

## HOLKHAM NEWSLETTER



Last week marked the end of my five-year term in office as President of the Historic Houses Association. In the course of travelling the length and breadth of the country each year to attend each Region's AGM, I have visited dozens of stately homes with their parks and attendant visitor attractions, and have spent a great deal of time talking to their owners. Each year it has become more and more evident that, in order to thrive in today's economy, it is necessary not only to diversify, but to ensure that we provide the best of everything for today's discerning visitors. Thirty years ago, they were happy with a cup of tea in a windy tent on the terrace — today they are not!

I like to think that we are well on the way to achieving this here at Holkham. Our visitors write and tell us how much they enjoy visiting Holkham, and compliment us on many aspects of their visit, but especially the 'lived in' feel of the house and the helpful and informative Room Stewards; we won the award for the best website design in the East of England Tourist Board's annual Excellence Awards; we have received a great deal of media coverage in the past year — most of it very encouraging; Pinewoods Holiday Park received the David Bellamy Gold Award for Conservation again; and every department contributes to the overall impression we make on our visitors.

Some schemes and ideas take a long time to come to fruition — as in the case of the new Holkham Reservoir (see picture above), which I am certain will prove to be a boon in the future, not only for our in-hand farms, but for our tenants as well. We have plans to enlarge The Victoria Hotel; and the Holkham Centre, which has extended its opening hours, has become a really attractive place to shop — with the added attraction of Holkham Foods and Holkham Beer being available for sale.

Ivor Edwards, a long serving Farm Manager, sadly died in October, but I am certain he will be remembered at Holkham for a very long time, for his great character, his wit and his friendship. We will all miss him, and we will miss Alan Sanders too, who, in his cheerful and unassuming way, took so much pride in all his hard work in keeping the Bygones Museum in good order for so long.

*Leicester*

The Earl of Leicester

# Archives

MY 'snippets' from the Archives in the last Newsletter have had interesting results.

Firstly, I am most grateful to Peter Gill, at Holkham Nursery Gardens, for sending me photographs of the gas works building. The gasholder was removed in the 1960s, but the small brick building, with the date, 1865, over the door, survives (though without the machinery).

Secondly, I tempted fate when I wrote in the last Newsletter that it is a mystery, how and when the old manor house at Holkham grew from about 10 rooms in 1600, to about 34 by the 1660s.

Since then, I have discovered a room-by-room inventory, made after the death of John Coke senior in 1661. The inventory not only lists 28 bedchambers, but also refers to old and new parlours, and old and new dining rooms.

The old dining room was still furnished with 18 chairs, as well as a table, 'two side board tables' and a large couch. The new dining room, however, was large enough to contain an oval table, three side tables, two couches, and 27 chairs; it also had 13 window curtains.

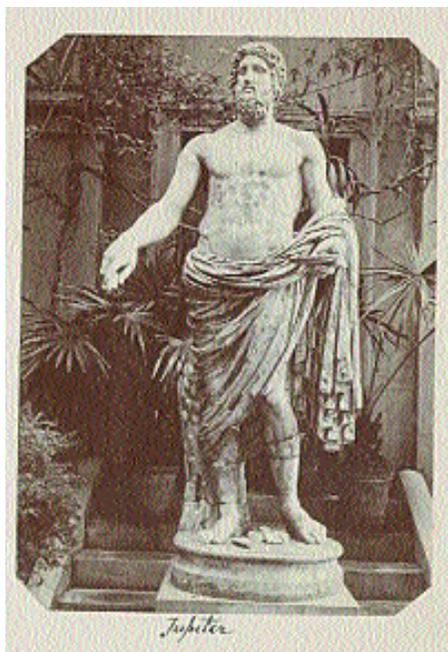
Suddenly, we have much more idea of the size of the old house that stood, until the 1750s, just to the west of Family Wing. A mystery remains, however, because this inventory does not mention books or silver, and we know that John Coke had inherited Sir Edward Coke's library and heirlooms.

My alphabetical pieces this month are about three very different characters.

J is for Jupiter

Holkham is renowned for preserving Thomas Coke's artistic treasures where he intended, but 'Jupiter' was a problem from the start.

BELOW: The old Holkham gas works that was built in 1865.



ABOVE: This statue of Jupiter was intended to stand in the Marble Hall, but is now consigned to the old game larder.

Coke bought the statue in Rome in 1717, during his Grand Tour, but the account books show that, once in England, it languished in a wooden crate in a yard for the next four or five years, at a cost of 2/- a week. Labourers had to be paid extra, 'at the rearing the statue up on end': it was marble, and nearly two metres tall.

The earliest plans for the hall show that Jupiter was to stand in the centre of the stairs in the Marble Hall, but when Coke decided on a single flight of stairs, we know from inventories and guide books that Jupiter was relegated to the 'Portico Room' (the Smoking Room, below the Portico on the south front).

He remained there for about a hundred years, until the 1850s, when the newly built conservatory provided him with a new home.

Another century later, when the decayed roof of the conservatory was removed, came the final admission that perhaps Jupiter had been a mistake: the head was removed and restored, and returned to the Smoking Room, but the torso (now thought to have been heavily restored in the past) lies in the old game larder.

K is for Kouli Khan

The Holkham parish register shows that in 1737, 'George Calican a black' was baptised. The curate some 50 years later added a note, 'he was a Negro, and was baptised Kouli Khan, Lord Leicester being his sponsor. He was a filthy fellow, belonging to the kitchen at Holkham'.



ABOVE: The third Earl of Leicester oversees the sheep shearing. Can you help to identify the cottage in the background?

He was not included in lists of the servants, but he makes fleeting appearances in the account books in the early 1740s, when 'a vomit' was bought for him when he was ill, lodgings were paid for him when in London, and a pair of shoes was bought for him. Where he came from and what happened to him, however, are not known.



ABOVE: Miss Lee.

L is for Miss Lee

Last year, a visitor to the Hall, who had been a kitchen maid here in 1936-37, and her friend, who had been the scullery maid, wrote down some of their memories, for preservation in the Holkham Archives.

## Holkham Farming Company Ltd

AS I write this, the rain is lashing at the window and the long dry summer is a distant memory. We can, however, reflect on one of the easiest harvests from a weather point of view that I can remember.

It is probably just as well that we were so fortunate with the weather as we had 2,900 acres to harvest with just one machine. We had a couple of minor machine problems, which held us up for no more than a day in total, but apart from the incident with John Coke's grain store and the trailer (you know who I mean James), all went very smoothly.

Many of you will know about the irrigation reservoir that was built at Manor Farm this summer (see full report on pages 10 and 11). It is now complete and nearly full with water. The water will be used next summer to irrigate potatoes and carrots. During construction, it was hard to see because of the dust some days, but gradually, a vast hole appeared out of what was a field. The conditions were ideal for building and we soon became 'experts' in large construction machinery and civil engineering terminology.

The very hard ground conditions in September did give us a few problems getting cultivation machinery into the earth, but the bulk of the autumn drilling was done in ideal conditions.

Miss Lee was the cook at that time, and the two women remembered several stories about her; 'She was from Ireland, and when his lordship had large house parties, her sister came to help, but they used to quarrel and fight; on one occasion Miss Lee threw a teapot across the kitchen, directed at her sister, but it missed, and shattered on the door. Her sister returned to Ireland shortly after that!'

Miss Lee was, however, kind to the girls: one of them remembers that, 'She and I had a special time together when it was my Sunday on duty', enjoying a slice of beef, from the dining-room joint, for their supper.

