The Holkham Gazette

Leading by example on renewable energy

BY JAMES BRACEY, ESTATE SURVEYOR

We are all faced with rising energy prices – the estate's energy bills increase annually. We are examining energy usage across the estate and, where practicable, introducing new technologies that will help us to cope in the future.

The government has a legally binding commitment to reduce the UK's carbon dioxide emissions by 60% by 2050. By 2020 15% of all energy must be generated from renewable sources – up from less than 2% in 2009. These are ambitious targets but at Holkham we plan to implement changes to beat these targets. In order to protect future income from rising fuel prices it is important for us to act now and build energy planning into a sensible, affordable long-term strategy. Environmental concerns and actions are not new to Holkham. In the late 1990s 'evacuated tube' solar panels were installed on a toilet and shower block at Pinewoods and at Lord Coke's old house, Waterden Farm. These projects have already repaid us by saving on energy costs.

In 2006 the wastewater treatment plant in Holkham village was constructed in response to a need to update the antiquated sewerage system in Holkham village. It has made a positive change to the environment in which we live and work. We are now considering using this treated, clean water to irrigate new willow coppice for future use as biomass (see below). A feature of the treatment system we chose is the very low energy requirement. Instead of solely relying on electricity, the system uses wind energy to optimise conditions in the treatment cells, whilst natural surface absorption provides the oxygen needed for the treatment process and positive odour control. The plant has now been running trouble-free for three years and will hopefully serve for many more.

It has become clear that we need to move away from the widespread use of fossil fuels across the estate. The hall itself has an old oil-fired central heating system. We have been debating whether to install a different system – currently among the front-runners is a biomass boiler, which would be fed by wood chippings from the timber grown on the estate. Naturally this would fit in with our tree re-planting strategy over the 1,800 acres of woodland we have. We would probably only look at a biomass boiler for the hall and the larger estate buildings, as it is not practical to install small ones for domestic use.

The wastewater treatment plant in Holkham village

The 10kW solar panel array at Pinewoods

We are beginning to implement a strategy of finding alternatives to oil and other fossil fuels for our houses. We are looking at wood burning stoves, ground source heat pumps and solar energy for domestic use and hope to install our first 'real' alternative by spring 2012. One of the many problems we face with the older houses, many of which were built in Georgian and Victorian times, is that it is hard to introduce modern insulating methods into buildings which are often listed and which do not lend themselves to cavity walls and double glazing. We will be reviewing properties that need insulating and will pursue grant funding that might be available to us. New buildings do not present these problems, which means the barn conversions we are building at Manor Farm, Wells will meet current government recommendations for insulation and sustainability.

We have begun to use solar voltaic power too – two arrays of PV cells have been installed, one at Pinewoods and a larger array at the reservoir to the west of Wells.

The panels at Pinewoods generate 10kW and the electricity is used on site, with any surplus being sold back to the national grid. We intend to mount a public display in the Pinewoods shop showing how much electricity we generate.

At the reservoir we have installed a larger array generating 50kW and the electricity generated in the summer months will be used to power electric pumps to irrigate the crops, conveniently also in the summer months. We expect this will result in our electricity usage at the reservoir falling by a third.

Wind power has established itself as a consistent generator of power and profit in the UK and the evidence of this is clear to see just off our coastline. We will be liaising with local leaders in the field of renewable resources to investigate other technologies. Scira, responsible for the Sheringham Shoal wind farm being constructed off-shore, is one of these leaders. Stephen Temple at Copys Green Farm in Wighton is pioneering anaerobic digestion which takes slurry from his diary herd and other farm waste and turns it into heat and electricity. The estate is reviewing a variation of this 'biogas' plant for its own use. Future developments in renewable resources will come and we want Holkham to be leading the way.

Superfast broadband is on its way, but we need your help!

BY MARIE STRONG, COUNTY COUNCILLOR FOR WELLS AND DISTRICT

I am delighted to report that Norfolk County Council has reached the next stage in bringing better broadband to Norfolk. Back in April 2011 we had to convince the government that better broadband would dramatically improve employment and the economy of Norfolk. In addition to the many businesses that provided valuable information for the initial bid I asked Holkham Estate to step forward, sign up and support the bid. Not only did Holkham sign up but they also produced a statement that formed a crucial part of our bid. Whilst their statement described the needs of a large organisation it reflected the needs of small businesses and individuals. These needs remain and I am asking every business, every embryonic business, every resident and students of all ages to again say YES to better broadband.

