

Farming for the future

How data is steering a group of farming businesses to improve the future of land management

'A lifetime opportunity'

Major funding for a land recovery project to establish a 'wilder, wetter, better for nature' Norfolk

Will you be a Norfolk hero?

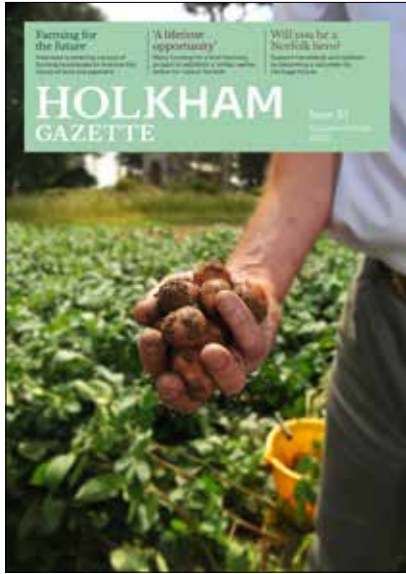
Support the elderly and isolated by becoming a volunteer for Heritage House

HOLKHAM GAZETTE

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Many consider summer to be the busiest season for Holkham with a peak of visitors, yet life for the teams continues apace. With the announcement of a new landscape recovery project, a data-led initiative to shape the future of farming and an editorial on local housing, there is plenty to read in this issue, at an exciting moment in the estate's history. We take a look at Holkham's training programme, the development of the estate's first wine and plans for Christmas, an unmissable part of the festive season. Enjoy the issue!

Daska Davis, editor

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RICS award for The Lord Nelson

The Lord Nelson at Burnham Thorpe, which Holkham bought in 2019 and is operated by Woodforde's Brewery, has been announced as a Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) UK 2022 regional winner for the East of England in the Community Benefit category.

The award recognises outstanding achievement in providing a facility which directly benefits the community, which must be supported by local feedback, and also which embeds diversity and inclusion in its

work. The regional success will see The Lord Nelson move forward to the award scheme's national finals which take place this autumn.

Commenting on the award, James Bracey, General Manager for Land and Property at Holkham, says: "This was a challenging project for the team, but this award recognises the efforts of all those involved. The pub provides a perfect setting to celebrate our success!"

Visit nelsonlocal.com

OpenTable award for The Victoria

The Victoria at Holkham has received a Diner's Choice Award from OpenTable, the UK's restaurant guide.

The accolade recognises the

restaurant as one of the best as voted for by diners in 2022, and follows The Victoria's decision to focus on food and its guests' customer experience earlier this year.



The Victoria is open for lunch and dinner each day. To book a table visit holkham.co.uk/the-victoria

Holkham reveals new look and website



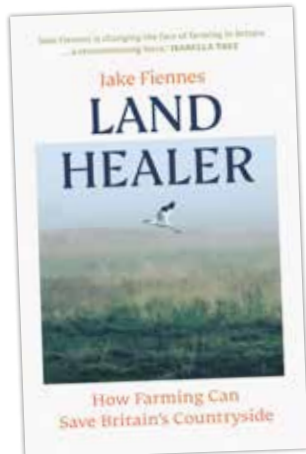
Visitors to Holkham may have noticed a 'new look' with a change to signage, literature and a new website. This follows a 12-month rebrand project by Norwich agency The Click, and its Creative Director Bobby Burrage says the new identity connects Holkham's history and future: "The new logo is a fusion of two typefaces which blends Libre Baskerville, a serif font designed in the same era as Holkham Hall, with Sora, a sans-serif font which connotes Holkham's pioneering outlook. It is unusual to mix the two, but we felt it reflects Holkham's brand story."

A new website has been created to provide an

improved user experience for a wide range of site visitors. Developed by Cambridge-based web design agency Rubber Cheese, Founder Kelly Molson says: "We wanted to capture a sense of place and have used content and video to inspire and create an immersive experience for visitors."

The site has been created with a minimal carbon footprint. "When we started working with Holkham, we were aware of the estate's sustainability drive," she adds, "and the site reflects this with concise content, correctly sized images and video, and green hosting."

Visit holkham.co.uk



Land Healer in-store

Jake Fiennes, Holkham's General Manager of Conservation, has had his first book, 'Land Healer', published to critical acclaim. Commenting on the book, Tony Juniper, Chair of Natural England, described Jake as, 'One of the motive forces behind this new way of looking at the land'.