For special occasions, and when large parties were staying, meat was still roasted on the spit — a large side of beef, turkeys at Christmas, and even a swan, sent by the king. The dripping was Miss Lee's 'perks'; she sold it to the villagers.

At Christmas, Miss Lee made quantities of mince pies, which she stored in the large copper stockpots; the younger footmen found out and sneaked down at night to help themselves.

My thanks to Mrs J. Rattenbury (nee Pearce) and Mrs J. Warburton (nee Gittens).

I wish we had similar anecdotes for previous centuries.

*Christine Hiskey  
Archivist*

Again, the discs and press combination enabled us to work quickly and keep any moisture in the top few inches available for germination.

One knock-on effect of the dry weather across Europe has been a welcome increase in cereal prices. This should provide the farms with the chance to make a small profit this year. I was however amused to see the millers jump on the opportunity to raise bread prices after the wheat price rise. You will all of course remember the fall in bread prices when the value of wheat halved a few years ago.

Sugar beet harvesting (using a contractor as last year) has gone well so far with very little damage done to the soil. The sugar content of the beet started high and has remained so. We are regularly delivering loads with more than 20 per cent sugar; keeping lifting close to delivery date has helped this, so we get very little sugar loss after harvest.

Now the nights are drawing in, we have 150 acres of winter beans to plough in and 1,000 acres of land to plough for sugar beet next year. We should be able to squeeze in some maintenance work along with a holiday or two maybe, before spring barley drilling starts in January.

*Michael Turner  
Farm Manager*

## BYGONES MUSEUM

WE have had a good year, with visitor numbers up on last year and continuing compliments from visitors on the standard of the displays and, particularly, on the new History of Farming exhibition.

The new location has proved to be a definite advantage. People come out of the Stables Café and can't help but see the History of Farming entrance. They also can't help but see the large sign saying 'Bygones this way'. Without exception, everyone that we have spoken to has said how much they appreciated the museum.

The highlights this year were undoubtedly the Holkham stand at the Holkham Country Fair and the return of the Soame Steam Cart. With a certain amount of concern, we responded to the request to have the Tidman showman's steam engine on display and working, and we also, of course, had a static display of selected artefacts and photographs. We also showed the Bygones video. Brian Ayton steamed the Tidman and manfully stood by for the duration of the fair.

Brian will tell you that he had the undivided attention of many visitors and enjoyed some fascinating conversations that made it all worthwhile. Sally Harvey and myself also enjoyed talking to people at the indoor stand. At one time, I heard three retired farmers debating amongst themselves whether our photograph of a Sail Reaper was in fact that, or whether it was something else. As I recall, they never did agree and went away still arguing about it.

The return of the Soame Steam Cart was equally rewarding. Thanks to the generosity of Jean Joice, it was put back into working order by David King at North Walsham, not very far from Marsham where it was designed and made by Sam Soame in 1897.

So, when it was collected from David King we stopped at Marsham, and parked it outside Sam Soames's original workshop. A large number of people turned out from the village to see this historic vehicle, including Soame's brother's great granddaughter, living in the village.

The steam cart actually features on the village sign, indicating the degree of nostalgia that exists. It was a great occasion and a privilege to be there. We then returned to Holkham and unloaded the cart to the museum. A few days later, we had the grand 'Steam in' and Brian drove the cart from the north gate, through the Park, and parked in front of the Hall, with Lord Leicester and Jean Joice as passengers. It was greatly admired by visitors and the Press.

But, of course, nothing would happen without the hard work and enthusiasm of the Bygones team. I am particularly grateful to Brian Ayton, who keeps everything that works working and in good order, and looks after all practical matters.

Our Assistant Curator, Sally Harvey, also does a great job dealing with the thousands of artefacts we have here. Sally researches each item's history and is responsible for all the new signage around the museum, which has been much admired by visitors this year.

Recently, Sally has also introduced monitoring of environmental conditions in the display areas and pest

Eric Absolon  
Curator



ABOVE: The Soame Steam Cart's return to Holkham was covered by the *Eastern Daily Press* and the *Dereham & Fakenham Times*.

monitoring and control. This essential activity enables us to take appropriate steps to minimise deterioration of the artefacts.

We are also sad to report that Bygones stalwart Alan Sanders passed away in October. Alan made a very valuable contribution with all his work over the years, which is still very much evidence today.

Current museum thinking is to 'conserve as found' and we are applying this policy to all the artefacts, as opposed to heavy restoration of a selected few and then not having the resource to protect all the others.

I'd also like to thank Jill Barrett, who spends much of her time sitting in the kiosk, cheerfully taking visitors' money. In the closed season, Jill helps enormously with the necessary cleaning and maintenance of the artefacts. Some have to be carefully packed and moved into storage. Others are dealt with before we open for the next season.

And this year we have had part time assistance from Rosemary Turner, who has tackled with enthusiasm the never-ending job of cleaning the cars and engines in the yard and east wing. She is determined, I'm sure, to make all the brass work into mirrors. We have also benefited from the enthusiastic help of two volunteers, each for an afternoon a week, Rex Vick and Brian Scott.

We have two new projects planned for next year. The first is a display of the original brick moulds used in the building of the Hall. These have been retrieved from Longlands, treated with linseed oil, and will be linked to the relevant bricks by a photograph of the Hall. Secondly, Sally is working on a display that will explain the conservation techniques employed here to ensure that all the items on display are kept in tip-top condition.

## St Withburga's Church

ALTHOUGH this year's Church Barbecue had to be cancelled for a variety of reasons, the fund raising was boosted by the tremendous support received for the Fete.

Lady Leicester, who was in charge of the fresh produce, received so many donations that her stall would have put *Sainsbury's* to shame; and she wishes to pass on her thanks to everyone for their generosity. A fantastic team effort by all concerned raised the record sum of nearly £1,500.

The concert given by Gresham's School Choir was also a huge success, raising more than £2,000 for church funds. We are indebted to the school, and particularly its Music Director, Mark Jones, for Gresham's continuing support for St Withburga's.

The St Withburga's Bells' Fund has received the magnificent donation of £10,300 from monies raised by the Holkham Country Fair. It has not been possible to ring the bells at Holkham for a great many years, due to the poor condition of the beams supporting them. However, it is hoped that some time in the next two or three years, the bells and their supports will be fully restored.

A company specialising in cleaning church floors was asked to give us a quote in the late summer, as the floor had not been cleaned professionally for several years. On receipt of the quote for more than £2,000, Lady Leicester decided to take matters into her own hands. Along with a small team of cleaners from the Hall, she spent nearly a week giving the floor and the rest of the church a much needed facelift, in time for the wedding of the Hon John & Mrs Carolyn Coke's daughter, Ros, to Justin, which took place on a lovely late September day.

Maureen Marr, Secretary for the PCC for many years, has written an excellent illustrated *History of St Withburga's*. This publication represents hundreds of hours of painstaking research, and is full of fascinating detail. Copies are for sale in the church, and they can also be obtained from me in the Estate Office, priced at £2, with all profits going to St. Withburga's.

Finally, we are sad to record the death of Ivor Edwards, who died on 14th October, aged 86. Ivor devoted a great deal of time to the Church, acting as churchwarden for many years, and regularly took the fortnightly Matin's Services. He will be sadly missed, not only in his capacity as a stalwart of the church, but also for his friendship and his humour. Our sincere condolences go to Mary, and their children, Ann and Ian, and to their families.

Marilyn Franklin  
Secretary,  
Holkham PCC



ABOVE AND BELOW: The Hon Johnny Coke and Carolyn Coke's (pictured below right) daughter Ros, was married to Justin Gibbs at St Withburga's on Saturday, 20th September 2003.