We need to attract the best possible private sector partner and to do this we need to show that demand exists right across the county. The bigger towns and parishes will produce higher figures yet Wells and our small parishes not only have a greater need but can demonstrate this by each parish registering. This will impress potential partners and will, I believe, benefit our parishes at the next stage.

So say YES – go to www.norfolk.gov.uk/sayyesnorfolk and sign up; obtain forms for residents and businesses to fill in from libraries and mobile libraries or register on 0344 800 8023.

Please note there is no commitment or obligation in registering your interest at this stage. And those of you who, hearing of the appalling service in your area, have not yet gone on-line can still register. I am trying to get the website amended for friends to register you but you could register by using a form, noting you are interested but waiting for a better service.

Chamber Music at its finest

The Marble Hall at Holkham is the perfect setting for our impressive Chamber Music programme for 2012

Sunday 12th February • Escher String Quartet

Pre-concert talk by Simon Rowland-Jones – 'Bartók's String Quartet No.5 – the Greatest String Quartet of the 20th Century?' Followed by the Escher String Quartet performing music by Haydn, Bartók and Beethoven. The talk starts at 3pm and the concert starts at 4.30pm. Tickets £25 – for pre-concert talk followed by tea and coffee. A glass of wine will be served during the concert interval.

Sunday 18th March • Dame Felicity Palmer and Simon Lepper

Mezzosoprano Dame Felicity Palmer and pianist Simon Lepper present 'Women on the Edge', a programme of songs by Britten, Purcell, Tchaikovsky, de Falla and Sondheim. Starts at 7pm. Tickets £25 including a glass of wine.

Saturday 24th March • Signum Quartet

Holkham is delighted to have been selected as a concert venue by BBC Radio 3 as part of its week-long series of broadcasts. One of Europe's leading young quartets and Radio 3 New Generation Artists, the Signum Quartet from Berlin, performs an all Schubert programme in a live broadcast from the Marble Hall. Starts at 1pm. Tickets £18 – includes tea and coffee in the Saloon following the performance.

Saturday 7th April • Elizabeth Watts and Julius Drake

Soprano Elizabeth Watts and pianist Julius Drake perform Schumann's song cycle and songs by Ivor Gurney and Richard Strauss. Starts at 7pm. Tickets £25 including a glass of wine.

Friday 8th June • Kungsbacka Piano Trio

Kungsbacka Piano Trio performs a programme of music by Beethoven and Tchaikovsky. Starts at 7pm. Tickets £25 including a glass of wine.

Saturday 13th October • Bondarenko and Matthewman

Baritone Andrei Bondarenko and pianist Gary Matthewman perform music by Ibert, Tosti, Respighi, Glinka, Tchaikovsky and opera aria. Starts at 7pm. Tickets £25 including a glass of wine.

Saturday 10th November • Brodowski Quartet

The Brodowski Quartet performs a programme of music by Haydn, Smetana and Tchaikovsky. Starts at 7pm. Tickets £25 including a glass of wine.

Saturday 1st December • Leon McCawley

Pianist Leon McCawley performs a programme entitled 'Debussy at 150, Impressions and Influences' with music by Bach, Chopin, Debussy, Liszt, Rachmaninov and Schumann. Starts at 7pm. Tickets £30 – includes a glass of champagne in the Saloon during the interval and a chance to see our magnificent Christmas decorations.

An additional attraction for all our concerts is the opportunity to view some of the other state rooms in the hall during the interval as you sip your glass of wine.
The full programme of each concert is available on the website.
To book tickets, please contact Holkham Ticket Office, Holkham Estate, Wells-next-the-Sea NR23 1AB. Telephone: 01328 713111

'Windward' – a sculptural bench

Anthony Coke, son of Peterstone residents Hon. John and Carolyn Coke and nephew of Lord Leicester, explains how his sculptural bench is now a permanent part of the regeneration of Port Elizabeth, South Africa, where he lives and works.

I live with my wife, Nadja in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, where I work for Volkswagen South Africa as a designer and component engineer.

