



DAWNAY ESTATES NEWSLETTER

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Sixth Edition
Winter 2005

Welcome to our Winter Newsletter

The Estate is a wonderful combination of the old and the new, the traditional and the innovative. Over the last four months the Farfield development has progressed by leaps and bounds. Although the site was carefully designed to blend in with the countryside, the techniques employed have been distinctly twenty first century. We are busily negotiating with occupiers and hope that the first ones will be moving in very shortly.

As a counterbalance I had the pleasure of introducing the new Steward to the Court Leet in Danby. The Court is a truly ancient institution tracing its history back some 600 years. This said, tradition does not survive for its own sake; the reason that the Court has thrived is that it delivers respected and local justice more quickly, economically and efficiently than any "johnny come lately" national Court.

The Viscount Downe

Congratulations to . . .

Adam Smith who recently became a father for the second time. Isabelle Anne was born on 22 November.

Welcome to . . .

Janet Hodgson, who has recently joined the Estate Office accounts department.

Goodbye to . . .

Rachel Hall (Estate Office), Angus Young (Wykeham Lakes), Robert & Julie Glover (St Helens Caravan Park), who have all moved on to pastures new; we wish them well.

The Danby Court Leet

On 21st October Lord Downe introduced the new Steward, Martin Gillibrand, to the full Court Leet. The day was the annual Court day when anyone with business is invited to Danby Castle to raise any issue with the Court, which is followed by a feast prepared by Mrs Mary Smith. These feasts are almost as legendary as the Court itself; anyone taking over their preparation will have an extremely hard act to follow.

The Court can trace its history back to the fourteenth Century. Records show that it was fining the citizens of Danby for brewing without a licence, trespassing with 'unringed' pigs and keeping too many sheep. It is interesting to note that some of the procedures of the



Court, such as swearing allegiance and kissing the Bible go back to before the Reformation. Commoners have an obligation to attend the annual Court, and they are fined if they fail to do so. The fine of "tuppence" has also probably not increased since the reformation!

The minute books go back to 1726 and one book records all the Court's decisions up to 1830. It is evident that few words were wasted. The next minute book is sadly missing but the Court then has records from 1860 to the present day.

In 1977 when the Government decided to "rationalise" the local Court systems it abolished all local courts bar a select few thought to be efficiently serving their local communities. Danby was clearly one of the few survivors, there being twelve Court Leets left in the country, with three on the North York Moors.

The Court is run by the Bailiff, David Smith, and the Jury under its Foreman, Herbert Tindall. The reason that the Court works well, is that the Jury has a detailed knowledge of the extent of Danby Common and the history of the rights over it. This means that they are in an ideal position to mediate on disputes and come to just and equitable decisions as regards any infringements of the common rights.

Interestingly the Government has recently conducted a consultation on the management of Commons (few Commons have any management body) and the Consultants undertaking the review have shown a great interest in the active Court Leets, such as at Danby.

The importance of the Court is nicely summarised in a poem read out by the Jury Foreman. This is reproduced on page 2.

Activities on the Estates

Court Leet: Downe v Thompson

Based on the
Whitby Times of 1 December 1893
at Pannet Park Museum.

*A Publican of Castleton,
in eighteen ninety three,
said "Danby's silly notions
have nowt to do with me".*

*So he ignored the Court Leet,
when summoned to attend.
Although, no doubt, he wished that
he had gone there in the end.*

*He could have paid them tuppence
just like other absentees:
The Court Leet had no wishes
to bring him to his knees.*

*So they fined the man three shillings,
which may not seem a lot,
but back in those Victorian days
it's more than some had got.*

*When taken to the County Court,
because he didn't pay,
the Judge and all the lawyers there
had quite a pleasant day.*

*Joe Thompson, the publican,
said he had no Common Rights
and very little money
and lots of sleepless nights.*

*As a freeborn Englishman
he knew that justice would prevail,
so he'd accept the verdict
whatever that entail.*

*He named some other tenants,
who hadn't paid at all,
so clearly it was wrong
that he should suffer from them all.*

*The judge replied if he chose
to put Thompson in the nick,
he thought the other tenants
would pay up pretty quick!*

*He explained the law existed
to protect the common good
whilst absent Irish landlords
did everything they could.*

*Obstinate, unruly people
must be taught to see
the advantages of living
in a country that is free.*

*He said that Thompson's case
was based on very shaky ground
so he'd have to pay the penalty
of something near ten pound*

*There's a moral to this story,
though it isn't very clear,
but you get more money at the Bar
than selling bottled beer!*

B C Mayston

New residents at St Helens Caravan Park

"Any other business" is always a dangerous time at any meeting. Out of the blue come requests and queries for which one is not prepared. It was, however, a total surprise to be asked by Lord Downe to investigate the possibility of keeping Alpacas on the Caravan Park. What is an Alpaca? Where is the nearest Alpaca shop?