# The Hall

WELL, what a busy summer season we've had. The weather was wonderful and seemed to work its magic on the folks who came to visit the Hall.

I can't recall a season that passed so quickly and with so few complaints from our guests. All of us work very hard to ensure that a visit to the Hall is as enjoyable and informative as we can make it.

All the staff here play a vital role in achieving this level of satisfaction. Pat Dickerson, Debbie Frary, Carole Cox and Daphne Taylor ensure the house is presented in the best possible state. Gary Raven, Mike Thompson and Ian Barrett beaver away in the background making sure that everything works, as it should. Any electrical problems get flung straight at Lou Bailey (on permanent loan from King's & Barnhams) who has never failed to 'fix it' for us.

And of course, the Room Stewards continue to be amongst the best in the country. Over and over again our visitors praise them for the friendliness and knowledge. One lady said that they made each room 'come alive'.

I know I've said it before but the end of the summer season does not mean that the house slips into hibernation. The winter season is filled with concerts, operas, guided tours and shooting parties.

The big event this year was, of course, the wedding reception for Ros Coke and her husband, Justin Gibbs, which necessitated closing the Hall on Saturday 20th September. Almost 200 people were dined and entertained in the house during the evening, with the last guests leaving at about 3am. By 9.30am that morning the house was ready to receive our Sunday visitors. This required a terrific effort by all involved. A big thank you to Peter Godwin and Ollie Forrest from the Gardeners' 'Rent a Muscle' team.

At the beginning of the year we had a visit from the Historic Houses' Association Disabled Access advisor. Wheelchair access to the staterooms on the first floor has always been a thorny problem. In the past, design engineers and various consultants have been engaged to see if some form of lift/stair lift could be installed — sadly the design of the building and staircases could not be safely modified to meet this proposal.

Happily, the advisor was able to put us in touch with a company that manufactures a stair climbing machine which will enable us to take wheelchair bound visitors smoothly up to the first floor. The picture (above right) shows the machine in action with me as the guinea pig. Colin reckons it's only a matter of time before I have to use it all the time!

Once again, we hosted the first part of the Holkham Staff Induction Day on 15th October, which included a mini Private Guided Tour of the Hall. However, this tour has to be



ABOVE AND BELOW RIGHT: The new stairlift will give disabled visitors unrestricted access to all the state rooms in the Hall, such as the Green State Bedroom, for the first time.



rushed so as not to mess up the tight timings for the rest of the morning. Please don't forget though, that if you would like to walk round again at a more leisurely pace, all company employees plus one, are entitled to free entrance and a free audio guide during the visitors' season.

Time, I think, for the usual end of season trawl through the comments book and Stewards' observations. Two comments on wallpaper, one from the visitors' book, the other overheard by a Room Steward:

***"What this place needs is new wallpaper!"***

Red Parrot Room:

***"We have this wallpaper at home. It's really good and you can wash it down so easily."***

On Christine Cardwell at the till:

***"She'd be no good at Tesco's, she's too slow on that credit card machine."***

A visitor to Lou Bailey, our resident electrician:

***"Do you work here? I just wanted to congratulate the owner on the wonderful variety of wild life in the Park. The ducks, geese and deer – wonderful, and as for the warthog – fantastic!"***

Two from the Landscape Room:

***"These pictures look like something they bought as a job lot at a cheap auction. If they're hard up for cash, why don't they sell them at a car boot and buy a few decent paintings by a local artist?"***

And:

***"Of course, these are only copies, the originals are stored away."***

And finally:

***"Orizonte – that's a strange name for a painter. Perhaps he was always drunk."***

It's been a very good season for us here. We retain our high grade from the tourist board and everyone seemed to enjoy their time in the house

The new extended access worked well, although I had to close some of the rooms some of the time. I hope that I'll be able to improve this next season, however, it all comes down to having enough Room Stewards to ensure security.

I'll be spending the winter upgrading our Room Stewards' Information folders and preparing for the next season.

In the meantime, thank you to all staff and visitors who made the summer so enjoyable, and if you haven't been to see us yet, let me leave you with just two more quotes to whet your appetite:

Mr & Mrs Wood of Coventry:

***"The house has a relaxing and welcoming atmosphere; enhanced by the equally welcoming and informative guides. Many thanks."***

Sarah Hopper, UK:

***"Wow!!!!"***

But perfect we are not, as one visitor wrote:

***"The rooms were great – but where's the TV?"***

*Michael Daley  
Hall Administrator*

## HOLKHAM LIBRARY

THE International Association of Bibliophiles based its 23rd Congress on London in September this year. Its programme provided for a number of 'country' expeditions, one of which was to Holkham.

One of the great treasures of the Hall is its magnificent library, which is rated as one of the finest private collections in the world. The visiting party led by Lord Egremont from Petworth in Sussex, was a representative cross-section of the Association's membership, which includes many of the world's top book and manuscript collectors, together with bibliographic experts from academia and the great auction houses.

With 10,000 printed books (of which more than 200 were printed before 1500), 650 manuscripts and some 15,000 maps and prints to choose from, it was not difficult to set out a splendid sample of the collections in the Statue Gallery and the three main libraries.

After listening to a brief introduction to the historical background of the collections, the visitors were free to browse for over two hours among the exhibits, and they made good use of their time. From our point of view, it was a very rewarding experience to keep company with such a knowledgeable and prestigious group. They, for their part, were patently delighted with the opportunity to examine and discuss such fine material.

The quality of the collections largely reflects the taste and discernment of two members of the Coke family — the Chief Justice and Thomas Coke, the first Earl, but the fact that the books have been undisturbed in the house for more than two

centuries is a significant factor which has transformed them corporately into an historical artefact.

It was very gratifying to hear Monsieur Henri Schiller, possibly France's most important collector, say that he had never seen manuscripts in such fine condition.

The visitors were also impressed with the information resource stemming from the database of printed books and to know that Dr Suzanne Reynolds is preparing a definitive catalogue of the manuscripts. We made a number of valuable contacts during the day and some of the members will undoubtedly keep in touch and wish to return.

With the advent of new technology the library is becoming increasingly well known and there is little doubt that visits such as this stimulate an increasing and worldwide interest.



ABOVE: Archbishop Parker's De Antiquitate Britannicae, given by his son to Chief Justice Sir Edward Coke. The only other hand-coloured copy is in the Royal Library.

*Sam Mortlock & Suzanne Reynolds*

# Holkham Pottery

THE Pottery Shop in the Park closed at the end of October after a good season. The seemingly endless sunshine throughout the summer and beyond has undoubtedly brought people into the Park later in the season and has helped to boost trade for us.

It was recently decided to keep the Holkham Centre open five days a week (from Wednesday to Sunday) from the end of October through to Christmas. At this time of year, we are only usually open on the weekends up until Christmas, but I can report that the new opening times are working well.

The local crafts, which were introduced into Holkham Centre this year, and sourced by Suzanne Pannell, have sold well. Sue also runs the Art Gallery at the Holkham Centre, which is one of the most attractive and successful in Norfolk. The works of art continue to be of a very high standard and we receive lots of compliments on not only the choice of art, but also the presentation of the Gallery.

Holkham Foods Ltd also opened the new Food Hall at the Holkham Centre this season. This has again proved to be very popular with visitors, with Holkham ice cream, sausages, game pies, beef and ale pies and, of course, Holkham beer, selling as quickly as we can stack the shelves.

Brochures giving information about Holkham Linseed Paints have also been available in the shops, with colour charts and tester pots for customers to take away and try.

