

The Holkham Gazette

Holkham Studios are a glittering success



BY SARA PHILLIPS, EDITOR

The first phase of transforming Longlands into a new 9,000 ft² office space and studios is complete and the new tenant, internationally renowned jewellery designer Monica Vinader, has moved in. The area around the buildings has been landscaped, trees have been planted and a new direct road has been laid. The development recently won the Commercial category in the East of England RICS Awards 2015. In addition the project was shortlisted for the Building Conservation and Regeneration categories.

Monica Vinader employs 42 people, most of whom live locally, though two have a bit of a commute – one member of staff comes from Peterborough and one travels from Diss. All the design work for her beautiful jewellery is done from the studios, though the pieces themselves are made in Asia, often using suppliers that Monica has used right from the start and with whom she has an excellent and trusting relationship. The pieces of jewellery are shipped back to the studios and undergo a rigorous quality control check before being sent to the Assay Office in Norwich for the gold to be assayed and stamped. The pieces are then brought back

to the studios and an extensive dispatch area packs and ships out all orders. Also on site is the customer care department, so any problems can be dealt with immediately. The design of all the Monica Vinader stores, point of sale displays and material and the photography of the jewellery is handled at the studios too. It's clear that the new buildings are perfect for this busy, successful company, which currently has shops in London, Hong Kong and Dubai and is looking at opening outlets in Seoul, Singapore and the United States.



I talked to Monica about the new studios and how her business has grown.

"I set up my design studio in my house at Choseley near Docking about 15 years ago. We did jewellery then, but as part of our interior design business – I worked with Holkham on the design for The Victoria's holiday lodges in 2005 and I also designed the interior of the conservatory restaurant at The Victoria. In 2008, my sister Gabriela and I both knew we wanted to establish a global brand from Norfolk and we both wanted to concentrate on jewellery. So we took a great leap of faith, stopped our paying jobs and established the Monica Vinader brand. We were thinking big right from the start – our global ambitions were in our initial business plan! Norfolk was my home and where my family is – my daughter was two at the time and I had no intention of moving us and her away. We used Gabriela's apartment in London as our showroom for some time before we could afford a proper place.



"As the business grew, my house in Choseley was just too small and it was disruptive to have work and family so close together. We moved to Docking Studios in 2010 but it wasn't ideal. We kept taking over rooms there as our needs expanded but it wasn't a coherent space and everything was very 'bitty'. Christmas 2013 was a bit of a nightmare – we had so many orders and were so busy and the space we had just wasn't suitable – it was a really stressful time and I swore that we would not be doing Christmas 2014 at Docking.

"The problem was finding somewhere local that had enough space for us. We knew we didn't want an industrial unit on the outskirts of Norwich or King's Lynn. The development at Longlands was hugely serendipitous and the fact that we were ready and willing to move there provided, I think, part of the impetus for the estate to build the studios where we are now. I remember being taken around what was effectively a muddy field by Estates Director, David Horton-Fawkes, as he explained where various buildings were to go. He said, "You'll need lots of imagination and vision to see what we want to do." I gazed around and could see exactly how it might be – I didn't need imagination. It was perfect!

"And now we are here and it has exceeded my expectations. We have the space we need and there's room for expansion too. We aren't crowded together and we have valuable areas for our staff to conduct their business in ways that suit them. There is excellent internet access throughout, we have flexible movable partitions to separate off spaces, we have meeting rooms and a café – people don't have to be chained to their desks all day. It makes for a community feel and is somewhere that I think everyone wants to come to to do their work. Many members of staff cycle to work – we have showers and a changing area. It's a very inclusive space to work from."

Magna Carta and Sir Edward Coke

To celebrate the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta, Holkham has a small display this summer about Sir Edward Coke. He was one of England's foremost judges and was the founder of the Coke family fortunes for his descendants, later the Earls of Leicester, at Holkham.

Sir Edward was born in 1552 and educated at Cambridge, before being called to the Bar in 1578. As a barrister he took part in several notable cases before being elected to parliament, where he served first as Solicitor General and then as Speaker of the House of Commons. He was promoted to Attorney General in 1594 and he led the prosecution in several notable cases, including those against Robert Devereux, Sir Walter Raleigh and the Gunpowder Plot conspirators. As a reward for his services he was knighted and made Chief Justice of the Common Pleas. He died on 3 September 1634.

Sir Edward's reinterpretation and use of Magna Carta helped to limit the powers of the Stuart kings and, when opposing them, he used Magna Carta to help draw up the Petition of Right, a document considered one of the three crucial constitutional documents of England, along with Magna Carta and the Bill of Rights of 1689. In 1628, as a precondition to granting any future taxes, parliament forced King Charles I to assent to the Petition of Right. This asked for

a settlement of parliament's complaints against the king's non-parliamentary taxation and imprisonments without trial, as well as the unlawfulness of martial law.

Coke's influence also spread further afield. The constitutions of the United States and many Commonwealth countries also bear the hallmarks of his writings on Magna Carta. The famous cry at the Boston Tea Party of "no taxation without representation" in 1773 reflected one of the major grievances of American colonists and provided a direct link back to Sir Edward Coke's interpretation of Clause 12 in Magna Carta from the original 1215 manuscript.

