



DAWNAY ESTATES NEWSLETTER

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Fourth Edition
Summer 2004

Welcome to our Summer Newsletter

By the time you read this newsletter the Wykeham Business Centre should be almost complete. This is the first leg of the Estates' Commercial Property strategy devised in the main by my father some seven years ago.

The Business Centre hopes to give occupiers a cost-effective modern office in a beautiful rural setting far from the noise, pollution and traffic problems of the town. I hope that the influx of businesses will give the village a social and commercial boost. Staff (and families) will be invited to a special tour of the centre in June.

I have also decided to go head with the second leg of my father's plan, the development of the old sawmill site known as Farfield. The idea behind this second development is to provide light industrial or warehousing space at an economic rent. As ever, the development will be done with more style and an attention to detail which should set it apart from the crowd and make it an agreeable as well as a convenient place to work.

By the end of the year things should look very different a Wykeham and I hope we will have two developments, occupiers, and a diversity of employment, of which we can all be duly proud.

The Viscount Downe

Welcome....

Geoff Simpson, keeper at Danby. Geoff and his wife Andrea are now settled at Fairy Cross Plain, Little Fryup.

Barry & Val Lonsdale are new faces at the Caravan Park having taken on the role of assistant wardens at the beginning of the Season.

Claire Gaunt-Barr, a familiar face at the Caravan site, is now assisting with financial administration at the Estate Office.

Ashley Cook is due to start as a trainee keeper on a two Year placement from Bishop Burton College.

Welcome back....

Rachel Hall, who has returned to look after Wykeham Farms Accounts after her maternity leave. Rachel now works one day a week at The Estate Office.

We Must Keep Evolving

It is often perceived that Estates such as Wykeham or Danby have somehow been created as a complete entity with Mansion House, farms, houses, cottages and possibly the occasional pub, church, school and other buildings for social use: that is, a complete community which has existed in perpetuity.

This scenario is far from the truth. The Dawnay Estates have been through periods of active development. What drives this development is usually the owner and Wykeham is no exception. There have been periods of great activity such as after Marmaduke Dawnay inherited the Estate in 1824. Having changed his name to Langley he began an avid building programme and made considerable improvements to houses on the Estate and often marked these changes with date stones of between 1836 and 1846.



Bedale Grange a fine five bedroom farmhouse, situated in the National Park, has been refurbished recently and let, but the main changes were made in 1836 as the date stone inscription "NORMANNIS NOMEN AB ALNIS 1836" states.

Another period of development was in 1910 when the 9th Viscount and his family came to live in Wykeham Abbey. The house and stables were doubled in size and garaging and other amenities were added to create the house which we see today.

The next building programme took place between 1945 and 1955 when twenty houses were built in the villages of Wykeham and Ruston by the present Lord Downe's grandfather. These houses were funded by American money, from a dowry that came with the then Viscountess Downe.

In more recent times there was a further spate of development when in the 1970's the Downe Arms was taken in-hand and extended, St Helens Caravan Park was built and Wykeham Trees (now Wykeham Mature Plants) established. These projects which were instigated by the 11th Viscount, signified an early and imaginative trend in not only property development but the establishment of rural businesses. This is now a common feature of many Estates as they re-position themselves in a world where agriculture is not the force it used to be and no longer forms the major part of an Estate's trading activities. (Continued on back page.)

Activities on the Estates

Farfield Development

Work has now started at Farfield (the former sawmill at Wykeham) with the construction of five new light industrial units providing a total floor area of 8,500 square feet. The project is expected to be completed in November 2004. Leon Keogh has been appointed as project manager, following on from his role as site manager at Wykeham Business Centre. The units will be modern in design (steel frame) but will have a traditional appearance with external finishes in stone, timber and glass.

The first job is to alter the site access. A new entrance is being created 200 yards west of the existing entrance. The new roadway will also provide excellent parking facilities for the development and for Daisychain Children's Day nursery, which will also form part of the developed site.