Gill McClimens – the Café Manager, Sue Pannell and I have dealt with considerable challenges this year at Holkham Centre. For my part, I would like to say thank you to all the ladies who help me, for their adaptability and great support. Three of these ladies, Helen Hawkes, Rebecca Ollett and



**ABOVE:** The refurbishment of the Holkham Centre at the Ancient House has proved popular with visitors this year.

Anna Small have left. Helen will continue her studies for 'A' Levels, Rebecca has started a further pottery course at King's Lynn and Anna already has a holiday booked. My best wishes to all of you. Staying on to help during the five-day opening are: Judy Howard, Julie Gould, Caroline Muncey and Jill Watson.

Throughout the season, we have seen many different visitors to the shops and we have had our usual fair share of strange moments. I particularly remember one very disappointed gentleman who was shattered when I broke the news to him that there were no horses to be seen in 'The Stables'.

Then there was the 10-year-old Tottenham Hotspur fan who felt that our Holkham crest was a copy of his favourite football club's emblem. Apart from the fact that they both depicted a bird, I was not convinced. Quietly confident, I asked him, "Doesn't the Spurs crest have White Hart Lane on it?" He replied: "No, it says Audere Est Facere on it." I decided not to argue with him.

*Sylvia Daley*  
Retail Manager

## GARDENS DEPARTMENT

AS I write, we are digging up the lawn area between the Stables Café and the Pottery Shop at the Hall. First, we used a turf cutter, which cut the turf half an inch thick and into strips 18in wide by 3ft long, which made it easier for us to lift. We also took the opportunity to take out the old lavender hedge, which was getting woody and 'gappy' in places.

We will use a mini-digger to level off the area, then it will be rotovated, allowed to settle and re-turfed with fresh turf. We are also taking the opportunity to sink in 12in sections of scaffold pole into the ground. These will support the umbrellas and save us having to use the plates, which mark the ground. Lastly, we will be replanting all the lavender on four sides of the courtyard instead of three.

On the terraces around the Hall, we have had the stonemasons in to repair areas of the Orangery. Also, because of the really

hot summer, we have had a few leather-jacket infestations on the lawns.

Since the grass has started to re-grow, these areas have shown up as bald patches and over the past few days, the starlings have been coming down in large numbers and scratching up the areas to devour the dreaded bugs. This does help us in that we won't have to spray the areas, but gives us another job, as we have to now dig them up and lay new turf.

We are well underway with the task of clearing up the dreaded leaves. With the lovely summer we have had, the leaf colour in the arboretum seemed to be more striking than in previous years.

*Peter Godwin*  
Head Gardener

## HOLKHAM ART GALLERY

THE last few months have been very busy at the Gallery at the Holkham Art, Crafts and Fine Food Centre based at the Ancient House in Holkham Village.

Numerous complimentary comments have been received mentioning the pleasant atmosphere of the Gallery and the wonderful range of work on display.

Over the summer months, we held four special exhibitions, displaying very different styles of work, including exciting furniture by Simon Marshall.

The distinctive photographs by John Hansell of the North Norfolk coast have been particularly popular (see picture below). John has had to make repeated visits to the Gallery to replenish stocks.

The display of glassware, crafted wood, ceramics and jewellery has added another dimension to the work offered. Like the photographs, the ceramic wildlife sculptures by Peta Whiting

have proved very appealing in addition to her series of very unusual free form bowls titled, *Wader, Countryside* and *Winter*, reflecting aspects of the area.

Of the several new artists introduced this year, Sally Ann Hart's sensitive pencil drawings of objects from the beach have also captured attention and sold well.

Recently the exhibition of work by Andy Curry and Simon Marshall was featured in the *Norfolk Journal and Life*, and the amazing turned vessels by Nick Arnall featured in the *Eastern Daily Press Weekend* section.

We now look forward to 2004 and another collection of exciting work and I am grateful to the gift shop staff who have contributed much to the smooth running and success of the Gallery.

*Suzanne Pannell*  
Gallery Manager



## Holkham Country Fair

HOLKHAM decided to have a stand at this year's Country Fair on the 19th and 20th July, to highlight the fact that the Estate has had to diversify in order to move into the 21st Century as a profitable organisation.

We also wanted to show how important our traditional enterprises such as farming and gamekeeping are to us. The large marquee displayed a banner stating that Holkham is: 'Much more than a stately home', and showed visitors the various businesses at Holkham and the work done within its departments.

There were displays for Hector's Housing Ltd, Holkham Linseed Paints, Holkham Pottery Ltd, Holkham Foods Ltd, Pinewoods Holiday Park, The Victoria Hotel, the Game Department, the Woods Department, the Gardens Department, the Hall and Bygones Museum and Holkham Farming Company. Each one gave the visitor a detailed representation of the department using photographs, informed write-ups and various props. Staff were on hand to distribute leaflets and advise any inquisitive visitors. The weekend was a great success and a good public relations exercise for the Estate. It certainly seemed as though most of the 60,000 people who attended the fair, visited our stand.

*Laurane Herrievan*  
Holkham Marketing Department



**ABOVE AND BELOW:** The Holkham stand at the Country Fair proved to be a big hit with visitors.



# Game Department

HERE we are again half way through another shooting season.

We are enjoying the results of a kind summer and a lot of hard work, as there are plenty of birds about.

Our two new beatkeepers, Paul Pharoah and Robert Heaton both settled in well, bringing new ideas and adding strength to the team.

This shooting season is proving to be particularly exciting for us, and the Guns alike, as, for the first time in a long while we have been able to shoot grey partridges on all our beats.

Being able to drive the greys is very rewarding. To send them sailing over the Guns adds another dimension to a shoot day for the Guns, the keepers and the beaters.

A lot of work has been carried out on the Estate to help understand the decline of the grey partridge and what we can do to reverse this trend. Scientists from the Game Conservancy and Cambridge University have been looking at various parts of the partridge's ecology, such as chick food, insect abundance and the impact of sparrow hawk predation.

As with anything to do with nature, these investigations have not been straight forward. The one factor that has become clear however, is the shortage of the right food at the right time; namely soft-bodied, slow-moving creepy crawlies! When they first hatch, the grey partridge chicks are tiny and need an abundance of high protein food for the first 10 to 14 days of life — without it they will perish.



ABOVE: (Back row, l-r) Paul Pharoah, Julian Bond, Simon Lester, Martin Joyce, Andrew Gyton. (Front row, l-r) Stephen Herrieven, Richard Bailey, Robert Heaton and Richard Futter.

The agri-environment schemes that some tenants have entered into will help. The next entry level 'Broad and Shallow' scheme, which is due to come into effect in 2005, offers a good financial incentive to farmers to enter. In the meantime, we will be looking for other ways in which we can increase populations of these insects across the Estate.

I am also pleased to report that the Great Barn has been converted into a meat processing unit. Holkham Foods Ltd is now able to process our venison and game in the most efficient way, and then sell it through farmers' markets, The Victoria Hotel and the Food Hall at the Holkham Centre.

*Simon Lester  
Headkeeper*

## NED COKE

THIS is the latest picture of Viscount and Viscountess Coke's son Edward (Ned) who was born on Wednesday, 11th June, 2003. Ned is easily recognisable by his impressive thatch of hair, as you can see from this picture.



ABOVE: Ned Coke, the son and heir!

## WINDOWCRAFT

The Windowcraft department is busy working on the windows at the Hall. So far, we have repaired and repainted all the windows on the south elevation and have just started on the west elevation.

The existing windows have been removed, repaired, treated with linseed oil and re-glazed with special glass, which contains a UV filter. We have also treated all of the external doors with Linseed wax.