The display includes some of Sir Edward Coke's manuscripts and books from the library and archives, demonstrating the crucial importance that he attached to Magna Carta.

The display can be seen until 29th October on days when the hall is open.





Walled gardens win Heritage Lottery Fund support

Holkham Walled Garden Limited, a not-for-profit organisation, has received initial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for its project 'Beyond the Walls'. The project, which is based in the walled gardens at Holkham, aims to sensitively restore the 18th century gardens, in order to conserve the important historic buildings for future generations and to provide new world-class facilities for day visitors, outdoor events, educational and horticultural groups, staff and volunteers. Development funding of £84,700 has been awarded to help the organisation progress its plans to apply for a full grant at a later date.

The project aims to carry out essential conservation and restoration work on the greenhouses and other buildings within the gardens. The Vinery, located outside of the walled area, which was designed by Samuel Wyatt and dates from 1780, will also be repaired. The aim is to open up all of these buildings for even more public access with new interpretation panels throughout. The project will see the creation of 21st century visitor facilities and a new, multi-purpose, environmentally-friendly education centre. The centre will be used to deliver a comprehensive education and engagement programme of school visits, events, workshops and horticultural training courses.

The walled gardens have attracted a strong band of enthusiastic volunteers and the team at Holkham will build on this to increase the number of opportunities for people to get involved. Our vision is that the walled gardens at Holkham should be internationally renowned for delivering the best training in traditional horticultural skills, inspirational educational and volunteer programmes and an engaging experience for a broad range of visitors.

The six acre walled gardens were built in the 1780s and were used to grow

fruit, vegetables and cut flowers for the Coke family living in the hall. This remains an important aspect of the gardens to this day.



Holkham art goes to Tokyo

This summer, one of Holkham's best known works of art has gone on loan to the prestigious Tokyo Fuji Art Museum as part of an exhibition entitled 'Leonardo da Vinci and The Battle of Anghiari: The Mystery of Tavola Doria'. Such loans help to show a wider audience some of the great works of art on display at Holkham, as well as providing revenue or work in kind for conservation of the loaned pieces.

On show in Tokyo will be a wide variety of Leonardo's achievements with both the Tavola Doria (a copy of part of Leonardo's fresco The Battle of Anghiari) and the Holkham painting (a copy of part of Michelangelo Buonarroti's fresco The Battle of Cascina) being shown to the public in Japan for the first time.

Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo Buonarroti, the two most influential artists of the day, received commissions to each design a fresco for the Salone dei Cinquecento in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. The intention was to place the two great Renaissance artists in direct competition with each other. Neither Leonardo nor Michelangelo finished their frescos but the latter did produce a completed cartoon of how his would look. The Holkham picture is the only surviving copy of this cartoon, made by Bastiano da Sangallo and it is this picture which is on display in the Fuji Art Museum until 9th August. It will then transfer to Kyoto in Japan in the latter part of the year, before returning to Holkham in a year's time.



Picture © Katherine Ashdown

Weddings and corporate events at Holkham

Holkham is, without doubt, one of the grandest and most beautiful wedding and event venues in the country. It offers the perfect location to get married in north Norfolk. This fine Palladian house, surrounded by the romantic deer park with a lake, temple and woodland, could be yours for your big day.

If you think you might like to celebrate with us, we have a friendly and experienced team that can help you plan your special day. We offer flexibility, support and guidance so that every detail has been thought of. We know the best suppliers to help you with a stunning marquee, delicious food, beautiful flowers and memorable photography. We will be there to support you but you are free to design your day, from the ceremony to the reception, as you wish.

We have a licence to hold weddings and civil partnerships in four of the magnificent state rooms in the hall and in the Temple in Holkham park, all of which offer something a little different for you and your guests.

As part of the major redevelopment of new visitor facilities this year, the Lady Elizabeth Wing – our dedicated, contemporary venue for weddings, parties and events – will be opening in summer 2016. The space will seat up to 250 guests for a dinner, up to 340 guests in theatre-style seating for presentations and 400 guests for a drinks party. Holkham is the ideal venue for weddings, receptions, corporate dinners, team building events, product launches and much more. Or why not consider the Lady Elizabeth Wing for your private functions such as anniversaries and birthday parties.



The Temple in Holkham park – the perfect wedding venue



Food and Drink Festival 2015

Holkham Country Fair SATURDAY 25th AND SUNDAY 26th JULY



The North Norfolk Food and Drink Festival, now in its sixth year, will take place at Holkham on Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th September. This year the stallholders, food concessions and sponsors will gather in and around the walled gardens to celebrate local food and drink.

The range of produce on offer will include real ales, fresh meat and poultry, local seafood, vegetables, honey, cakes, fruit, ice cream, cheese, fresh juices, cakes, puddings and tarts and so much more. Entry to the festival will be free but a car parking

charge of £2.50 will apply. Just outside the walled gardens a food court area will provide outstanding food and beverages to eat or drink. Around eight concessions will take part including Arthur Howell offering his famous hog roast, the Fruit Pig Company with award winning sausages and Jo C's brewery with fine artisan beer. Children's activities will include face painting, storytelling and plenty of traditional fun.