It turns out that an Alpaca is, like its bigger cousin the Llama, a member of the Camel family, native to South America. "No problem", I thought; they will be difficult to manage, will spit at the children; they will require exotic food and generally be awkward. I could soon persuade everyone that the idea is a non starter.

It turned out that all my arguments fell away. The alpaca is freely available in this country from a host of sources. They are remarkably easy to manage. They don't (as yet) spit at people, and they eat any sort of grass or scrub. There wasn't even any paper work to be done for DEFRA. There was no alternative, but to report back, as to how delighted we would all be, to keep Alpacas on the Park.

It turned out to be true. The four animals duly arrived, from that part of South America, known locally as Morpeth. They settled in to their new home in 10 minutes, and have been no trouble ever since. To keep them company, and to encourage the Northumbrian dialect, we managed to acquire five Jacob sheep from the same farm. They are all one happy family. One role they do perform is that of 'scruffy bank clearers'. They seem to eat anything, including nettles, scrubby grass and even the ivy!

The reaction of the customers, and various visitors, has been very positive. Walkers, using the public footpath, stand slightly agog and, of course, children love them. We look forward to a long and happy relationship.

Robert and Julie Glover.

Robert and Julie have both recently moved on, from their job as Wardens on the Caravan Park. They joined us three and a half years ago, when the Park was going through some major changes.

They were both popular, and effective, in their roles. Robert is a talented joiner, and could turn his hand to most methods of construction. His work will be visible for all to see at St Helens for a long time to come.

Julie took over as the gardens member, and her pots of flowers continue to give pleasure, to both staff and customers.

We will miss them both, and wish them the best in their native Sheffield.

Wykeham Lakes – Fishing for a joint venture

St Helen's in the Park Ltd, the operator of Wykeham Lakes is currently seeking a joint-venture partner to participate in the management of the Fishery. This is an exciting opportunity for a commercially minded and enthusiastic individual(s) to develop the business, which comprises five fishing lakes (trout and coarse fishing), a lodge, car parking, a certified location caravan park and a three bedroomed house. It is anticipated that there is scope for an operator to generate additional income from the sale of flies, bait and also catering. An information pack is available from the Estate Office (Tel 01723 866600) or Rupert Drury & Co. (Tel 01653 648335)

Activities on the Estates

Farfield

The new workshops at Farfield are almost complete. These attractive newly built stone and timber finished buildings provide workshop accommodation ranging from 57 to 200 square metres. Interested occupiers have been quick off the mark to reserve their preferred workshop and terms have been agreed on half of the units. The first occupiers will move in during March 2005 and we look forward to celebrating these moves with them. The development represents a new and exciting direction for Dawnay Estates and the village of Wykeham. The regeneration and employment created by this investment should bring benefits to the whole community. The project has been supported by the European Union.



The Danby Estate – The Red Meat Initiative

Many of the farmers on the Danby Estate are dependent on the production of livestock (sheep and beef). Robert Sword, The Estates Director, recently attended a Red Meat Industry Forum at the Pavillion's, Great Yorkshire Show Ground, and following several discussions with members of the Red Meat Industry Forum arranged a seminar for the Estate farming tenants and neighbours. The purpose of the group is to encourage members to participate in the free On-farm Benchmarking for producers of red meat regardless of their production system. If there is sufficient interest a producers club will be formed which will enable confidential on-line comparison of each farm's data within the club.

Speakers at the seminar were Mike Keeble of the Red Meat Industry Forum, Peter Molyneaux from HSBC Bank, and Patrick Lane of Direct Farming and Rural Solutions Ltd.

Who knows where this may lead the Danby Estate Farmers? At least participation in the scheme will give greater clarity to each farmers performance, the ability to add value to their livestock production and eventually the possibility of some form of producers retailing group. Robert Sword is hopeful that this project might pave the way for increased profitability and diversification of existing farmers' skills.

Wykeham Mature Plants

Wykeham Mature Plants recently featured in the trade section of Horticultural Week.

They were highlighted for the part they played in the restoration of the Great Garden at Kirby Hall near Corby for English Heritage. This £10,000 project is based on the original garden design from 1685. The garden designer was George London, who was commissioned by Lord Weymouth of Longleat House in Wiltshire.

Tim Walker, the regional landscape manager for English Heritage said: "It is thought this accurate presentation of a mid-1690s garden is unique in the UK."

During the winter months The Walled Garden is open Monday to Friday 10am to 2.30pm, or by appointment. Saturday opening should resume in the spring.