We are also working on Nos 66 and

70 New Holkham, Longlands House, Thurton Lodges, near Beccles, Burnham Overy Mill, Irstead Hall, near Wroxham, as well as the development at Hindringham for Hector's Housing Ltd.

Mike Henderson joined the department during the summer. We had a busy two days at the Country Fair in July, where a lot of interest was shown in our display, which was part of the Estate stand.

*Maurice Bray  
Windowcraft Department*

## HOLKHAM LINSEED PAINTS

THE Lost Gardens of Heligan in Cornwall, Ashdon Post Mill in Essex and countless windmills, are just some of the clients who have been using our products in the last few months, and demonstrate that we are beginning to establish a name for ourselves with prestigious renovations.

Architects and painters are also increasingly using our products after recommendations from colleagues, and we are hoping our stand at the Historic Buildings, Parks and Gardens Event in November, in London generated more interest from owners of large properties.

We were also pleased to win an award for being the 'best dressed small stand' at this prestigious event (see picture below).

After a successful summer, in which we've been keeping our new paint packer George Berek very busy (in fact he's so good we are thinking of asking him to pack all our Christmas presents). We are also looking forward to working with Stephen Foster, the Holkham Salesman, in the New Year, to expand our network of retailers.

Finally, we are very excited that our paints are likely to be featured on Channel 4's *Grand Designs Abroad*, on an innovative environmentally friendly house in south west France.

Discussions about this project are underway at the moment, along with plans for new product development, so watch this space!

*Natalie Barrows  
Holkham Linseed Paints*

BELOW: Stephen Foster, Natalie Barrows and Lord Coke accepting the award for the 'best dressed small stand' at the recent Historic Houses Association AGM in London.



# Building Maintenance

THE past six months have been as busy as ever for the Building Maintenance department.

We usually receive approximately 60 maintenance jobs a month from tenants living in Estate properties; these comprise plumbing repairs, joinery repairs, drainage problems and of course electrical items.

As you are aware, we also undertake larger projects. Projects being worked on at present include:

1 — The new slaughterhouse and meat production area being formed at the Great Barn.

2 — Alterations to Palmers Lodge to improve facilities to the bathroom, bedroom and shower-room. When complete, the property will be used as a romantic hideaway for guests at The Victoria Hotel.

We also continue to modernize cottages as they become vacant, properties worked on recently include:

Golden Gates Lodge, Holkham Park  
69, New Holkham  
13, Binham Road, Warham  
36, Holkham Village

We can also report that the fire damage to Chalk Farm Barn, Warham, has been repaired by Fisher & Sons of Fakenham.

We have recently set up a joinery shop at Longlands, which is being run by Ron Teague. The joinery shop will manufacture new windows, doors, and door frames for Hector's Housing developments and the Windowcraft Department.

This has meant shipping in Baltic Pine timber from Sweden, which is the best timber to use in conjunction with the linseed paint which is also being used on the Estate. We have also had to purchase new and additional woodworking machinery.

As we reported in the last Newsletter, two of our painters, Stuart Watkins and Rodney Lovick have made a start on the redecoration of the Marble Hall.

They also had to redecorate the lower part of the Statue Gallery and Tribunes, before the paintwork was re-gilded in late November.

*Barry Turner  
Building Maintenance Manager*

# Water works

Holkham's Resident Agent, Richard Gledson, explains how the Estate came to build a £600,000 reservoir to help irrigate its crops



ABOVE: Lord Leicester being interviewed by Jo Kent from BBC Look East at the opening of the reservoir in November.

LATE in the evening on Wednesday 12th November, the first water from the River Stiffkey flowed into the newly constructed 50 million gallon reservoir at Manor Farm, Wells-next-the-Sea.

The culmination of four years work was marked with a Bucks Fizz and bacon sandwich breakfast early on Thursday 13th November, at which Lord Leicester formally declared the reservoir open.

It was in 1998 that we first looked at the possibility of irrigation; arable margins were already on the slide following the heady years of 1995 and 1996.

We applied for an abstraction licence for 35 million gallons (140,000 cubic metres) from the River Stiffkey at Warham. After much negotiation and discussion, we were granted the licence in January 2000, by the Environment Agency.

Various sites for the reservoir were considered, but we eventually picked the site at Manor Farm as it lay just outside



ABOVE: The site at Manor Farm, just outside Wells-next-the-Sea before work began. BELOW: The archaeological survey gets underway.



the Park and was well screened.

Mike Calvert of Calvert, Brain & Fraulo carried out a geological survey of the field in the summer of 2000, which showed that conditions were favourable, with solid chalk approximately 2m below the surface.

Early in 2001, I began a series of meetings with North Norfolk District Council Planning Department. Calvert, Brain & Fraulo provided indicative designs for the reservoir, which proved to be invaluable during conversations with the Countryside Agency, English Nature, Norfolk Gardens Trust and the Norfolk Coastal Project. The site that we selected is in the area of outstanding natural beauty and therefore landscaping was hugely important.

Our final scheme was drawn up, and following the consultation period, we submitted our formal planning application in July 2001 for a 50 million gallon reservoir.

Planning permission was granted on

the condition that an archaeological dig was carried out on the site. At this stage Calvert, Brain & Fraulo set about drawing up a detailed scheme and tender document, these were issued in October 2002. Tenders were submitted before Christmas and having received these, we appointed Brown & Co to assist us in applying to DEFRA for a grant under the Rural Enterprise Scheme.

The Norfolk Archaeological Unit carried out an archaeological dig on the site in February 2003 and found nothing of any significance.

Matthew Cannell of Brown & Co, helped us with a business plan which was submitted in support of the grant application in May 2003. The total projected cost of the project, including the supply and distribution network, was just under £600,000. We were hoping for a grant of 50 per cent.

I was on holiday in Northumberland on the 8th July, when I received a text message from Michael Turner the Farm Manager informing me that DEFRA had offered us a 50 per cent grant to help fund the huge cost of the project.

May Gurney were awarded the contract to build the reservoir, with Tony Freezer completing the supply and distribution network.

Following a pre-contract meeting on the 24th July, construction started on Monday 4th August.

Construction of the reservoir progressed well and was greatly assisted by the dry conditions. There were few problems other than the discovery of 3,000 cubic metres of silt in the chalk which had to be moved out by dumpers rather than the huge scrapers we spent hours watching.

It was only when the construction was nearly complete that we were fully able to appreciate the scale of the project. The floor of the reservoir measures just over three acres and is 5.5m below ground level. The total depth of water will be 11m.

During construction of the reservoir, Tony Freezer was busy laying a supply pipe all the way from the River Stiffkey at Warham. Mark Harrison kindly agreed that we could use his irrigation pump to fill the reservoir during the winter.

The water will be pumped four miles to the reservoir site passing through Chalk Hill Farm, Warham, Northgate Hall Farm, Warham, Church Farm, Warham, Grove Farm, Warham, New Farm, Wells and Manor Farm, Wells on the way.



ABOVE: Contractors get to work on excavating the massive site.

We really appreciate all the assistance and support that we have received from the tenant farmers along the route. We hope that in future, they will be able to benefit from the reservoir as we are able to pump water back down the supply pipe in summer for irrigation.

The distribution pipes are currently being installed around the Park. Once the reservoir is full, we will have enough water to irrigate 300 acres of land with six inches of water every year.

Our system benefits from a specialist pumping system, designed by Tony Freezer. The 'Irrimizer' controls two pumps, which can pump at different rates depending on demand. The system has a 'soft start' feature, which is extremely energy efficient, as well as being capable of supplying up to six reel irrigators simultaneously.