The ever popular cookery theatre, organised and hosted by Mary Kemp, doyenne of Norfolk food, will be in its trademark octagonal tent where you can see demonstrations from this year's wonderful line-up of chefs. A list of those participating will be published on the festival website – www.northernorfolkfoodfestival.co.uk. This year the cookery theatre will celebrate the collaboration between the local food producers attending the festival and local chefs. There will be children's demonstrations too. The gates to the festival will open at 10am and close at 4pm each day.



The hugely popular Holkham Country Fair returns to Holkham park this July. The fair comprises two days of fun and interest for all ages, with a full programme of events and displays in the Grand Ring right through the day. There are more than 200 trade stands and a large variety of showground events to complete the mix.

New this year is a rare opportunity to camp within the beautiful grounds of Holkham park for the weekend, with on-site facilities and live music on the Saturday evening. You will have time to fully explore and enjoy Holkham and the Country Fair!

The theme of the fair is the celebration of the English countryside, its work, leisure, conservation, traditions and its evolution. Holkham has a long tradition of progressive farming. Coke of Norfolk in the 18th century introduced crop rotation and improved animal husbandry and today the Holkham Estate leads the way in modern farming methods. It is fitting, therefore, that this celebration of the countryside should be held in the magnificent park.

Please note that Holkham Hall and the walled gardens will not be open during the Country Fair. Tickets and further information are available from www.holkhamcountryfair.co.uk

The Crab Shack at The Victoria



Building on its success of last year, for 2015 the Crab Shack at The Victoria will feature a delicious menu of fresh, locally caught seafood and other dishes, served in the sunny courtyard – a great place to meet, eat and relax. The Crab Shack will be open daily from 25th July to 31st August from 12 noon to 6pm (weather permitting). Sample dishes include a 'Shack Sharer' comprising half a lobster, dressed crab, shell on prawns, oysters, crayfish and avocado cocktail, lemon mayonnaise, beetroot slaw, potato salad and bread – perfect for two or more to tuck in to. There's also a selection of filled rolls and all the seafood above is available as individual dishes if that's what you fancy.

Come and see us – we're looking forward to a great summer!

What's on locally...

Walled Gardens Ramble

A guided walk to explore the six acres of gardens at Holkham. Booking required.
Thursdays 2nd July, 16th July, 3rd September

Cricket Matches at Holkham

July 5th, 8th, 12th, 18th and 21st, August 1st, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th and 31st, September 2nd, 6th, 13th and 20th.

Walking Women, Wells

Meet at the Beach Café, Wells.
Tuesdays 7th July, 1st September

Macro Photography Workshop: Plants Up Close

Held in the walled gardens at Holkham. Booking required.
Wednesday 8th July

The Burnhams Flower Show and Carnival

Saturday July 18th

Summer Tours of the Private Gardens

An opportunity to visit the private gardens at Holkham, usually closed to the public. Booking required.
Sunday 19th July

Guided Walk on the National Nature Reserve

Meet at Lady Anne's Drive. Booking required.
Tuesdays 21st July, 18th August, 15th September

Park Discovery Day: Pond Dipping

Discover what lies beneath the water of Holkham lake.
Thursdays 23rd July, 30th July, 6th August, 13th August, 20th August, 27th August

Outdoor Theatre

The Importance of Being Earnest

Oscar Wilde's timeless comedy in the fabulous surroundings of the walled gardens.
Wednesday 22nd July

The Three Musketeers

All for one and one for all!
Wednesday 5th August

The Secret Garden

Mary Lennox discovers wonders in the Yorkshire countryside.
Wednesday 12th August

Twelfth Night

Shakespeare's best-loved romantic comedy, performed by an all-male cast.
Wednesday 19th August

Robin Hood

He robs from the rich to give to the poor!
Wednesday 26th August

Holkham Country Fair

Country pursuits, plenty of events in the Grand Ring. A great day out for all the family.
Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th July

RNLI Open Day and BBQ

At the RNLI Boathouse on Wells beach. All welcome.
Sunday 26th July

Walled Gardens Discovery Day

Hands-on, family fun activities at Holkham.
Mondays 27th July, 3rd August, 10th August, 17th August, 24th August

Wells-next-the-Sea Carnival begins

Running through to 9th August.
Friday 31st July

Walking Women, Holkham Walled Gardens

Meet at Holkham ticket office.
Tuesday 4th August

Gamekeeper Discovery Day

Find out about the work of a modern gamekeeper on the Holkham estate.
Tuesday 11th August

Evening Bat Walk

Find out about the bats in Holkham park. Booking required.
25th August, 27th August, 1st September

Open-air Concert: Jools Holland

A fantastic boogie-woogie party with Jools and guests in Holkham park.
Saturday 29th August

Open-air Concert: Last Night of the Proms

Listen to timeless favourites and sing your heart out. In Holkham park.
Sunday 30th August

North Norfolk Food and Drink Festival

Now in its sixth year. To be held in the walled gardens at Holkham for 2015.
Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th September

Photography Workshop: Coastal Nature

Held at Holkham. Booking required.
Wednesday 16th September

North Norfolk Triathlon

Organised by Wells Harbour Maritime Trust. Wells quay.
Sunday 20th September

For more information about Holkham events go to www.holkham.co.uk



Two nights of great live music on August bank holiday

The park will come alive for our two superb outdoor music events this year. On Saturday 29th August we welcome Jools Holland and his Rhythm & Blues Orchestra for a night of jazz and blues. Jools will be accompanied by Ruby Turner, Louise Marshall, Mabel Ray and drummer Gilson Lavis and his special guest will be Marc Almond. Jools Holland will lead the orchestra in a musical catalogue to capture all tastes. A boogie-woogie party not to miss!