Wykeham Business Centre

Building work at the Business Centre is nearly complete. Lora Courtyard is the first building to be ready and the first tenants will move in early June taking two of the five available units. A show office will be opened in No 5 Lora Courtyard with the assistance of Calverts Carpets, John Mitchell Office Equipment, Matthew Noble Photography and Smart Executive Cleaning Services. Wykeham Mature Plants have started the landscaping within the courtyard and this is starting to make a dramatic difference. The four units in Langley House should be completed by the end of July. Viewings can be arranged via Emma Hepples, Business Centre Manager, based at The Dawnay Estates Office. (01723 866600)



Room for Mushrooms?

Any one who has wandered in the Wykeham woodlands south of the A170 during autumn and spring cannot have failed to notice the vast array of native fungi or mushrooms. It is these ideal growing conditions that have enabled the Estate to become a trial site for gourmet woodland mushrooms, including *shitake*, *oyster* and *chicken of the woods* mushrooms.

Contrary to popular belief, freshly sawn and healthy round wood logs have to be used for mushroom culture. Old or rotting wood usually contains the spores and mycelium of competing and non-desirable species. To inoculate the timber, usually a hardwood log three foot in length, 8mm diameter holes are drilled every few inches in a star type pattern around the circumference. Into these holes are then hammered spiral-grooved dowels that have been impregnated with live mushroom mycelium. Cleanliness is important, and a frequent stop to clean off the naturally occurring algae from hands and tools is required. It is also possible to use stumps as a medium for fungi culture.

The inoculated timber is then stacked to allow an adequate flow of air but at the same time a reasonable amount of humidity. In dry weather the logs need watering, and some protection from the wind is also required.

After a couple of months, it is possible to see the mycelium growing into the host log, and hopefully a few months later the first crops of mushrooms can be gathered. Each log yields up to 2.5 lbs of mushrooms a year, and logs can produce for up to 5 years depending on the species and diameter of the log.

It is hoped that the production of woodland mushrooms will prove to be a way of generating an alternative "woodland" income.

The gourmet mushroom can be used in cooking in the same way that the regular button mushroom is used, though it has a much more intense flavour. *Oyster* mushrooms are well known to be a reducer of blood cholesterol. Cooking all types of mushroom is better than eating them raw, as it breaks down the keratin used for the mushrooms structure, which in the raw state is not digestible.

Soon your fridge may contain gourmet Dawnay Mushrooms rather than the flavourless fungi from your super-market.



Activities on the Estates

Developments on the Boating Lake



The boating lake at Wykeham Lakes has been in operation for some years, however the size of the available water has been growing rapidly. This is nothing to do with climate change, but due to the amount of gravel removed by Hansons Aggregates.

The present boating lake now extends to some 39 acres, having nearly doubled in size over the last 3 years. There is even an island, especially asked for by the late Lord Downe.

On the lake shore there is a car park, with a concrete slipway for launching dinghies or canoes. Various outdoor groups, including Scarborough canoe club and the Navy keep craft of all shapes and sizes on the edge of the water.

Water activities are limited to non powered craft, (ie no motor boats or jet skis,) but long distance swimmers, windsurfers and dinghies all seem to get along together and make good use of the water.

An outdoor adventure company, based in York, known as Rock Steady, administers the sailing, for whom we have recently acquired a fine timber building from a Forestry Commission sale. The building is somewhat reminiscent of a colonial tea planter's office, with a verandar and a certain feeling of elegance. This will form the basis of a small development to provide changing rooms and somewhere to instruct in comfort.

For further information contact St Helens Caravan Park (01723 862771) or Rock Steady Sailing (01904 635647)

Wykeham Mature Plants

Overall it has been a good year for business with sales up a staggering 30% on this time last year and well over budget. The new financial year has also started well.

For us the most impressive area of growth has been on the retail side. This now constitutes an impressive 34% of our turnover. This ranges from the sale of just one plant locally to the supply and planting of whole gardens of over £10,000 in value.