ABOVE: Farm Manager, Michael Turner explains the benefits of the reservoir.

Just as the construction phase of the reservoir was complete, the weather changed, which caused a number of problems to the team of sub-contractors whose job it was to line the reservoir.

The silt that had caused so much anguish during the construction phase was carted back in to blind the base of the reservoir, to ensure that flints do not sever the plastic liner. The lining was completed on the 30th October and the Panel Engineer issued a certificate of completion on the 31st October.

After delays throughout the planning stage of the project it was pleasing to see that the construction phase had been completed on time and very nearly on budget.

All that remains to be completed now is the perimeter fence and the sowing of grass seed on the banks of the reservoir. Next year, we will plant a small wood to screen the reservoir from the north. The field surrounding the reservoir is part of a Countryside Stewardship Scheme and we will establish a species rich grassland on what is left of the 30-acre field.

# Pinewoods Holiday Park

HAVING completed my first summer season at the Pinewoods Holiday Park, I can reflect on a very busy season and think of the excellent staff who have worked so hard to make 2003 the most successful year yet.

When I first visited the Park, I thought how special it was, and six months on, my opinion of the wonderful environment around us has not changed. In fact, it has got better and better.

To walk around Pinewoods is a pleasure and the improvements made since 1997, when the estate took over the management, are really starting to help achieve the site's full potential.

The static caravan landscaped developments on Harrier, Kestrel, Lapwing and Merlin are now attracting caravan purchases over £40,000, more than double the top prices paid up to 1996. Our customers have changed since the days when the Park was run by the Council, with a continuing growing confidence, and owners introducing friends and family to caravan ownership at Pinewoods. Caravan sales have also doubled this year.

The company-owned hire fleet of caravans has had its best year yet, with visitors prepared to pay a very good tariff and the majority having visited many times before.

The same can be said of the touring area with the new super pitches. Each of these pitches has excellent landscaping, its own hard standing, electricity, water, TV aerial and grey water drainage. The excellent weather has guaranteed us a major increase in tent visitors, with our overflow area being at capacity for much of the peak season.

The shop and café have had record years, sometimes working under extreme pressure and yet maintaining an excellent service to our customers.

Due to the continuing efforts of all concerned, during 2003 we also once again achieved gold accreditation for the



ABOVE: Pinewoods has more plans for improvement this winter.

David Bellamy Conservation Award and satisfied the criteria of the English Tourist Board four-star grading.

We did lose some staff during the season, but I am pleased to report that we also made some internal promotions: John Hingley became Maintenance Manager and Alan Coe became a Maintenance Assistant. Alan's year got even more exciting when he married Sarah in August.

Our housekeeper, Tonya Sizeland, became a young granny, when her daughter Jessica gave birth to baby Ellie on 15th September, weighing in at 7lbs 1oz. Ellie maintained the family tradition of five generations of girls.

We are now deep in discussions with North Norfolk District Council to finalise our winter development programme. It is very likely that we will be developing 40 new static caravan pitches, renovating some of the shower blocks on the touring site, modifying the shop and café, building a new children's playground and completing general landscaping around the Park.

We have also ordered 10 new caravans for our hire fleet, which will maintain and improve the high quality of our existing letting caravans. Six new Cosalt Lodges are due for delivery and siting in January/February 2004. We will sell three and let three, as we did in 2001. The lodges will be sited on the most attractive area of Lapwing with views over the water to the Pinewoods.

*David Shelley*  
General Manager

# The Victoria Hotel



ABOVE: Paul Brown, the new General Manager at The Victoria, with his wife Vicki and their children, Jordan and Hannah.

AFTER a long and eventful summer, quieter months are now upon us, giving us time to prepare for a busy Christmas and New Year period.

Since the last Newsletter, The Victoria has undergone many changes, which in the main, have greatly improved the quality of service which we can

offer. Whilst we are aware that mistakes have been made this year, we are endeavouring to take The Victoria forward, determined to make it accessible to locals as well as hotel guests.

We want to continue to improve The Victoria as a hotel, yet always remembering that we must look after the people who support us 12 months of the year.

Several popular changes have already occurred, including the lowering of beer prices and the introduction of a tasty bar menu, including a delicious 10oz Holkham steak sandwich. Every Thursday and Friday evening we now have a happy hour, and if you fancy something a bit more special, you could choose our two course lunch menu in the restaurant for £12.

Our Kitchen team has been bolstered by a new Chef de Partie, in the shape of Michael Davies, who has joined from Australia. The Kitchen team, led by Neil Dowson, is constantly striving to improve the ever-changing menu in the restaurant. The menu uses only fresh produce and has an English twist including local seafood, Holkham beef and Holkham eel. Our new game menu is now available, and features only game from the Estate, prepared by the hard working team at Holkham Foods Ltd.

Sue Biddle, our events manager, has put together a fun and inexpensive list of events for the future (see right). Make sure you pencil the dates in your diary.

We still have a few tickets left for New Year's Eve, which we are holding back for locals. These tickets are available for just £15, for the post dinner party starting at 10pm, which includes Salsa dancing. Come along at 4pm for salsa tuition in preparation for what is sure to be a night to remember.

Finally, I must take this opportunity to thank all the staff at The Victoria for the hard work that they have put in over the summer months. Although some staff have come and gone, I feel we have a strong team of talented people here, who will make The Victoria, a professional, yet fun place to visit.

*Paul Brown*  
General Manager

## EVENTS AT THE VICTORIA

**7th January — Holkham Steak Night**  
7.30 for 8pm. £16.50 for two courses

**14th January — Holkham Game Night**  
7.30 for 8pm. £15 for two courses

**28th January — 'Vic' Curry Night**  
7.30 for 8pm. £12 per person

**4th February — Holkham Game Night**  
7.30 for 8pm. £15 for two courses

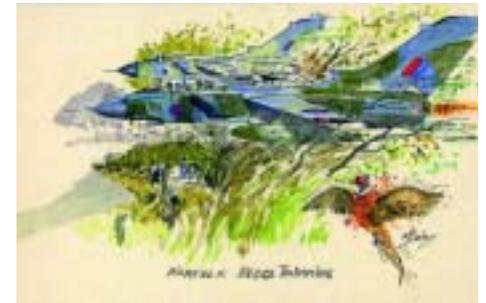
**28th February — Burns Night**  
All evening. Haggis and bagpipes

**3rd March — Holkham Steak Night**  
7.30 for 8pm. £16.50 for two courses.  
A chance to savour succulent steak reared on the Holkham Estate.

**17th March — St Patrick's Night**  
7.30 for 8pm. £15 for two courses

**31st March — "The hills are alive..."**  
7.30 for 8pm. £12 for two courses  
(Dress up as a nun or a goat for our special 'Sound of Music' evening and join us for good old sing along with Julie Andrews. There will be a prize for the most convincing outfit!)

## Art attack in Walsingham



HOLKHAM Hall Administrator, Michael Daley, is also an established artist in his spare time and from 2nd April next year, he will be staging an exhibition of his work at the Little Walsingham Galleries.

Those who work in the Estate Office have been able to admire the quality of Mike's paintings, but he also has a talent for cartoons. The one pictured above is just part of a series that will be featured at the exhibition, along with a collection of his impressive paintings.

## HOLKHAM WEBSITE



THE HOLKHAM website won the title of 'Website of the Year' in the East of England Tourist Board's annual Regional Excellence in England Awards.

Our website beat two other finalists to win the prestigious award which was presented by Lord Somerleyton and former BBC weatherman Bill Giles at the East of England Tourist Board's AGM at Hatfield House in October.

