

The Swan Inn at Swinbrook

The Swan Inn, idyllically situated on the River Windrush at Swinbrook, was recently taken over and refurbished by Archie Orr-Ewing. Archie and his wife Nicky also run the Kings Head at Bledington. The Inn re-opened last November so, one lunch time in February, we investigated.



(L-R) Manager Sean Wolfe, Chef: Brian Stocker and Archie Orr -Ewing.

The Mitford Connection

We took with us two captive 87 year old 'ladies who lunch'! After parking easily, we walked into a number of light and airy rooms with their original oak beams, simply and freshly furnished by Susie Robinson with old oak settles and crisp striped fabrics. Some readers may take exception to the rather splendid stuffed swan, but he looks as though he has earned his right to be there! Our room opened to the bar and the attractive Conservatory and we were immediately greeted by an open fire; the whole pub is non-smoking and so was the fire! Dogs are welcomed. The simple but original feel is enhanced by huge photographs of the Mitford family lining the walls.

The Swan Inn is owned by Deborah, the Dowager Duchess of Devonshire, whose father, Lord Redesdale, inherited the Swinbrook estate in 1916. All the famous Mitford sisters, along with their only brother Tom, who died in the Burma Campaign, are pictured. Their open young faces show no signs of the

extraordinary lives they were to lead. Jessica was to write *The American Way of Death* and Nancy *Love in a Cold Climate*. Unity's passion for Hitler, led to her shooting herself and to tireless nursing by Lady Redesdale in Mill Cottage, the old

fishing cottage next door to the Swan Inn. Diana, a great beauty to her dying days, fell passionately in love with and married Oswald Mosley and as Lady Mosley was, with him, vilified and imprisoned. Pamela married happily, as did Debo to Andrew Cavendish. Deborah later became famed as the much admired chatelaine of Chatsworth and a very welcome visitor to Swinbrook.

And the Food!

Specials of the Day included Smoked Duck Breast, a tempting Mozzarella and Tomato Tart and that old favourite Potted Shrimps. We went with the main menu. Service was slow, but Christine and I loved the Linguini and Margaret and Audrey declared their Fillet steaks and Bearnaise sauce, each with a delicious bowl of chips, to be excellent. The beef comes from the Orr-Ewing farm in Fifield. The wine list, sadly unexplored by us, provided an imaginative range of wines at reasonable prices. Too many chips, reduced appetite for pudding, but we thoroughly enjoyed one sticky toffee pudding, one apple tart and four spoons! Congratulations all!

Liz Clarke-Watson