

Welcome to our Spring newsletter

Spring brings thoughts of revival and this year more than most; be it the renovation of a fine, though derelict, building in the Hillyard, the care of the environment in Danby or the Estate's efforts on behalf of Turtle doves.

The Viscount Downe

New faces sought to live in a timeless view



Some places change more than others, but if the countryside is as stunningly beautiful as Danby, there is a very good reason to keep things as they are. The picture illustrated above was painted by John Inigo Richards, one of the founders of the Royal Academy, in 1758. Two hundred and sixty years later the landscape is almost identical, with Duck Bridge, the Lodge (now the Moors Centre) and Danby Castle being easily identifiable.

The real beauty of the picture (and today's landscape) comes from the dry stone walls and the ancient shapes of the fields. The farm boundaries have changed little since the painting was completed, in part because our predecessors knew a thing or two about soil types and built the walls so as to enclose land with homogenous soil. The soil hasn't changed, so there has been

no need to change the boundaries. The retention of these beautiful and historic dry stone walls has been helped by the low intensity farming practiced up in Danby, to such an extent that the moorland wall boundary remains exactly the same as it was in 1656, when Sir John Dawnay bought the Estate.

The communities remain very rural and strong and there is little change, but every now and then there is an opportunity to encourage new entrants into farming – in this instance the first time in nearly twenty years. Robert Sword, the Estate Director comments "one of the Estate's former dairy farmers is retiring this spring and the Estate will be searching for the next generation to take over a new tenancy of the farm. This is an exciting opportunity in the long life of the Danby Estate."



Welcome



A big welcome to James Stephenson who joined the team last November as Assistant Agent.

We also welcome a new apprentice keeper Jack Brown, who will be with us for 18 months as part of our commitment to training the next generation. Jack replaces the last apprentice Jordan Smith who we are delighted to report has moved to a permanent position on the Urra Estate.

Farewell

We say farewell and good luck to David Barrett who has taken up the position of Estate Manager at The Bolton Abbey Estate.

Events in 2019

Derwent Hunt Point to Point
Charm Park - 3rd March

Books by the Beach
The Old Kitchen - 12th April

Charity Clay Shoot
Wykeham Abbey - 23rd May

St Catherine's Challenge Event
AquaPark - 7th June

Open Farm Sunday
Stonebeck Gate Farm, Danby - 9th June

And finally

RIP to The Wykeham Pike

Who passed away in July 2018. She was 16 years old and the largest pike in England at one time weighing 46lbs 11oz .



Now you see it, now you don't



The gardening ‘magicians’ at Wykeham Mature Plants continue to perform vanishing acts across the country. Demand for their instant hedging has soared from customers wanting to block out unsightly views, dampen road noise or improve privacy and security.

“We’ve seen an increase in home owners who want to switch to hedging because they’re tired of replacing fencing destroyed by storms,” says General Manager, Adam Smith. “Our Premium Laurel Blocks are ideal for this as they allow the air to pass through and won’t blow down. They also can’t be climbed over or pushed through.”

By trimming the laurel twice a year, the nursery raises tough, hardy evergreen laurels which are incredibly dense. They continue to grow for a minimum of four years. Eight-year-old plants can be up to two metres high.

“Our website showcases all our shrubs and trees which include beech, firethorn and holly,” explains Adam. “We’re also happy to advise on the best plant for tricky situations such as coastal or wet areas. Just pop by for a visit, give us a call or drop us an email.”



From spokes to a bespoke shopping experience



The shopping opportunities at The Hillyard, Wykeham have expanded once more in the form of The Cartshed. This derelict traditional stone farm building next to The Fat Pheasant Bistro and opposite The Picture Place has undergone a stunning transformation. Instead of farming equipment and wagons, you can now find beautiful homeware and gifts.

Retaining as much of the original structure as possible, and without altering the existing

openings, the building took six months to renovate. The result is a combination of traditional features with contemporary finishes; exposed stone walls and large glazed panels with discreet lighting and high spec insulation.

The Cartshed’s founder, illustrator and artist Victoria Richards, has spent over 20 years working for retailers and the BBC, designing sets and interiors. The Cartshed is an opportunity for Victoria to sell her own range of home ware products – decorated with her charming hand-drawn animal illustrations that perfectly capture the personalities of goats, pheasants, hares, ducks and particularly dogs - from dachshunds to pugs.

“I love being able to combine my love of wildlife and passion for design in this space,” says Victoria. “As well as my own range of homeware products I have sourced design-led ceramics, scented candles, art prints and furniture from local artisans. Everyone has been so supportive and I love being part of the Hillyard retail community.”



Ship-shape and pedal powered

Last summer a fire boat, ferry boat, pilot boat and even a naval frigate patrolled the North Yorkshire Water Park. They were all part of a new fleet of fun in the form of electric mini-boats which proved a real hit with visitors. These were joined by the slightly surreal pedalos in the form of VW Beetles.

“The temporary crew loved steering the fleet through the inflatable arch and around the ‘sea mine’,” says Manager, Andrew Backhouse. “We thought the mini-boats and pedalos would be popular with children who aren’t yet old enough for the AquaPark, but parents and grandparents enjoyed them too!”

If you would like to experience some aquatic adventures, the AquaPark reopens on Easter Saturday (20 April 2019).



Taking to the water for triathlons

The first ever triathlon, a race where competitors run 6 miles, cycle 25 miles and swim a mile, took place in San Diego, USA, in 1974. Since then the sport has boomed in popularity (debuting at the Sydney Olympics in 2000) partly due to the ease with which people can take up running and cycling. However the swimming element can be more difficult and for those who find it hard to find suitable open water venues for training, North Yorkshire Water Park offers a solution.