In 2009 I joined a sculpture evening class, feeling the need to expand creatively. My first sculpture was still a work in progress when the lecturer suggested I enter it into a competition where I won the 'Most Promising Emerging Artist' award!

I entered the same work into another competition, this one to do with the upgrading of the Donkin Reserve, a public space on a hill in the oldest part of Port Elizabeth, overlooking the bay. This was the beginning of a much bigger project in the city, eventually named Route 67, celebrating the contribution by Nelson Mandela to South Africa.

I won a commission to develop my sculpture into a park bench. This meant adapting the original abstract form into something slightly more practical. I achieved this by sketching the profile onto a huge block of styrofoam and then cutting away the foam until I had the form I wanted. Then a mould was created, from which a fibreglass 'bench' was cast. The end product is simple and solid and virtually vandal-proof. The budget allowed for three to be made.

The bench is perfect for three people. The seat backs are orientated so that a degree of protection is provided against the prevailing southeasterly winds, while giving the user a panoramic view over the bay.

'Windward' is an abstract work that calls to mind several aspects of life for the citizens of Port Elizabeth. The nautical theme connects with the city's history as one of South Africa's earliest and most important harbours. It makes reference to its name of 'Windy City', along with its reputation as Africa's water sport capital.

The influence for the design comes from nautical themes, the most obvious being a yacht under sail, but it also has organic elements taken from seashells and wave shapes and these are evident in both the line and surface of the sculpture.

The benches act as a sort of renewable canvas for street art or graffiti. Local artists are commissioned to decorate them around once a year, providing a sense of change to the Donkin Reserve.

It's been a fantastic experience being swept along in this whole process and on such a grand scale. I was the only non-professional artist out of the first six involved, which meant I completed this project in my spare time. What surprised me most was that the process of developing the initial design into the full-scale product went very smoothly, which was probably just as well as I had only 12 weeks to complete it!

'Route 67' was officially opened in October, and it has been hugely effective in transforming a tired and sad part of the city into a place where people want to spend time. This has been achieved by bringing art and people together, no mean feat considering the 12 official languages and their associated cultures and artistic influences in South Africa. If you would like to read more go to www.mbda.co.za

Landscape department takes shape

The estate has an obligation to ensure that Holkham park looks as it did when it was created between the early 18th and mid-19th centuries. The retirement of Head Forester Ian McNab in December 2011, after 54 years at Holkham, called for some restructuring and the Woods and Gardens teams have merged to form the new Landscape Department, under Landscape Manager Tim Marshall. His remit now covers the whole of Holkham park, as well as the restoration of the Walled Gardens. Tim is planning re-plantings, tweaking and tidying to refine the park into a 'natural looking landscape that is manmade', just as William Kent and the two first Earls of Leicester intended. To this end he has a 'five-year plan' to make improvements, though he admits that the years might be gardeners' years, rather than the 365 days we are used to!

His team's new responsibilities include 1,800 acres of woods and 100 acres of gardens. He has ten people to help him and is recruiting an extra person to bring his team up to full strength. He is also very keen to encourage volunteers to help out at the Walled Gardens throughout the year. It's a great opportunity and if you would like to help, please contact Tim by e-mail – t.marshall@holkham.co.uk

In the Walled Gardens the first 'room' is finished. Now in the third year of the five-year project, the team has moved on to the next 'room', to be called 'An Arena of Shrubs'. Most of the planting has been done in this area, but the brickwork has yet to get started. The vegetable garden will be finished in April. The Walled Gardens used to be the kitchen gardens for the hall in times gone by and Tim is pleased to return part of them to their original use.

The best quality vegetables they grow will go to the kitchens in the hall, with most of the rest going to supply the estate's own restaurants and cafés. Any surplus will go on sale to visitors. Tim also wants to increase plant sales from the gardens. Later on, as the project gets nearer to completion, he has an idea to build a viewing platform in the back left hand corner so that visitors can get an overview of the whole area and see how the various 'rooms' are linked together to make a harmonious whole.