'Land Healer' is available to buy at the Courtyard Gift Shop.



Pinewoods' new plot

The team at Pinewoods has transformed an area of scrubland into an allotment and woodland play area for guests staying at the holiday park. Following work by Kickstart Gardener Henry James to clear and establish the site with reclaimed materials, a herb garden and fruit bushes have flourished. The new working garden, and the play area, with fun den-building activities and seating, has been popular with young

families throughout the summer. "We've had a lot of interest from owners, guests and passers-by," says Pinewoods Gardener Ashley Tilley. "Children of all ages have been getting involved with planting, weeding and watering, which has been great to see. We have plans to build more for the future and to add wildflowers and bulbs to form an attractive natural area that increases biodiversity and attracts pollinators."



Stay on track!

Visitors to Holkham are urged to be cautious about walking under trees this autumn, particularly after the long drought this summer. This has caused some trees to protect themselves by shedding 'limbs' if it means preserving the trunk. Visitors are encouraged to stick to the paths and cycleways, which in turn respects wildlife and the work of our landscape and conservation teams.



Farming gets forensic

A partnership of five local farming businesses is set to shape future use of the land with intelligent use of data. *Holkham Gazette* caught up with project lead, Dominic Swan.

Holkham has a long record of pioneering agricultural practices and, as one of history's most progressive agriculturists, Thomas Coke pioneered crop rotation and many other innovative farming methods in the 18th century. Continuing the tradition today, the Holkham Farming Company (HFC), which manages 4,000 hectares of land, is evolving its practices to improve food production and protect the environment – a core theme of Holkham's sustainability and conservation action plan, WONDER. Much of its recent focus has concentrated on improving soil health and reducing the use of artificial fertilisers and pesticides.

Now, a new partnership with four other local farming businesses is set to build on this with a collaborative data-driven study that will capture and share information about the performance of 7,210 hectares of land. Holkham Emerald in Wells, NE Salmon in Great Fransham, Raynham Farm Company in East Raynham and Salle Farms Company in Reepham, along with HFC, have jointly established a new venture, Catalyst Farming.

KNOWLEDGE SHARE

The company, led by analyst Dominic Swan, will capture 'real data' using a bespoke app from farm machines, cultivation and drilling, along with soil analysis and

information gathered by weather stations and drones across 700 fields. Although each business' operations are unique, the detailed information will be combined to provide insights which can help to steer each of the companies' future decisions about farming.

"Originally, the work started as a Defra project," says Dominic, "but once funding concluded, the farms which were involved wanted to continue with a data-led venture and, although they all have slightly different objectives, their collective goal is to have economically and environmentally sustainable operations."

The collaborative approach and willingness to share commercially sensitive information is a radical move which has the potential to improve productivity and stewardship of the land. One example of data informing future activity is in the use of organic rather than artificial fertilisers to improve yield and simultaneously reduce operating costs and carbon footprint. At a time when extreme weather and rising fuel, feed and fertiliser costs are impacting supply and retail prices, gains in knowledge may provide benefits for the food chain.

FIELD TRIP

Such close scrutiny of recent historical data and ongoing studies can help each business to adjust techniques and crop



FIELD STUDY

The five farming businesses partnered in Catalyst Farming collectively grow winter wheat, winter barley, spring barley, oilseed rape, sugar beet, spring beans, rye, maize, potatoes, vining peas, multi-species herbal leys, grass seed and spring wheat.

varieties, and while the forensic approach sits at the fore of the project, this is supported by frequent, open dialogue among participants and time spent in the field talking with those working the land. Adopting new working practices, such as reducing the depth of cultivation, for example, improves soil health, reduces the wear and tear on machinery and fuel consumption, a dual environmental and commercial win.

"Between farm managers there is very much an open book," adds Dominic, "but presenting the information to farm workers and land owners has made a positive difference and everyone is on the same page with the importance of what we're

doing – there's almost a leader board in front of them to capture and deliver data! It's a healthy competition and what almost seemed an inconvenience at first is now meaningful and informing the future. The results influence decision-making, questioning and fine-tuning the way they farm."