The judges chose the Holkham website above Colchester Zoo in Essex and Coda Cottages in

Suffolk, as they felt our site did a lot to promote not only Holkham, but also tourism in the local area.

An East of England Tourist spokesperson commented: "The Holkham site is easy and straightforward to use, very informative and well presented."

Holkham now goes forward to the National Excellence in England Awards, which will be held in London next year.

# Holkham National Nature Reserve

Picture by: The Countess of Leicester



ABOVE: Everyone was disgusted when the Queen's Chalet near Holkham Beach was destroyed in a mindless act of vandalism.

THE passing of the summer was met with a sigh of relief by the site staff who experienced a busy season on the visitor management front, but who encountered few real problems in the face of record numbers of visitors.

For the most part, the summer will be remembered for long, hot sunny days and the sight of many thousands of mostly well-behaved people making the most of the weather and the beach.

In the absence of any significant rainfall we were acutely aware of the fire risk and staff remained vigilant throughout. It's unbelievable that people will risk lighting campfires and barbecues under such dry conditions but they do. We recorded 31 campfires and 44 barbecues and others will have gone unnoticed. In fact, two fires which were caused by inadequately extinguished barbecue trays, were attended by the Fire Service. The concern here is that these convenient

take away barbecues are becoming ever more popular.

The arson attack on the Queen's Chalet in August was a despicable act and appeared to be a totally random act of vandalism.

The fire completely destroyed the building and could quite easily have spread into the surrounding woodland. As luck would have it, a brisk westerly breeze, that blew all day, dropped during the early evening allowing the leaping flames to tower. In the event, only a few trees were scorched, but I have no doubt that had the breeze persisted the fire would have spread rapidly into the tree canopy, leaving the Fire Service with a major woodland fire to contend with.

The Chalet has been used by the Royal Family since the fifth Earl of Leicester's time, and for many years it provided visiting royalty and their friends a secluded

retreat in the pinewoods close to the beach.

I suspect many people hold fond memories of this building, not least the many hundreds of birdwatchers who made a beeline for the Queen's Chalet in the late 1990s searching for a vagrant Red-breasted Nuthatch, blown off course from North America. It was the first of its species to be seen in Britain and during its stay was regularly seen on, or in the vicinity of the building. Unfortunately, like this bird, the Queen's Chalet is now consigned to history.

A major people event was the illegal rave on Warham Greens. This passed peacefully enough in the end, but caused a great deal of concern at the time for the internationally important salt marsh habitats lying adjacent to the Greens. The rave lasted four days and at its peak there were more than 1,000 people and 200 cars present.

In general, wildlife enjoyed a fruitful season helped by the fine weather. The nature reserve continues to attract new breeding birds and this year both Serin and Stonechat were added to the list.

The arrival of a pair of Serin, more associated with the Mediterranean region, generated a good deal of interest and following a period of courtship a nest was built in the pines near Lady Anne's Drive. This attempt failed but they relocated in pines north of Bone's Drift and eventually fledged two young. This constitutes the first breeding record for this species in Norfolk.

The Stonechat, a local breeding bird in Norfolk, also

nested successfully on Overy dunes. Nearby on the grazing marshes at Decoy Wood at least 14 pairs of Little Egret fledged 42 young, not bad for a bird that only began nesting here last year.

Out on the beach, our terns and shore waders were not faring so well, a combination of high tides, predation and human disturbance causing major losses here. Only the Sandwich Tern did well with 250 pairs raising about 250 young out on the Stiffkey Binks.

We were also busy on the habitat management front and by the beginning of July our tractors were following behind the cattle on the grazing marshes to mow thistles and rushes.

Ragwort, a perennial problem was less abundant this year but we still spent many days hand pulling this troublesome weed. By mid-August contractors were busy carrying out a full programme of ditch maintenance and other earthmoving works to enhance grazing marsh and reed bed habitats at Holkham and Burnham Norton.

We were sorry to lose Dominic Harmer who was recently promoted to the post of Assistant Site Manager at Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve in Oxfordshire. Dom, a summer warden for five years will be sorely missed and as yet there is no indication from English Nature that he will be replaced.

*Ron Harold  
Site Manager*

## WOODS DEPARTMENT

THE Woods Department is pleased to announce that we have made it into the 21st Century, having had electricity installed in our tractor shed.

This has made a big difference to us, especially as we are now able to carry out repairs and maintenance on our machinery in the light!

We enjoyed our time on the Holkham stand at this year's Country Fair and can report that there was a lot of interest in our display, which showed how old a cross-section of a Holkham Oak was by labelling several memorable dates on the rings.

Many visitors asked why the centre of the tree was not in the middle of the piece of wood, but just to the side. The reason for this is that the narrow side was the north facing side, which was the coldest side of the tree, and therefore slower growing.

We have been clearing out old trees in the Violet Pit, by the Obelisk Wood. After nearly a year, we have finished burning up the remains of the branches and trees damaged by last October's gales. We have only been able to do this as the weather has been so dry.



We have started coppicing hedges at Chalk Hill and Manor Farm, Wells, as part of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. People might be concerned to see hedges cut down to the ground, but they will recover and the young re-growth forms a better, fuller hedge.

*Ian McNab  
Head Woodsman*

## HOLKHAM TENANTS

### Turkeys and bats at Castle Acre



ABOVE: Organic turkeys grazing at Manor Farm, Castle Acre.

THE farm at Castle Acre has seen many changes this year. Due to the expansion of the farm, new staff have been taken on to help the farm develop into a successful organic business, writes Terry Bird.

We now employ eight full-time workers and three part-time. The team still includes Brian Dunkling, who retired earlier this year, but now enjoys working part time.

Our crew consists of: Rapik Mangaser, our new poultry manager has moved from the Philippines; Richard Garland, who is from North Yorkshire who has been appointed as the Stewardship officer; Rhys Evans has been employed as a tractor driver and Frank Wells is our estate worker. The refurbished farm office is manned by Catherine Sands and Anna Cole.

The farm has now completed the organic conversion period. The lamb and beef is available now as traditionally reared, will be available as organic come January. We are currently advertising our organic poultry range, which includes turkey and goose until Christmas and chicken throughout the year. Rapik, has settled in well and is planning to create our own breed of chicken.

At present, we are concentrating on selling our produce to local hotels and restaurants, as well as to the general public locally. If you would like some of our produce, please contact Catherine or Anna in the office tel: (01760) 755380.

The conservation work on the farm has expanded during the past six months and the farm is now actively involved in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. As part of the agreement, more than 20km of hedgerow will be restored over the next 10 years, and 7km of new footpath and bridleways now exist on the farm, which has been welcomed by villagers and dog walkers.

As part of the Stewardship agreement we also have the opportunity to open the farm to educational access, and because of our diverse enterprise are able to offer a wide range of topics including farming systems, organic farming and countryside conservation. Please contact us for further information.

Extensive work is being done on the Manor House at the moment, including re-slating the roof and re-building the chimneys. Prior to the work being carried out, evidence of bats was found in the roof and English Nature discovered that we had Pipistrelle and Brown long-eared bats.

Numbers of these bats have declined over the years, mainly due to loss of suitable feeding habitats and hollow trees for roosting, so it has been very important not to disturb their nesting area during certain times of the year. We have been lucky though, as the bats are a breeding colony, we have been able to carry on the work on the Manor roof as the breeding season has past and parts the roof will be finished before the bats begin to roost for winter.



### Mrs Temple's Cheeses expand

MRS TEMPLE'S Cheeses were awarded bronze and silver medals at the 2003 British Cheese Awards held at Blenheim Palace, Woodstock, Oxford at the end of September.