The south park at Holkham is also the backdrop for the Last Night of the Proms concert on Sunday 30th August. The English National Philharmonic Orchestra will perform popular classical music joined by Fiona Bruce as compère for the evening. The ENPO will accompany soprano

Claire Ormshaw and tenor Lee Bradley, whilst conductor Ben Crick will try to keep the audience under control! Sing along to some of Britain's best-loved patriotic pieces and watch as the evening draws to a close with a spectacular fireworks display.

Gates open at 4.30pm on both evenings so you can set out your picnic and soak up the atmosphere before the concerts begin at 7.30pm. Tickets for both shows can be purchased online at an advanced booking rate from Live Promotions at www.livepromotionsconcerts.co.uk for £39.95 for Jools Holland and £29.50 for the Last Night of the Proms. Tickets are also available from the Holkham ticket office, telephone 01328 713111. For more information visit www.holkham.co.uk.

The London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art comes to Holkham



The London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) will perform an open-air performance of Oscar Wilde's most treasured play, **The Importance of Being Earnest** in the walled gardens this July.

A world leader in the performing arts, LAMDA provides vocational training for talented actors, directors, designers, stage managers and technicians pursuing careers in the industry. Its tours allow graduating students hands-on experience and give audiences an opportunity to see the stars of tomorrow.

LAMDA's interpretation of *The Importance of Being Earnest* brings this farcical comedy to life. The cast pokes fun at Victorian society's tight reins on behaviour and successfully recreates the bizarre eccentricities of British social attitudes of the time.

Spearheaded by director Stephen Rayne, *The Importance of Being Earnest* has a strong cast and production team of talented students. This performance gives the audience at Holkham a unique opportunity to see future talent at first hand. Acting alumni of LAMDA include Benedict Cumberbatch, Hermione Norris, Jim Broadbent and Dominic Cooper to name but a few.

The performance is on 22nd July at 7pm. The audience are invited to bring picnics and low backed seating or rugs and to come prepared for all weathers. Theatre-goers will be admitted to the gardens 45 minutes before the production starts.

Tickets: Adult £15, Child (2-16 years) £10, Family (2 adults and 2 children) £45.

Our other theatre productions this summer

The Three Musketeers – Box Tree Productions

On Wednesday 5th August, 6.15pm. Join D'Artagnan on his quest to be a gallant musketeer. Tickets: Adult £13, Child (2-16 years) £9, Family (2 adults and 2 children) £40.

The Secret Garden – Chapterhouse Theatre

On Wednesday 12th August, 6.15pm. The enchanting story loved by children and adults alike. Tickets: Adult £13, Child (2-16 years) £9, Family (2 adults and 2 children) £40

Twelfth Night – Lord Chamberlain's Men

On Wednesday 19th August, 7pm. Shakespeare's best-loved romantic comedy. Tickets: Adult £15, Child (2-16 years) £10, Family (2 adults and 2 children) £45.

Robin Hood: The Musical – Cambridge Touring Theatre

On Wednesday 26th August, 6.15pm. The iconic tale of Robin Hood and his band of merry men. Come along in your best Sherwood fashion. Suitable for ages 3 to 12 years and adults too! Tickets: Adult £13, Child (2-16 years) £9, Family (2 adults and 2 children) £40.

Tickets are available to book online at www.holkham.co.uk or from Holkham ticket office on 01328 713111.

New car park in Wells

Work on the new car park to be built by the Holkham Estate behind Freeman Street in Wells-next-the-Sea started on 16th June. The car park will be constructed in phases – the initial phase will provide coach parking along with 100 car spaces. When finished, it will provide 299 car spaces, five coach spaces and an overflow on busy days. Visitors to the town will have a safe place to park within walking distance of all that Wells has to offer and it will alleviate the high level of traffic going through Wells during the high season.

Win one of two family tickets to see *The Importance of Being Earnest*

To enter email your name, address and telephone number to gazette@holkham.co.uk, mentioning the outdoor theatre prize draw, or complete this form and post to: Outdoor Theatre Competition, Marketing Department, Holkham Estate Office, Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk NR23 1AB. **The competition closes at midday on Monday 13th July 2015.**

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

EMAIL.....

PHONE.....

We would like to keep you informed of events and offers at Holkham by email.

Please tick this box if you do not wish to receive communications from us.

This prize is valid only for the outdoor theatre production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* on Wednesday 22nd July at 7pm • Valid for a maximum of 4 people – 2 adults and 2 children (aged 2 to 16).

For full terms and conditions, see www.holkham.co.uk/newsletter

Edward Coke, 7th Earl of Leicester

6th May 1936 – 25th April 2015

The Earl of Leicester was buried at a private ceremony at St Withburga's Church on the estate on Friday 1st May. The casket was taken from Holkham Hall to the church by his beloved Massey Ferguson tractor, driven by his brother the Hon. Johnny Coke. The tractor was the first one he purchased at Holkham in 1973 and had been recently restored for his birthday, which would have been on 6th May. The casket was made by the estate's joinery team from Holkham park oak. The route to the church was lined by over 200 estate employees and the cortège was followed by family, friends and estate employees. The funeral service included a reading by Lord Leicester's younger son the Hon. Rupert Coke. The tribute, below, was given by Viscount Coke. The 7th Earl leaves a widow, Sarah Countess of Leicester, three children and seven grandchildren. A memorial service will be held on Friday 17th July at 2.30pm in Norwich Cathedral. Everyone is welcome.