The Walled Gardens are open from April to October, 10am to 5pm. For more information, please visit the website: www.holkham.co.uk

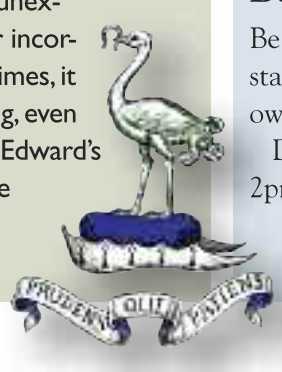
Planning something? Let us know!

If you're planning an event on or around Holkham during April, May or June 2012 we'd like to hear from you. Let us have the information and we'll try to publish as many details as we have space for in the next issue of the Holkham Gazette. Please send the information to s.phillips@holkham.co.uk by 1st March 2012.

The Ostrich and The Crown

This year we celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the 400th anniversary of the establishment of the Coke family at Holkham. Visit the hall between April and October to see our captivating exhibition 'The Ostrich and The Crown' which highlights the links between the Coke family and the monarchy, from the time of Elizabeth I to the present day. A beautifully illustrated story is brought to life with displays from our archives and personal records, including a dress worn at the 1953 coronation.

And why have we called it The Ostrich and The Crown? It was Sir Edward Coke, Lord Chief Justice to Elizabeth I, who adopted the rather unexpected emblem of the ostrich with a horseshoe in its beak (later incorporated into the family's coat of arms). In ancient and medieval times, it was believed that the ostrich's digestion could cope with anything, even iron. The bird was therefore the perfect visual companion to Sir Edward's personal motto – *Prudens qui patiens etenim durissima coquit* – The prudent man is the patient man, because he can digest (endure) even the hardest things. The ostrich emblem is still in use today.



Hats off to Kevan McCaig

Head keeper Kevan McCaig

Holkham has long been regarded as a 'great estate' in the eyes of the shooting world, not least because Holkham is believed to be the place where driven shooting first began.

The estate is still famous for its wild game bird shoot and conservation record. In the days of the third Earl of Leicester in the early 1900s, invitations to shoot at Holkham were much sought after. Back then, grey partridge were the most common game birds in the country. In recent years, populations of these beautiful birds and many other farmland birds have plummeted dramatically, on a national scale. The birds have been under constant pressure from changes in farming which, in turn, has led to a decline in the population of those insects which are vital for young chicks to feed on. Lack of natural feed and an increase in predation has seen many estates lose completely their populations of grey partridge. However, because of Holkham's policy of conservation and wild bird management, there is still a viable stock of grey partridge on the estate.

The management of the birds and the running of shoot days at Holkham is the responsibility of head gamekeeper Kevan McCaig, who joined Holkham from the Sandringham estate in 2011. He has a team of four beatkeepers, each of whom has his own beat of up to 2,500 acres to look after, and he is assisted by a deer-keeper who manages the herd of fallow and red deer that roams the park.

Kevan's meticulous planning of shoots means that they run like clockwork. Liaising with Lord Leicester and Lord Coke to decide which beats to use, he maps out the drives, enlists a team of enthusiastic beaters and pickers-up and runs the shoot, making sure that everyone knows exactly what part they are to play on the day.

Once a gamekeeper has been at Holkham for a year, he earns the right to wear the famous 'Billycock' or bowler hat, which was originally commissioned by William Coke, a nephew of the first Earl of Leicester of the second creation in August 1849. William asked London hatter James Lock to design a close-fitting, low crowned hat and stressed that the hat must be extra strong in order to protect his gamekeepers' heads from low hanging branches while out horse riding. It is believed that William also hoped the new hat would protect his keepers from attacks by poachers! Lock's chief hatter, Thomas Bowler, made a hard hat with a round, low crown and small brim, covered in a rough finished felt. The story goes that William took the hat and jumped on it to determine its durability. The hat withstood the test and was called the 'Coke' hat, after the customer for whom it was made. The hat soon became known as the 'Billy Coke' or 'Billycock' hat in Norfolk and is still proudly worn by the keepers at Holkham on shoot days.

Cosy cafés

The Rose Garden Café in Holkham village and the Beach Café in Wells are open during the winter, and are great places to retreat to after a bracing walk. Well-behaved dogs are welcome at both cafés and they each have a cosy wood-burning stove.

Hearty bowls of Irish stew and homemade soups are on the menu at the Rose Garden Café to warm you up and thaw you out. While you're there, why not take part in their book exchange – bring along books you've read to swap for different ones left by other customers.

