

Welcome to our Autumn newsletter

This newsletter includes news of bees, butterflies, curlew and lapwings. This shows that endangered species really can still thrive if the environment is managed sympathetically by farmers and game keepers.

The Viscount Downe

Securing the future through bricks and mortar



After 15 years, Wykeham Business Centre continues to grow to accommodate its ever-expanding number of customers. Originally a collection of redundant cowsheds and grain stores, this successful and sustainable example of rural diversification and regeneration lies just off the A170 between Pickering and Scarborough.

Its first occupant back in 2004 was C-Ways, a leading IT solutions provider. They have been instrumental in installing satellite broadband, then a fibre optic internet connection to the site and a wireless network to surrounding properties. As the company has grown, so has its need for more office space.

As C-Ways wished to stay in Wykeham, the Estate took the decision to build a bespoke extension for them in what had been a car parking area.

“We have constructed a new wheelchair-friendly single storey building which connects with their existing offices,” explains Dave Todd, Building Services Manager. “Details such as brick window lintels and sympathetic stonework helps to seamlessly blend the new offices with the old”

Externally the new building is in keeping with its traditional, agricultural surroundings but 21st century technology lies at its core. Flexible data cabling spaces are integral to the design in order to accommodate future digital advances. It also has two new electric car charging points, with the opportunity to add more should they be needed.

Robert Sword, Estate Director says “We are delighted to be able to retain our very first and such loyal customers and hope they will still be with us in 2034”.



Welcome



A warm welcome to both Sheryl Buttner who joins The Estate as Personal Assistant to Robert Sword, the Estate Director and Rachael Bee the new Accounts Administrator.

Farewell

We say goodbye and wish success to those leaving us to pursue new careers. Caroline Bamforth, Personal Assistant for the previous eight years, Tina Watson from Accounts and Jake Finnigan, who ran Wykeham Lakes Fishery, and is now warden on the Wandsford Beck.

Congratulations

And huge congratulations to Laurence Day (second from right) who in September celebrated 50 years working at the Dawnay Estates. Joining straight from school, Laurence started at the sawmill, now the location of Farfield workspaces, then moved on to the Forestry Department, before helping to establish Wykeham Trees.

For the past 20 years he has been Production Manager for Wykeham Mature Plants. At the celebration Lord Downe started by saying “I am one of the very few people here who arrived at the Estate before Laurence, admittedly in a rather unproductive capacity at first!” and then went on to say “During Lawrence’s fifty years on the Estate, he has somehow survived three agents and numerous other characters, such as the fondly remembered George Malcolm. He has seen the trees business at first hand, its tribulations and its recent successes. David Crossley and Adam Smith have been hugely grateful to be able to rely on his sturdy pair of shoulders. It is no exaggeration to say Wykeham Mature Plants would not have been the same without him.”



Nesting in Danby - in more ways than one

The UK's curlew and lapwing populations are in serious national decline, but with one important exception, managed grouse moors. As part of Danby Moor's Environmental Stewardship Scheme, work is taking place to improve the vegetation, flora and birdlife of this SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest). By keeping on top of the vermin which also threaten grouse, these key ground-nesting bird species plus the golden plover can thrive, which also helps our smallest bird of prey, the merlin. However, finding homes for the four keepers needed to manage and develop the moorland means the Estate has had to focus on a different type of 'nest' in an area with a housing shortage.

"To free up accommodation, we have created a rare new build in Danby village," explains Robert Sword, the Estate Director. "This allows our retired head keeper and his wife to move to a fully-accessible new bungalow. We can then extend 'Bracken Hill', their former home, for a young keeper and his family who currently reside in The Bothy flat. The stringent planning demands of building in the North York Moors National Park and a Conservation Area have been a challenge, but we are very pleased with the results, which provides much needed accommodation for an expanding team of keepers."



Stonehaven, 7 Wellington Close, Danby



Danby Moor looking towards Little Fryup Dale

The lakes leaving others in their wake



Four Person "rocker"



Family Bushcraft Event

The North Yorkshire Water Park's 'Only pay to play' slogan went down a treat during the summer months, with more visitors than ever taking advantage of free entry and car parking. Many people enjoyed the new all-terrain two metre wide walkway, tested out by runners from Scarborough Athletic Club before being opened to the public. It creates a two and a half kilometre circuit around the watersports lake, with a five kilometre route on offer too.

"It's always great to see tourists having a splash around, but this year more local groups have been experiencing our inflatable course, pedalos and kayaking," says Manager, Andrew Backhouse. "We've hosted a corporate day to raise money for Saint Catherine's Hospice, a security firm's team day for the third year running as well as welcoming rugby and football groups – both juniors and adults."

Another success has been the partnership with Hidden Horizons who trialled two bushcraft days for families. As there is no light pollution at the Water Park, they are also keen to operate some Star Watch events in the future.

Closed over the winter months the Aquapark will reopen in late April 2020 with an extended range of water activities, public events plus two wakeboard lines.



RNLI East Riding Lifeguards Team Building Day

Tree-commerce in action

The Wykeham Mature Plants website now has an e-commerce shop. Here customers can order shrubs such as camellias, hydrangeas and viburnums online. They can also purchase instant hedging options including beech, laurel and privet. There are options to select plants according to ideal height and whether the hedge is for a coastal, shady, wet or exposed area.

“The shopping cart option calculates costs automatically by suggesting the number of plants for the estimated length of hedge,” says General Manager, Adam Smith. “We also include photos and details of growth rates, best growing conditions and how it appears through the year. However people can still contact us by phone or email should they have any questions.”