Farmers Market

The traders at Wykeham Farmers Market held a special Christmas market in December. This is now a very popular annual event, a great way to prepare for Christmas. Despite inclement weather the market was very well supported and visitors enjoyed browsing the wide variety of stalls and chatting to the producers about their produce. Estate staff were on hand to provide a welcome cup of coffee and mince pies to all the shoppers. St Helens and All Saints Church in Wykeham also benefited; traders donated an excellent food hamper and Dawnay Estates donated a brace of pheasants and two bottles of wine. The raffle raised £140 for the church and left two lucky locals with excellent prizes.



The market recommenced on 14 January and is open every Friday until Christmas. Trading hours are 8.30 until 1pm.

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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 8 April 2005

In Our Community

Window Dedication



Wykeham was very pleased to welcome the Bishop of Whitby, The Right Reverend Robert Ladds on 21 November to dedicate a new window in memory of the late Lord Downe.

The Bishop preached a moving and inspiring sermon remembering the life of Lord Downe and revealing his knowledge of Chemistry that must be unrivalled in the upper reaches of the Church.

The Family commissioned Tom Denny to design and make the window, an artist who specialises in the medium. Mr Denny's reputation has grown with a list of prestigious commissions such as at Gloucester Cathedral, Tewkesbury Abbey, The Priory Church of Great Malvern, All Saints Bolton Percy, near Tadcaster and Emmanuel Church in Bridlington. The window contains a number of allusions to both the Old and New Testaments with particular reference to Psalm 15. To complement this special Service of Evensong, bellringers rang a Quarter Peal of 1260 Changes of Reverse Canterbury Pleasure – rung half-muffled.

Village Hall Fundraising

Oh what a time was had at the Village Hall Ball! The theme was "Days of the Raj" and the gathering was resplendent. Ladies in their saris of every hue, bedecked with gold costume jewellery were escorted by gentlemen in evening dress. They all had one thing on their minds....fun!

On arrival guests were offered a choice of G&T or Pimms and then they made their way into the Kings Jewel which had been transformed into a Bollywood film set. Each table was swathed with brightly coloured fabrics and lit by tealights. The organisers had arranged for authentic Indian food to be prepared by the Eastern Paradise Restaurant in Scarborough. They put on an excellent feast and everyone said how much they enjoyed the meal. (Of particular interest was the flaming poppadom tower which acted as a cue for the diners to go and get their food!). As soon as they had eaten, guests took to the dance floor, strewn with rose petals and danced the night away to the energy which is Hamps Tramps. The evening raised around £3,000 towards the village hall fund. More importantly, the evening was a huge amount of fun, and it brought together a vast number of diverse interests united in a common cause. Roll on next November and the chance to do it all again!



Wykeham Cricket Club enjoys a good season

The Wykeham Cricket Club Presentation Evening, held in November at the Everley hotel, turned out to be a lively affair as the members looked back on one of the most successful seasons for years.

Pride of place went to the Evening League 1st Team, captained by Gareth Barnard. The champions of the Andyhire Division B, also managed a cup double, winning both the Hunter and Cayley Cups. Awards were presented to Kevin Thompson as best batsman and Gareth Barnard as best bowler.

The eagerly awaited clash between the 1st and 2nd teams turned out to be something of an anti climax as the 1st team easily beat a below strength 2nd team in the first encounter and the second match was rained off.

Nevertheless the Seconds did well to maintain their position in Division B. Jon Wanless won the award as their best batsman whilst newcomer Richard Mirfin picked up the bowling award.

The Saturday A Team also had a good season winning promotion to Beckett League B. Pete Shepherdson gained the batting award and Richard Creaser was the most successful bowler.

The Club was stunned by the tragic death of Saturday B Team skipper, Steve Brice, before the start of the season. John Palmer stepped into the breach and the team did very well to finish third in their league. Awards went to Andy Stephenson as best batsman and Les Ramm as best bowler.

The first presentation of the Steve Brice Memorial Trophy for the most promising young player went to Joel Ramm.

Fundraising will continue throughout the forthcoming year towards a new pavilion. The creation of better facilities is much needed to compliment the stunning ground and excellent pitch, situated on the edge of Wykeham Abbey Park.

Children and Tyres

Disposing of used tyres, especially the larger varieties, has become increasingly more difficult as legislation aimed at cleaning up the environment takes effect. Burning the tyres is also very much a no-no, as this practice is very polluting being especially detrimental to lichens.

Thus it was with some relief that Cayton School rang to ask if The Estate had any old tyres. Never one to miss a photo opportunity, Dawnay Estates donated two large tractor tyres to the school, which were delivered just before Christmas.

Dee Holmes from the school kindly sent some pictures showing the children enjoying non-polluting rubber wear!