Funeral Tribute

DELIVERED BY VISCOUNT COKE

I had no inkling I would be standing here in 2015 delivering this tribute to my father. It has been a huge shock. 78 is young in today's terms, he was rarely ill. It is also young in 'Coke' terms.

Coke of Norfolk died in the 19th century aged 88. The 2nd Earl died aged 86, and my father's great grandfather, the 3rd Earl, was aged 93.

You will see examples of that longevity when we return to the hall. Our wonderful team have put together a collage of photographs that will be on display. There is a photograph of my father taken in 1939 when he was three, sitting on the knee of the 3rd Earl, a man born into Victorian England in 1848.

Today we are burying my father, a day short of the 100th anniversary of his grandfather's death at Gallipoli – his memorial is on St Withburga's Church wall.

Lady Carey Basset, the 5th Earl's daughter, pointed out in a sweet letter that "Ned will be the youngest Viscount Coke in the history of the Leicesters".

We were all expecting another decade but, and this is typical of his unselfish spirit, he didn't want to burden people with the prognosis given two years ago, which I have only just learnt of, that he had three to five years left. But we must be thankful that the day he died he had all his family around him. We had time to say the things we wanted to say to him and I know that was a great comfort to him and to us.

The day before, my mother was particularly gracious and said that she did not hold their divorce against him, a divorce that he himself said was the saddest thing in his life. That she was grateful for the happy times they had spent together, the three wonderful children they had had, and the new direction it had unintentionally set her life on.

Those who know me well, know I am not one prone to passionate outbursts of emotion. But seeing my stepmother Sarah cradling my father for the last hours of his life was one of the most beautiful things I have ever witnessed. Sarah, you made my father incredibly happy. Thank you.

I have to say, the NHS is a wonderful institution. The staff at King's Lynn were magnificent. The nurses all loved looking after him. He was so polite, and grateful for all they did for him. I watched him thank one of them when she finished her shift, hours before he died. He had such kindness in his face, a ready smile and genuine delight that he had met another lovely person. This easy charm was so typical of my father.

That same afternoon Bishop Jonathan came to his bedside to say some prayers. My father discussed with



great gusto preparations for his funeral and memorial, "Sabina [Lord Leicester's step-daughter], get your notebook!" Turning to the Bishop of Lynn, "You can bury me and Bishop Graham can do the memorial!" When a name was suggested to deliver the tribute, he slapped it down. "No, Tom will do it!" adding (and not unnaturally, I like this bit), "Tom, tell them what a great job you are doing on the estate!" His words, not mine!

Instructions were given to tidy up the 2nd Earl's gravestone and to ensure that enough security men were left at Model Farm and the hall, as "a funeral is the perfect time to burgle a house!"

Some of us urged my father to slow down a little in the last couple of years, but with hindsight I now see that he just wanted to pack in as much as he could. He was so proud of Sarah being High Sheriff of Norfolk and he accompanied her on as many visits as possible, including a night sleeping on the streets of Norwich.

Schooling in Africa

My father was born in 1936 in what was then Salisbury, Rhodesia. His parents were divorced when

he was very young and his mother remarried and moved to the Transvaal in South Africa. Their nearest white neighbours, all Afrikaners, were 20 miles away.

He and his siblings, Almary and Johnny, both here today, had a happy childhood. There were no parties and very few presents, but each morning they had the complete freedom of the African bush to run into (always barefoot) and to swim in the Komati river (always looking out for poisonous river snakes). They would stalk guinea fowl and dussys (a type of big hare) and bring them back for the table. They helped the local boys, who were their friends, herd the cattle. These friends gave the children names – his was "Bongantlaw", meaning 'person who walks on his own'. What they didn't have, they didn't miss.

School was 800 miles away. Aged seven they would catch the train by themselves. Two days and three nights later they would arrive at Grahamstown on the Indian Ocean. St Andrew's school motto was 'Nec Aspera Terrent' (Hardship will not deter us). Hardship was the daily diet and boarding school bred independence. It gave him the resilience he would



HOLKHAM



The Earl of Leicester's funeral cortège. Over 200 members of Holkham staff lined the route of the procession from the hall to the church

need when he came over to Holkham.

He enjoyed sport. He captained the school boxing team. If you box you learn to withstand punishment and you need courage. Qualities that would also help him.

By the age of ten he was aware he would inherit Holkham. Even then it was becoming clear that Tommy (the 5th Earl) and Elizabeth Leicester would not have a male heir. The 91 year old 3rd Earl was prescient when, with my three year old Dad sitting on his knee, he remarked to another family member, "One day this little boy will be Lord Leicester."

In 1955, aged 19, he had his first job working for Coopers, MacDougall & Nephew, suppliers of agricultural pharmaceuticals. He quickly rose to become the Johannesburg Branch Manager. The company posted him to England where he flirted with the Managing Director's secretary... who was to become my mother.