“From May to September open water swimmers of all ages are welcomed to the lakes to swim at their leisure. “We provide wetsuit hire and just ask that swimmers use a tow float for safety.” says Manager, Andrew Backhouse.

North Yorkshire Water Park will be hosting a Corporate Challenge Event on the Aqua Park in conjunction with St. Catherine’s Hospice on 7th June. So if you are interested in entering a team or offering sponsorship contact North Yorkshire Water Park and take the plunge.



A delicious slice of café society

This year guests at St Helen’s Caravan Park have even more reason to leave their cares behind them with an upgraded on-site café. Relocated away from the check-in area, the café now occupies the old games room. The building has served as a family room, games area, a take away and a computer room; adapting to the changing needs of the Parks’ holiday makers. The café now boasts a veranda over an outdoor seating area.

“We wanted to make the café as dog-friendly as possible,” explains Manager, Andrew Backhouse. “Now people have more choice where to sit. Parents of two-legged little ones and furry four-legged guests alike can relax, knowing the veranda and outdoor seating is enclosed by fencing.”

A new pizza oven and log burner are the cherry on the cake. Or should that be the olives on the Quatro Stagioni pizza?



Second day of Christmas under threat

Each spring turtle doves fly 7,000 miles from Africa to breed in the UK. However, since the 1970s their numbers throughout Europe have fallen by an amazing 90%. There maybe now no more than 100 birds nesting in North Yorkshire and their days are numbered unless urgent action is taken.

The Estate at Wykeham is therefore delighted to take part in the North Yorkshire Turtle Dove Project, led by North York Moors National Park and the Forestry Commission. As well as raising awareness, the project, one of only two in the country, provides farmers with a special seed mix of native flowers such as birds-foot trefoil, shepherd’s needle and common fumitory, which is drilled at wide spaces leaving a high proportion of open ground.

“In October, we sowed three plots totalling nearly five acres adjacent to their preferred nesting sites on the woodland fringes,” explains The Estates Farm Manager, David Edwards. “When the turtle doves return in May, these wildflowers should provide the seed they need to feed on to support their young.”

Photo: Richard Bennett



Nine shakes of a lamb's 'tale'

Sheep have been in the UK since the Romans. Their wool, meat, milk and sheepskins (for the manufacture of gloves) drove trade in medieval times and still contributes to today's economy. With more than 90 breeds of sheep, the UK flocks are thought to contain more sheep breeds than any other country in the world.



A breed that has proved a success story for the Estate is the Swaledale. Sally Snaith in Danby, whose husband is the Head keeper, helped introduce them nine years ago. Since then she and the Estate have won first prize every year with the best pen of wether lambs at Ruswarp Market.

The Swaledale breed was developed in the Yorkshire Dales where it is now the dominant breed. Dating back to the 12th century, the females are good at foraging on the rough grazing and make excellent mothers. This allows them to bring up lambs in harsh, exposed environments. Here's to making it a decade of accolades Sally!



Honouring home-grown heroines of World War I



The Croix de Guerre medal is awarded to those who "distinguish themselves by acts of outstanding heroism". One recipient was Faith Dawnay, daughter of the 8th Viscount Downe. Faith volunteered with the British Committee of the French Red Cross, entering France in January 1917. Records show she was a 'canteener' serving meals to wounded soldiers close to the fighting, and also supported the French Army as a nurse and an ambulance driver.



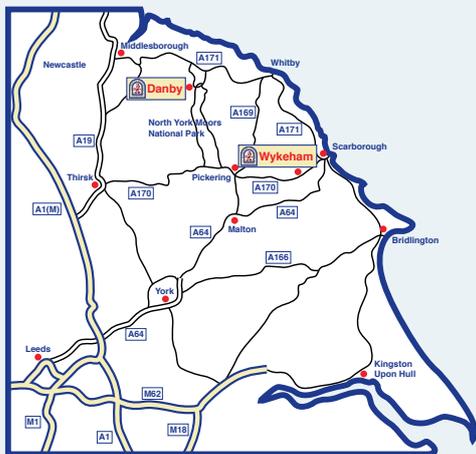
Another volunteer was Dorothy Poad from Ruston on the Wykeham Estate, who trained as a nurse. Described as "an intelligent and interested worker, with a neat appearance and pleasant manner" she volunteered for war service with the Red Cross in the summer of 1917. Sadly Dorothy died of pneumonia the following year aged just 26 but whether in England or France is unknown. Unusually for a woman she is commemorated on the memorial plaque in Wykeham Church, alongside the men from The Estate who fell in the two World Wars.

Geography comes to the rescue of grouse

The weather has a huge impact on the Estates' activities, and no more so than when it comes to game shooting. The elements made it a challenging twelve months for shooting in the UK but the Estate has fared better than most.

"The late snow from the Beast from the East followed by the hot, dry summer played havoc with moorland bird populations," says Robert Sword, Estate Manager. "Fortunately the North York Moors are a little lower than the Pennines and Scotland so the snow didn't linger as long. Our proximity to the North Sea meant sea fets offset some of the summer's aridity, creating an 'island' of grouse and a very good year."

This allowed the Estate to welcome its usual visiting guns from the Netherlands, Belgium, Russia, Scandinavia and America. It is encouraging to see the important financial contribution and employment which grouse shooting brings to the uplands, and 2018 was no exception. This provides an important source of income for many local businesses as well as paying for the upkeep of the moor.



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St Helen's In the Park Caravan Park:
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Forrester's Lodge:
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Wykeham Mature Plants:
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