

S T O K E P A R K

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T H E F I R S T 1,000 Y E A R S

- P E T E R P U G H -

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FOREWORD

This is the history of one of England's great estates. It begins in Saxon times, passes on through the turbulent middle ages, and then moves rapidly to the end of the 18th century when the elegant Mansion, landscape and monuments that we can still see today were created by John Penn. It then moves on to the creation of one of the country's first and greatest country clubs and the unique group of men who founded it.

The Club is now 100 years old and I am very happy to be able to continue the tradition of my family's involvement with the Club from its creation in 1908, when my great uncle, George the 4th Earl Howe, was its first Vice President, to today.

*The Earl Howe
President
Stoke Park Club*

INTRODUCTION

Stoke Park is one of the most beautiful places in the world. So much has changed over the past 1,000 years but the purpose of Stoke Park has not. It has always been a place for families to escape to and enjoy the luxuries of life in elegant surroundings. Today, however, we are able to share this wonderful place with many more people than in its earlier centuries.

In the twenty years that our family has been involved with Stoke Park the estate has seen some significant changes, and I would like to thank my colleagues at the Club as well as everyone who has worked with us on this long-term restoration project as builders, craftsmen, artists and designers, as well as the many experts that have advised and supported us, especially the officers of South Bucks District Council and English Heritage. In addition we have also got to know many of our members and guests over the past twenty years and I would like to thank you all for your support. We would not have been able to achieve anything without you.

With a recorded history of nearly 1,000 years it is high time that we produced a permanent record of the history of the estate and the people who have made it the unique place that it is. The Club's centenary has been an excellent reason to do it. I would like to thank Peter Pugh for spending the last two years creating this fantastic book for the Club.

For most of its existence Stoke Park has been a private estate owned and visited by some of the most famous people in British history. However, 100 years ago it was transformed through the vision of one man into a luxury country club, the likes of which had not been seen in this country before. The Club's ethos was dedicated to creating an environment that supported the physical and psychological well-being of its members and guests. This is the tradition that we have attempted to continue.

*Roger M. King
Chairman
Stoke Park Club*

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It has been a pleasure and a privilege to research and write this book about Stoke Park Club.

Not only is it a wonderful place, so painstakingly restored to its former glory by the King family, but the welcome and generous hospitality I have received from everyone each time I have come has made it one of the most enjoyable projects I have ever undertaken.

I would like to thank especially Hertford King, who has given me enormous amounts of his time and who has been, in the true King family tradition, decisive in what he wanted in the book and how it should be designed. He has also carried out a great deal of research himself. His contribution to this book has been immense. Mark Fagan, Club Director, has been on hand at all times to smooth my path in his customary masterly way, and Julia Buxton, the Club's PR Manager, has helped with photographs etc. The former Club Secretary, Ralph Pickering, was helpful in providing anecdotes and archives, and Alex Millar, Estate Director, was also helpful on course details.

Lionel Rigby was helpful on local history, as was Michael Mobbs on his family's involvement with the Club from 1928 to 1958. Derek Etherington kindly took me through the transfer of ownership in the 1980s and 1990s, and Bruce Critchley was helpful on the Colt Association.

Many have contributed photographs and I would like to thank them all, especially the National Portrait Gallery for all the photographs in Chapter One, and for Lancelot Brown on page 37, Thomas Gray on page 40, Humphry Repton on page 49 and James Wyatt on page 61; and the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge for the photograph of Thomas Gray on page 39.

Peter Pugh
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