

March 2010 – Lunch Club

March's lunch carried on the tradition of good company, good food and good conversation. The mix of interests and sectors allowed us to have a range of subjects from project management and the development of heritage buildings, to modern architecture and traditional French trades.



Jon Riley and Neil

Jon Riley of Locker and Riley, the specialist plasterers, was able to discuss the mixed fortunes of the company, from its original conception to the successful company it is today. Now, Managing Director, Jon had joined the company as an apprentice and worked his way up, learning the business inside and out before taking over. Jon, like Jasper Weldon and myself, all started by learning the skills of the trade before taking on the challenges of business management, a grounding that we all felt was extremely valuable when dealing knowledgeably about complex subjects with clients.

Peter Grabham has long been at the top of his profession, providing project management expertise for the wealthy on a vast range of projects. We were especially pleased to see him after many a last minute cancellation.



Peter Grabham and Jasper Weldon

Michael Potter is a Creative Consultant who offers a cohesive approach to interiors, bringing together the varied and sometimes conflicting interests of creative forces working on the same project to ensure that a scheme meets the client's requirements. Michael came to this role through his work in fine art and photography, and in a separate guise runs photographic holidays all over the world.



Julian Powell Tuck

Julian Powell Tuck is one of the country's premiere architects, working in contemporary architecture with an impressive array of awards behind him, and no doubt many more to come. It is my aim to convince Julian that we are just as capable of producing contemporary furniture as we are at heritage replicas, a view potentially shared with many designers and architects? I think this stems from the clear divide between classicists and modernists in the architectural world, whereas craftsmen generally see little difference, adapting their skills to suit the demands and intricacies of the commission.

I was delighted too that Tim Reeve could join us. As Properties Director of English Heritage he is responsible for the management of all English Heritage properties and particularly their presentation to the public. Most recently he was behind the project to re-present the Keep at Dover Castle which has resulted in a fantastic new visitor experience staging the Keep as if Henry II was in residence. We were delighted to have been commissioned to produce all the furniture from the kitchen chopping block, to the King's Throne. It was a great project for us and well worth a visit if you find yourself in Kent.

English Heritage is required to maintain scores of important buildings acting as their guardians and all within a restricted budget. It is Tim's role to produce income from those buildings that can be opened, whilst spending money maintaining those that cannot, a job he does admirably.

Munira Bonnet contacted me out of the blue asking for advice about marketing traditional French crafts companies in the UK. I wasn't able to help her much, but the range of crafts was such that I was personally intrigued to learn more and she very kindly agreed to join me for lunch. It was wonderful to see the range of work and I am sure that there is a market in the UK.



Tim Reeve and Munira Bonnet