Dad was always a very fair minded man. When the National Party were elected in 1948 and introduced apartheid, the social injustice of it upset him to the point where he was not sad to leave the country for England in 1961.

But prejudice was not confined to South Africa. When he and my mother needed accommodation in England, he replied by telephone to an advert for lodgings in Islington. The landlady, upon hearing his South African accent, apologised and said "she didn't take black people!" He had to insist upon a meeting, to assure her he wasn't black.

In 1965 he began an apprenticeship of 18 months, learning estate management at Sandringham, preceded by a year on the Brun's farm at Massingham. One great piece of advice that old Henrik Brun gave him was to always, "Get out and about – your good men like to see you and your bad men don't!"

Aged 37, in 1973, he took over Holkham. He was not overawed by the responsibility. He was armed with a huge amount of common sense and a great deal of determination. He said he could see the problems at Holkham very clearly, as if laid out on a relief map, they were large, but not insurmountable.

At Holkham, Park Farm was in bad order. Dad's predecessor, Tommy the 5th Earl, was one of the keenest and best shots in the country. The farm played second fiddle to the shoot, so much so that the manager was only allowed to start farming the day the shooting season ended. It provided wonderful weedy habitat for wild game, but no income. Dad changed that and within a few years it had become profitable.

He was subsequently able to demonstrate that farming can go hand in hand with conservation. He

was the recipient of both the Mills and Reeve Grey Partridge Award and the Purdey Award for Conservation and, in 2007, the Royal Agricultural Society of England's Bledisloe Gold Medal.

Dad never blamed his predecessors for the decline at Holkham. It is difficult for us to comprehend, in this day and age, how austere life must have been in post-war Britain. Rationing carried on until 1954. The economy simply didn't get going after the war. Life was so difficult that the 4th Earl tried to hand Holkham over to the National Trust.

Trustees' Concern

Dad's own grandmother, Hermione (my father and his brother Johnny were enraged we had named our first daughter after such a harridan of a woman!) wrote in 1955 that she had met Eddy and "liked him". But "on the unfavourable side, he struck me as having no sense of humour, bad manners and a vile South African accent. He is really brought up at home in a pig-sty. I should hate to think of Holkham in the hands of a completely unsuitable person!"

Dad had a strong sense of social justice. A prime example of that at Holkham lay in the housing stock. Only 40 years ago, 90% of Holkham's houses had no indoor sanitation. He thought it was simply wrong that he should live in a house with bathrooms whilst his tenants had to troop down to the privy at the bottom of their gardens. Advisors told him to sell houses when they became vacant, as they were a costly repair liability. But Dad rejected the advice of the so called 'experts'. It took him twenty years, modernising one or two cottages a month. We still have them and of course they are worth rather more now.

This was an example of his enormous sense of duty, never one to simply take the easy route through life when he knew there was a right route. That seems to be the essence of his leadership.

He was also a hugely practical man. When Jonathan Paul asked him for my sister Laura's hand in marriage, his first question was, "Are you sure you have had enough girlfriends?" (Twenty years ago JP didn't look as if he had!)

When I got engaged to Polly, knowing my parsimonious nature, he advised me to, "let her take a taxi now and again". (I place the emphasis on "now and again"!)

At Model Farm one morning, Sarah found all her wooden spoons laid out on the kitchen table. "Tell me what on earth do you need 12 wooden spoons for?" Dad hated waste!

Tourism

Much of the estate's recent activity has been based around tourism. My father's open approach to public

access was one of his great strengths. Unlike some other estates and great houses, Holkham has never begrudged the public their ability to visit. We enjoy having them. This was one of the reasons he was such a realistic and successful President of the Historic Houses Association.

My father had a passion for preserving heritage. But heritage for him was not simply old buildings. He realised that the landscape was as important. This was his prime motivation for entering local politics. He was a councillor for 18 years at King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council, being both leader and also Chairman of the Planning Committee. He wanted to protect the countryside.

During my father's Presidency of the HHA, he manoeuvred it into a position of much greater influence than it had ever had before. He was invited to be an English Heritage Commissioner in 2005. Later the same year he was honoured with the award of Commander of the British Empire, for services to heritage.



Playing with his grandchildren



HOLKHAM

What motivated him? He claims it was fear of failure. Dad had a great sense of history, it was his favourite subject at school. With his deep and intimate knowledge of the history of Holkham, he didn't want to be the first Earl of Leicester to sell up due to incompetence. Personally I think he was motivated more by hope for success.

But one fact is true the world over; behind every successful man is a supportive woman! Sarah was the energiser behind him. She transformed Holkham into a lively hub of activity, full of warmth and vitality, always entertaining generously.