Gold standard for St Helen's

St Helen's Caravan Park in Wykeham has been awarded the AA's coveted 5 Pennant Gold quality standard for caravan parks. “We're delighted all our hard work has been recognised,” says Manager, Andrew Backhouse. “It's the highest mark the site has ever achieved and builds on our reputation for excellent customer service and facilities.”

These facilities include a new café with a veranda for outdoor dining and a wood burning stove inside for cooler days. It's not just patronised by the caravan parks' visitors but is a regular haunt for locals, walkers and cyclists. It was the start and finishing line for a recent Trackrod car rally and has hosted fundraising events including a Macmillan Coffee Morning and a charity night which raised more than £700 for Yorkshire Air Ambulance and St Catherine's Hospice.



Wooden Horse nursery gallop ahead

A thriving day nursery based at Farfield Workspaces in Wykeham received a glowing report from Ofsted this year. It praised how “staff weave mathematics and literary into activities” to create “enthusiastic, curious and confident learners”. The Wooden Horse Nursery's eight staff are led by former nanny Louise Holloway who joined the original owners in 1998. The nursery moved to Farfield in 2002, and six years later Louise became the manager, going on to buy the business in 2011.

“I love everything about my role, particularly seeing the children develop from babies to school age,” says Louise. “The Ofsted inspector noted how our garden allows children to balance, climb and ride bikes. Over the summer holidays we've added an outdoor wooden play area to encourage even more physical activity.”



Self-sustaining success hots up

Two biomass boilers heat Wykeham Abbey, the adjoining eight flats, the Old Kitchen and Tack Room, and nearby maintenance workshops and garages. Installed in 2016, they require 250 tonnes of woodchip to function, saving 60,000 litres of oil per year. Initially woodchips were bought in, but the boilers are now self-sustaining using Estate timber.

“We keep aside first thinnings, snapped and twisted logs and any “lop and top” not suitable for the sawmill” explains Assistant Agent, James Stephenson. “After we've dried it for at least 18 months, a contractor comes in to chip the wood, which is then fed into the boilers using an automated auger system. Now any low value timber which would have gone to waste is turned into energy instead.”



Buzzing with borage and blossom bell

"I'm allergic to bees. Do you want some?" Ian Danby's beekeeping life started with this offer from a colleague in 1983. From just two hives, Ian now looks after more than 100, most of which are situated on the Dawnay Estate. Every two months or so he moves the hives following the best crops for pollen. Ian usually does this at night, once the bees have returned to the hive.

"Oil Seed Rape gets them going in spring," Ian explains. "Borage is the next crop in the cycle. I then take the hives up on to the moors for the bell and ling heathers. Tree pollen, such as horse chestnut, is also a valuable source for the bees. During the winter, it's good for the bees to be within reach of a village and domestic gardens."

Yorkshire Honey by Ian Danby is available in local shops and garden centres around Scarborough and Bridlington.



A great year for Purple Hairstreak, Brindle Green and Birdswing

The Estate's butterfly and moth populations at Wykeham are monitored by Jackie Holder from Butterfly Conservation Yorkshire and local enthusiast Allan Rodda. They follow in the footsteps of Peter Robinson, a renowned local lepidopterist who sadly died earlier this year. They focus on The Causeways, an area of deciduous woodland with areas of mixed floral habitat and wetland margins. All butterflies and moths are returned to where they were captured once they have been photographed.



"2019 has been an exceptional year for butterflies and moths. We found three new moth species - Birdswing (left), Brindle Green and Peacock Moth - on the Estate," explains Allan Rodd.

"The highlight was discovering a colony of Purple Hairstreak butterflies (right) after many years of searching. This species is particularly difficult to observe as they live mainly in the canopy of mature oak trees and have not previously been known in the area."

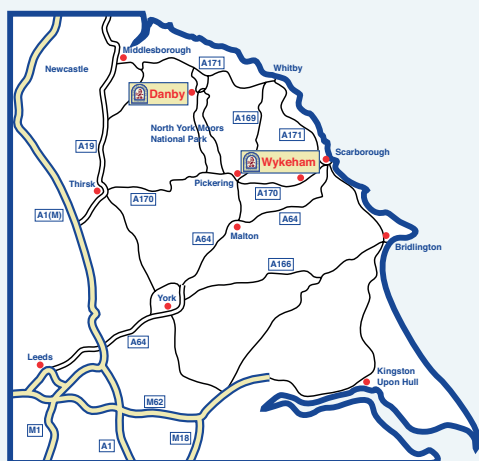


Off with his head?

Recently workmen re-leading part of Wykeham Abbey's roof uncovered some historical graffiti made up of a caricature and the carved figures of "W-R" and "CM A16". There was some debate as to if the chap with the tricorn hat and large nose was the then owner of The Abbey or perhaps his "Estates Director"!



One of our team shared the photos online with the Bernard Cornwell Facebook Club of 10,000 historical fiction fans. Within half an hour they suggested "W-R" stood for William Rex and "CM" were the initials of the boy who carved it, aged 16. King William IV reigned from 1830 to 1837, which matches the age of the lead. As Noah Cross comments in the film Chinatown "Course I'm respectable. I'm old. Politicians ugly buildings and whores all get respectable if they last long enough". It seems the same is true for graffiti; so our workmen added their own initials and the date of 2019 for future generations to discover.



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