David Brown, a founding member of the British Sundial Society, has helped with the science of gnomonics in the calculations for the dial.

www.davidbrownsundials.com

About Penshurst Place

Home to Philip Sidney, 2nd Viscount De L'Isle MBE, Penshurst Place & Gardens has been the ancestral estate of the noble Sidney family since 1552 with the history of the house going back six and half centuries.

Described as "the grandest and most perfectly preserved example of a fortified manor house in all England", at its heart is the medieval Baron's Hall, built in 1341. The adjoining Staterooms contain a wonderful collection of tapestries, furniture, portraits, porcelain and armour.

The 11 acres of gardens are as old as the original house with the walls and terraces added in the Elizabethan era with a continuous display from spring to autumn. There is also a

Toy Museum, Venture Playground, Woodland Trail, Gift Shop and Garden Tea Room with the estate surrounded by ancient parkland.

Opening Times and Prices 2009

- **House & Garden opening times for 2009:** 28th February – 29th March open weekends and then daily from 30th March – Sunday 1st November 2009. Gardens open from 10.30 am – 6.00pm. House open from 12 noon – 4.00pm.
- **Gift Shop** open all year (excl. Christmas Day to New Year).
- **2008 Admission prices held for 2009:** Admission to Gardens is £7.00 for Adults and £5.00 for Children and a Family Ticket is £20. Admission to House & Grounds is £8.50 for Adults and £5.50 for Children (up to 2 under 5's free per adult) and a Family Ticket is £23.
- **Family season ticket: 2 adults, 2 children £60.00** for access to the Gardens including the venture playground, and lots of free events throughout the season. (Each additional child in the family thereafter £6.00).
- **Garden Season Ticket (2 persons): £37.50** and admits one named person and one other to visit the gardens as well as enjoy many of the free events throughout the season.
- **Events** held throughout the year – leaflet available or visit our website for details.
- **Access to Parkland** – open all year. Copy of Parkland Walks leaflet available from Penshurst Place Gift Shop and the Forge Stores in Penshurst village.

Penshurst Place & Gardens is easily accessible from the M25 and only 30 miles from central London. Approaches locally are well signposted with brown tourist signs. For further information, call Penshurst Place on Tel: 01892 870307 or visit the website at www.penshurstplace.com.