Standards

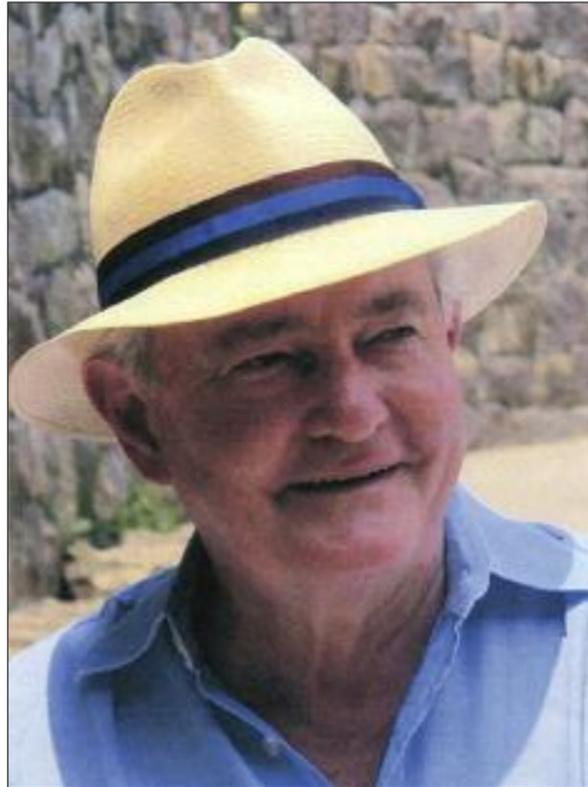
Dad exacted high standards, why settle for less? David Horton-Fawkes told me that when my father was an executor of the Althorp Estate, where David was a fresh-faced 28 year old presenting a new estate business plan, Dad sent it back immediately with a note, "When you have learned to spell and punctuate properly, I'll read this!"

On another occasion we were deciding upon which candidate should be appointed to succeed Richard Gledson as agent. Not without humour Dad said, "I don't care who we employ, as long as when he arrives he knows how to keep ivy off a park wall!"

The estate staff have been a tremendous source of strength and comfort in this last week and have bent over backwards to ensure the funeral arrangements were perfect.

Ron and Liam made his coffin out of Holkham oak, from a tree felled four years ago at Joe's Stop, one of Dad's favourite shoot drives in the park. Maurice turned the decorative discs and Ian carved the reliefs of the intertwining 'Ls' and the ostrich on them.

For the last year we have been restoring the little Massey 135 that stands outside. It was the first tractor Dad bought at Holkham. One of the photographs you will see in the hall is of two very sulky boys, Dad and Johnny, about to be packed off to school. The journey to get to the railway siding to meet the train was undertaken by tractor. Johnny and Dad used to put their trunks in the trailer and then take turns to drive each other. Today it is once again Johnny's turn to drive the tractor, and his



brother, for the final time.

As a family we have been humbled to receive so many letters from people from all walks of life. So many talk of my father's kindness, his sense of humour, the wonderful twinkle in his eye and his generosity.

I could use many as examples, but this one sums him up. It comes from Sophie Trend of Wighton. "I'm holding on to the memory of my last chat with him, in the church porch at Wighton. He was his usual gentle, kind and interested self, wanting to catch up on village news, and that of the family. Always good humoured, with a twinkle in his eye and a deep affinity for all things Norfolk related, and beyond. Reading the obituaries I've learned more about him and his many achievements, but he certainly wore those lightly and with huge modesty. Always down to earth and quietly unassuming. A lovely man, he will be very much missed by a great many people".

From Richard Wilkin who worked with Dad at the HHA, "Of all the occasional outstanding figures of

my life, I can think of few for whom I've had such admiration, respect and affection". He continues, "He had kindness, generosity of nature and spirit, wisdom, and above all a total lack of conceit."

These past seven days have been a time of great sadness for all of us, but also a time of great togetherness. There have been tears and laughter in equal measure. We have had some very funny times, like on Sunday, when we were lying down measuring out the graveyard. Rupert, JP, Hugo and Bess, all lying down ramrod straight. I of course was anxious that there was going to be room for me and many more generations of successors. All this while two tourists walked past. Dad would have loved it.

I am so pleased that last summer I managed to persuade him to record his life story on CD. It is fascinating and of great succour to us, to still be able to hear his voice.

In it he was asked what his most treasured possession was. His answer, "To be blessed by my large family, my children, my step-children Hugo and Sabina, and all our grandchildren." He loved his grandchildren and enjoyed being beaten by them in simple card games. The best holiday the children remember was in the summer of 2012 at Kinloch in Scotland, when Dad and Sarah were surrounded by Coke, Paul, de Chair and Struthers children, spouses and grandchildren.

And the thing he is most proud of: "Saving Holkham."

Zoe, the daughter of perhaps Dad's greatest friend, Gary Maufe MC who died five years ago, writes, "I am sure you will receive many eloquent letters about your father and his professional life, but to me he was the lovely man who came from South Africa to save the Holkham Estate and he did just that!"

Dad, you did that in spades, and so, so much more.

Three cheers for Lord Leicester:

Hip, Hip, Hooray!

Hip, Hip, Hooray!

Hip, Hip, Hooray!

Below: The 7th Earl and his family on holiday at Kinloch in Scotland in the summer of 2012





A true gentleman

REMEMBERING LORD LEICESTER – BY SOME OF THE PEOPLE WHO WORKED FOR HIM AND THOSE WHO KNEW HIM WELL



I recall one early winter morning getting a phone call from Lord Leicester saying there was a burst water pipe at the hall and would I come along and bring the plumber. This was at about 4.30am! Arthur Cox the plumber and I arrived to find an old 2" lead pipe had burst and water was flooding down from an area in the Nelson wing staircase on the second floor. Lord Leicester was in his pyjamas with a broom, sweeping water along the ground floor passage and out of the porter's door of the hall. The water damaged walls, ceilings and floors. Soon after this we replaced all the lead piping throughout the hall.