Catherine Temple and Lorraine Roe were delighted to find their products up there with the big names, and have resolved to go for gold next year. They are already devising new recipes, as it's necessary to make next year's entries soon to allow for maximum maturity.

Since launching their soft blue cheese, Binham Blue, in May 2003 sales have increased, giving the company the confidence to invest in new equipment and to take on a third cheese maker.

Catherine and Lorraine are particularly fond of their new industrial dishwasher, as 60 per cent of cheese making is devoted to washing up, cleaning the floor, maintenance and recording of hygiene.

### Nina sells every last plum

THE dry weather of the past few months has made life outdoors really very pleasant, writes Nina Plumble.

Our plum harvest came and went with easy picking conditions. We did not have a huge crop, so demand far outstripped supply. We sold every plum we grew, but like everything else on the farm, profit was negligible, despite increasing the prices.

Labour costs have increased dramatically in the last few years, thus making it very difficult to keep the orchard profitable. I estimated that the profit calculated as pounds per hour for my labour was £3 per hour, whereas the casual workforce received a great deal more than me per hour.

The barn we converted with the aid of a DEFRA grant was finally finished and our first booking was at the beginning of July. Since then, it has been almost fully booked. I must admit that it was a real struggle towards the end and that we only just managed to get it completed on time.

This autumn, we start our year two work for the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. We need to construct footbridges to make the public access route connect with existing public footpaths. We have more trees to fell on the Roman tumuli in the orchard and more gapping up to do in one of the hedges.

The farmyard has now turned to mud after the fine dust we had all summer; so the River Burn might just about keep flowing. Bookwork never ceases, especially government forms; the geese are flying all over the place and I am dreaming of more motorbike trips.

## New Finance Director starts work



SHALL I begin by introducing myself? I am 40, live in Reepham with my wife Nicola and come from Ipswich, (confession: Yes, I do support Ipswich Town Football Club).

I am a qualified chartered accountant and, after leaving professional practice (practice does not always make perfect), worked in a variety of roles for a regional property

group, before becoming Finance Director of a national plant hire company based in Norwich in 2000.

I have been fortunate and deliberate in that all my past employers have been fast growing and ambitious and the Holkham Estate continues that pattern. It is fascinating to note that in just a few years, the turnover of the Estate has grown from £2million, to more than £9million. Not only that, but there has been a tremendous shift in the composition of that business. Farming and land previously provided about three-quarters of income but now accounts for less than 20 per cent of turnover. That is a massive switch for any business to contend with.

As a consequence, the Finance Department now administers something like 31 different sets of books for Holkham entities. As well as maintaining these financial records, it runs payrolls for nearly 200 employees, administers rent and computer systems and ensures compliance with matters such as VAT and PAYE.

I have been taken aback with the commitment and dedication of the Finance Department team, but challenges remain. There is a continuing process of change to the Estate and a wider variety of businesses and departments requesting and needing faster, more informative and appropriate data. Business managers need good information to take informed decisions and corrective actions and there will be a gradual rollout of better management information over the next few months. This puts heavy demands on the team delivering such necessary change. However, there is much that is being done or is planned to relieve some of the pressure.

Some of you may have noticed that we have begun to familiarise ourselves with automatic counting machines for the cash that we handle and that we now use Securicor to make deliveries of money to the bank. We expect this winter and spring to enhance use of information and technology and convert some manually maintained systems to computer-based.

We also intend to start paying as many suppliers as possible by BACS, minimising the time spent handwriting cheques and being at the mercy of the postal system.

There will be a period of change for Finance, but change for good reasons: to help the business of Holkham become more focused and responsive and to enable it to continue its growth and preserve the jobs dependent upon that growth.

*Mike Wyard*  
Finance Director

## Forthcoming Events

Saturday, 21st February	SPANN Concert at the Hall. Red Priest.
Saturday, 27th March	SPANN Concert at the Hall. Edinburgh Quartet.
Sunday, 28th March	Concert at the Hall in aid of St Withburga's Church.
Saturday, 24th April	SPANN Concert at the Hall. Ivan Klansky.
Saturday, 3rd July	Barbecue in aid of St Withburga's Church.
Saturday, 17th July	Divas Opera at the Hall.
Sunday, 15th August	Church Fete.
Saturday and Sunday 2nd & 3rd October	Concert at the Hall in aid of St Withburga's Church.
Sunday, 3rd October	Big C Cycle Ride in the Park.

## HOLKHAM BUSTS GO ON SHOW IN LONDON



THIS is the latest photograph of the reproduction Holkham Busts, devised by the Countess of Leicester, which are now on display at the Grosvenor House Hotel, Park Lane, London.

The range of busts can also be purchased from our two shops here at Holkham.

# *Holkham People*

## Welcome to:

STEPHEN FOSTER, salesman for Holkham Foods Ltd, Holkham Pottery Ltd and Holkham Linseed Paints. Stephen formerly worked in the timber industry and has recently moved back to the Wells area where he has family. VICKI BROWN, wife of PAUL BROWN (General Manager of The Victoria Hotel), who has joined The Hillbrooke Partnership as a consultant.

## Farewell to:

CARL JAMES former General Manager of The Victoria Hotel. ALAN SERETNY, Food and Beverage Manager for Holkham Foods Ltd, who left at the end of the summer season. Also TRACEY WOODHOUSE, RACHEL EMMERSON and LUCILLE JACKSON, who worked for Holkham Foods. Lucille has returned to her native South Africa.

## Congratulations to:

The Hon Johnny and Carolyn Coke's daughter, ROS COKE and JUSTIN GIBBS who were married on 20<sup>th</sup> September at St Withburga's Church, Holkham. ALAN COE from the Pinewoods Maintenance Team who married SARAH in August. Estate plumber PAUL and LORRAINE ROE, whose daughter BEVERLEY married GARY HAZE in September.

## Births:

Congratulations to Windowcraft's WAYNE BARRETT and his partner JULIE HASTINGS on the birth of their daughter ELLIE MAY on 24<sup>th</sup> July. To gamekeeper PAUL and KATE PHAROAH on the birth of their son RORY GEORGE on 27<sup>th</sup> September.

## Deaths:

ALAN SANDERS a long-serving member of the Bygones team, who died in September, aged 79 years. IVOR EDWARDS who died in October aged 86 years. Ivor had for many years been Churchwarden at St Withburga's Church, Holkham, as well as the Estate's Farm Manager.

*IVOR Edwards, a familiar and much loved figure in Holkham, died in October aged 86. A large crowd of relations and friends attended his cremation at King's Lynn.*

*Ivor was born and brought up in South Wales where he trained in horticulture. During the Second World War, he saw active service in the Royal Air Force as a wireless operator in the Stirling bombers of 7 Squadron. He was wounded and awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal presented to him by the King himself.*

*After the war, he and Mary, to whom he was married for 53 years, came to Holkham, where in due course he became the Estate's Farm Manager. Ivor was deeply knowledgeable about the countryside and local history.*

*He was always cheerful and optimistic, even in the last months of his illness and had a gentle and endearing sense of humour.*

*Ivor was closely linked with St. Withburga's Church, where he served for many years as churchwarden and regularly took the fortnightly Matin's service. Our deepest sympathies go to Mary, to her children Ann and Ian and to their families. We shall miss him.*

**Richard Worsley**  
Churchwarden

Please note all contributions for the next Newsletter need to be submitted to the Editor, Paula Minchin, by 3rd May, 2004. Email: [p.minchin@holkham.co.uk](mailto:p.minchin@holkham.co.uk)