Or you can get comfy at the Beach Café and play traditional board games such as draughts, chess and Scrabble. There are weekend newspapers and free WiFi and a range of knitted hats, gloves and scarves for sale to keep you snug. There are popular drinks – Horlicks, Ovaltine and even Bovril – to raise the temperature. And if you're feeling peckish there are 'Weekend Roast' rolls filled with succulent beef, pork or turkey!

Beach hut bird box family activity with Natural England

Be inspired by the Wells Beach Huts and mark the start of National Bird Box week by painting your own beach hut bird box to take home.

Drop in to the Beach Café between 11am and 2pm on Tuesday 14th February. The cost is £5 per bird box painted and booking is essential. See www.holkham.co.uk for more details.

Noticeboard

A wonderful place to visit

The income we receive from our car parking is used to maintain the parts of Holkham that are accessible to visitors. We offer a combined season ticket costing £105 that gives access to Holkham beach, Holkham park and Wells beach as well as unlimited admission to the hall during the visitor season from April to October. To apply for a season ticket you can download an application form from www.holkham.co.uk or give the Estate Office a call on 01328 710227.
Or you can enter our prize draw below.

PRIZE DRAW

Win one of two combined car park season tickets each worth £105!

Fill in your name, address and phone number or email below to be entered in a prize draw to win a combined car park season ticket. Entry closes 16th March 2012.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....

PHONE.....

EMAIL.....

THEN EITHER
Post to Holkham Competition, 2d Maryland, Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk NR23 1LY
OR Email your name, address and phone number to ticketoffice@holkham.co.uk
NB Terms and conditions apply

Only one entry per household

Gardening Tips

by Landscape Manager Tim Marshall

Jobs to do in January, February and March

- Try to keep off areas where you know bulbs have been planted, as they can be easily damaged as they start to emerge from the soil.
- Check your potted half-hardy perennials tucked away in the garage or shed. Make sure they are not getting mouldy and aren't getting too dry; if they are getting very shrivelled give them a small amount of water.
- Scented plants such as Daphnes and Chimonanthus (Wintersweet) are a delight at this time of year. If you have one, place it in a prominent position by a path or the back door so that you can benefit from the delicious smell.
- Protect blossom on fruit trees such as peach and nectarine. If they are planted in the ground protect using fleece – uncover during the day. If they are in pots put them in an unheated greenhouse until fruit has fully set and the risk of frost damage has diminished.
- Clean the greenhouse with disinfectant before spring sowings begin.
- From November till February is a good time to take hardwoods cuttings of Willows (Salix) and Dogwoods (Cornus). Take cuttings about 20 to 30 centimetres long of new whippy growth. Insert these cuttings about two-thirds deep into well-dug and free draining ground. Make sure that you put them the right way up! Water during the growing season and by the following autumn you will have plants to dig up and plant out.

The Victoria on Valentine's Day

Romance the night away at the Victoria Hotel – book their dinner, bed and breakfast Valentine's offer with someone special and a complimentary bottle of champagne will be waiting for you in your room. The price for this romantic treat is £195 based on two people sharing and the offer is available from 11th to 14th February.

If dinner *à deux* is more your style, the Victoria's romantic Valentine's night dinner menu is guaranteed to make your loved one feel extra special. The menu, which is reproduced below, will be available on 14th February only and costs £40 per person.

You can also take advantage of this generous offer – book a table for the Valentine's dinner and cut out and present the voucher below when you arrive and you'll get a free bottle of wine to make your meal even more memorable.

To find out more, or to book, call 01328 711008 or visit their website: www.holkham.co.uk/victoria

The Victoria Valentine's Dinner Menu

Victoria's Kir Royale

Ravioli of lobster and crab, shellfish jus
or
Deep fried goat's cheese, walnut, chicory and grapes

Tempura fried oysters, Vodka and melon

8oz rib eye or 16oz rib of beef to share, chips, onion rings, french beans wrapped in bacon, mushroom, tomatoes, with a choice of béarnaise or peppercorn sauce
or
Pan fried red mullet, shrimp toastie, roasted red pepper fondue
or
Watercress, mascarpone and toasted pine nut risotto, salad of apple and celery

Assiette of chocolate

Sorry!
Voucher not available in on-line publication

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