Maurice Bray, retired clerk of works

I started at the hall in 1977 and worked there for 34 years. Some years ago I had a period of ill health and although some days I was able to work, I often could not. My husband went to Lord Leicester to tell him that I didn't think I should keep my job. and in response Lord Leicester said, "Tell Carol that I'll decide when she should stop working for me. Her job is here for as long as she wants it to be." Those words gave me strength and helped me to recover and I worked for Lord and Lady Leicester for another 20 years! Lord Leicester was just the nicest, kindest man to work for. I accidentally broke some china ornaments once and went to him in a panic. "Not to worry, Carol," he said. "I never liked those anyway!"



Carol Cox, retired housekeeper

The Earl of Leicester was always a good shot. One time we were out shooting and his spaniel was misbehaving and wouldn't walk to heel. He berated the dog, getting more and more irate – the language was impressive! Eventually I pointed out that his spaniel was behaving perfectly – it was my dog that was misbehaving and which had been on the receiving end of his ire! He had a great sense of humour and was profoundly thoughtful on matters of spirituality. He and Sarah were a huge support to me when I took over as Rector of the parish. When I became a Canon they discovered that I was entitled to a new cassock with red buttons and piping. "We'll pay for it", they said, and I wore my new cassock with pride.



William Sayer, friend and ex-rector of Wells parish



My wife and I had moved to a house on the estate and spent a lot of time on our garden. We entered the Burnham Market Flower Show and won first prize. Lord Leicester came by one day and commented on the garden and how well it looked. I told him of our triumph. "Shame there weren't any other entrants" he said with a big grin.

Freddie Futter, head forester

I had the pleasure of working with and getting to know the Earl of Leicester during his time as a Harbour Commissioner. I always found him to be an affable man who had a genuine interest in the well-being of the harbour. More importantly, he cared about people, being very approachable no matter who you were. He had a great sense of humour. During the opening of the Harbour Office in 2005 he stood under an umbrella in the pouring rain and said with a big smile that he knew how Fred Astaire must have felt when filming *Singing in the Rain* but, unlike Fred, he wasn't prepared to dance! He was a true gentleman.



Robert Smith, Wells Harbour Master

Lord Leicester was a kind and considerate man. He once personally delivered a cheque for £1,500 to me on his return from holiday that hadn't been presented to him for signing before he went away. He was none too pleased with his office as he knew the importance of cash flow for small businesses like mine.



Ray Hewitt, Wells builder



Although I asked Lord Leicester to come out wild fowling many times, he always declined, stating, "The African sun has thinned my blood too much but Sarah [Lady Leicester] would love to go". One January morning we set out in the pitch dark in a force six northerly, with sleet and rain and bitter cold. We had a wonderful flight with a spectacular fiery dawn. We arrived back at Model Farm soaked and covered in mud. Lord Leicester met us with a huge grin and declared, "I made a good decision but I can see you have a convert in Sarah, so tell me every detail." After listening intently, he shook his head and stated that it was one of the last of the truly wild sports and we should protect it for ever. He then added, "but you must be stark staring mad!"

Lord Leicester was president of the Wells Wildfowling for a very long time, and it was a role he took extremely seriously as he was passionate and fascinated by the coastal marshes. In our many conversations, he maintained that they were important for their birds and plants but equally for the people who have traditionally used the coast – the fishermen and wildfowling, for without them the whole coast would become nothing more than a theme park. His understanding of Norfolk and local people was encyclopaedic. He made a point of talking to everyone, showing a genuine interest in their lives and families. He possessed that rare skill of making you feel you were talking to an old friend, which of course is how many of us thought of him.

Kevin Thatcher, Chair, Wells Wildfowling

I remember we had a film crew come to Holkham to film wood cutting in the park. I had a saw bench set up to cut up the wood once the tree had been felled. Unfortunately, the tree had a mind of its own and instead of falling where I wanted it to, it fell onto my saw bench. No-one was injured, though the saw bench wasn't too happy! Lord Leicester, who was present, ribbed me for years afterwards. Every time I saw him he mentioned the tree that fell on my bench. He thought it was priceless!



Ian McNab, retired head forester



Lord Leicester used to visit Wells boathouse in his capacity as president and patron of the Wells branch of the RNLI. He always stood in the crew room, looking out of the window over Wells beach. "You have the best office in Norfolk" he'd say to me.

Allen Frary, Wells RNLI coxswain

I worked at Holkham as headkeeper for 15 years. Lord Leicester and I hardly ever had a disagreement. If we did and he was wrong, he'd apologise, and I would apologise if I was wrong. He was very easy to work for and he'd always have time for a chat. I remember he was often away from Holkham for several weeks at a time when he was President of the Historic Houses Association. "You make the decisions, John," he told me then, "I'll back you." It was reassuring to hear that – it meant I could do my job!



John King, retired headkeeper

Lord Leicester was always very generous with his time and input to the wellbeing and running of Heritage House. He will be fondly remembered as a president who was proactive and showed a keen interest in everything that happened at Heritage House.



He certainly was not a president in name only. He gave ideas and input to any project that we took on and had a great knowledge of the work we undertook. We were delighted that he agreed to open our new Bradbury Room before he died.

Mary Britton, day care manager, Heritage House