This change of direction began with the realisation that the traditional wholesale market was decreasing and needed to be supported with marketable retail products.

While the margins are higher in the retail area it has become apparent to the sales team that a much higher level of service is required in pre delivery and aftercare.

Interesting recent projects include the supply of a £500 Aesculus hippocastanum (conker tree to normal folk) to the set of "Emmerdale" where it appeared as a memorial planting on screen.

We have also just completed supplying and planting an £18,000 project for mature trees to Queen Ethelburgh's School at Green Hammerton. They are so pleased with the product we have been asked to quote for a further 50 trees this summer.

The business continues to build on its reputation by expanding the range of large containerised shrubs, hedging, conifers, topiary and trees.

For further information telephone (01723 862406)



We Must Keep Evolving (Continued from front page)

And so to the present – Further innovation and the creation of rural workspace with offices and workshops for letting. This most recent development is perhaps one of the most significant changes at Wykeham and is led by another change in generation and a desire to move forward and protect the Estate's future. It also represents a major shift in employment and business activity. The Estate currently employs 30 employees, and businesses on the Estate another 50 with a direct turnover approaching £3million and indirect turnover of an estimated £6million. The Wykeham Business Centre and Farfield Workshops are expected to increase the employment numbers by a further 80 and turnover by a further £1.5million. An exciting prospect when based on what appears to be a traditional agricultural Estate.

Let us hope that Dawnay Estates will continue to expand and provide an economic engine in a very attractive corner of rural England.



In Our Community

Filming (Again)

Yet another YTV series used the Estate at Danby as a location for filming recently. The North East's answer to London's Burning, entitled "Steel River Blues" filmed a car crash rescue on the moor-land above Castleton. The actors certainly were earning their fee, as many of the retakes involved them running in full fireman's outfits up and down a steep bank from the road to the professed crashed car. This series is set to air in the autumn. The connection with the recent filming of "The Royal" is that this series has the same locations manager, and chief set designer, so further collaborations are likely. This series is set in present day, so no old vehicles in this one!



Danby Beacon

The earliest recording of a beacon at Danby is in the 1600s when there was a national network of beacons to provide an early warning system in the event of invasion. The site was also home to one of the first radar stations which was instrumental in tracking a bombing raid on Middlesborough which was thwarted by the shooting down of the first enemy aircraft over England in World War II – by none less than the late Group Captain Sir Peter Townsend.

Danby Beacon is now a national landmark which is used as a reference point by thousands of visitors and walkers each year. Unfortunately the last Beacon disintegrated and fell down in 1999 and the landmark was lost. In 2002 a group of local people formed a Trust to raise the £18,000 required for a new beacon, with Lord Downe as President. The Trustees are actively seeking further members and supporters.

The contemporary design will be highly visible but will also blend with the surrounding area. The Column will be constructed of the metal corten which, over time, develops a patina reflecting the colours of the moorland (similar to the Angel of the North). A bronze bowl with blued stainless steel "flames" will reflect the sunlight when the Beacon is not lit.

For information on fundraising events, trust membership and donations please contact Harry Graham, the Hon. Secretary Danby Beacon Trust, Low Moor, 26 West Lane, Danby, YO21 2LY. Tel 01287 660493



Schools Estate Day Visit, July 2004.

The Dawnay Estates in collaboration with The Countryside Foundation for Education, are hosting a schools day in July where primary school children will experience some of the activities that take place on a diverse rural estate. Displays will include keeping, falconry, tree felling and processing and hurdle making. The team behind the dinosaur coast project are also going to talk about the geology of the area, with particular reference to the most recent glacial period ten thousand years ago when the glacier reached Wykeham at its southernmost point. The visit is on 8th July at Wykeham and all interested parties should contact Matthew Noble at the Estate Office. (01723 866600)

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Thank you to all who have contributed to this newsletter. Please contact me with your news and photographs for the next issue by 15 August.