Ambitious and forward-thinking, while the project is in its infancy, the long-term potential is to build stability, improve farming performance in our area and provide learning which can be adopted by farmers in other regions and the sector at large. Once again, Norfolk is at the forefront of a new agricultural revolution. ■

Learn more at catalystfarming.co.uk



Defra funding for an exciting project to restore wetlands, scrublands, chalk grassland and woodland will create new habitats to support rare and threatened species on the North Norfolk coast

‘Once in a generation’ recovery project given green light

An ambitious habitat creation project in North Norfolk has been given the green light with government funding to support the restoration of 2,000 hectares of new wetlands, flower rich scrublands, chalk grassland and woodland. The project, titled ‘North Norfolk: Wilder, Wetter, Better for Nature’, was announced by Natural England in early September and is one of 22 in the UK selected to receive a share of £12m of Defra funding.

The project, led by Norfolk County Council in partnership with Norfolk Rivers Trust and the Holkham Estate, brings together landowners, farmers and conservation organisations from Hunstanton to Sheringham and will support a wealth of rare and threatened species including Natterjack toads, Spoonbills, Grayling butterflies, Turtle doves and Barbastelle bats. Simultaneously, the project will improve the area’s resilience to climate change,



Thriving Spoonbills spread their wings

Holkham's thriving Spoonbill population has seen the species establish new colonies at new sites on the coast this year. The breed became extinct in the UK in the 1600s, yet a colony of six Spoonbills was established at Holkham in 2010 and has nested every year since, growing to 45 nesting pairs in 2021 with 77 youngsters seen this season.

Andy Bloomfield, Senior Warden at the Holkham National Nature Reserve, has had papers published on their behaviour and established the UK Spoonbill Working Group. "Since 2010, we have seen almost 500 youngsters fledged at Holkham," says Andy, "and this has led to the colonisation of other local sites. The species is reclaiming its spot as a British bird with climate change playing a part as Spoonbills spend their winters on the Dorset coast and Spain, rather than Africa, returning far earlier in February which allows for a longer breeding season. This year, we have doubled the nesting area at Holkham."

In October Andy spoke at the Eurasian Spoonbill International Expert Group's conference in Croatia. This is followed in November by an inaugural conference of the UK Spoonbill Working Group at Holkham. "The species is in its ascendancy once more," says Andy. "By sharing our experience we can help others to support its breeding."

contribute to cleaner water and enhance the area's natural landscape.

At Holkham, arable farmland on the estate has been chosen to fill gaps in the natural habitat which will be carefully managed to create a seamless area to support wildlife. Alongside this, the project will improve habitats on four chalk rivers – the Hun, Stiffkey, Burn and Glaven – and the coastline between Hunstanton and Weybourne.

As part of the government's post-Brexit 25-year environmental plan, the recovery project will see conservationists and farmers working together to better support natural habitats and protect the land for future generations. Commenting on the announcement, Jake Fiennes, Holkham's General Manager of Conservation, says: "Norfolk is such a food-producing

county – to be able to encourage, preserve and protect habitats at the same time as producing food is a wonderful example of how we can have something that delivers for all.

"There will be a range of approaches that are designed on a case-by-case basis. Nature is a wonderfully complex and interesting phenomenon – sometimes the landscape will tell you what it wants to do.

"Low-lying areas which might have been drained in the 70s through government subsidies and are problematic for growing cereals, are probably better suited to being benign wetlands. Areas near the coast currently in conventional agricultural use can be quite low yielding, but could be more suitable for calcareous chalk grassland and sheep grazing."

Measuring nature's successes

As part of Holkham's environmental stewardship, this summer has seen work to establish a benchmark by which to measure future success in breeding populations. "Since my arrival at Holkham, we have implemented bird counts on four Holkham farms," says Jake Fiennes, "some tenanted and some farmed by the estate itself, to get a feel for how the land is performing. Metrics captured this year will form baselines as we action change.

"At Great Farm, we can already see which species are thriving, returning or declining. In general, there has been an increase in the abundance of breeding birds which, in my opinion, is more important than overwintering birds, and these types of trends allow us to evaluate performance to date.

"We are implementing change across the estate and introducing new stewardship agreements which make way for nature. Although we are still in

the early stage of recording numbers, we are seeing that where we are making changes this is having a positive effect. For example, the way hedgerows are cut is supporting natural habitats and this will shape how we manage historic parts of the estate in the future.

"Nature takes time to adapt and we're recording it as it does. There are always winners and losers – this year we have seen species of day-flying moths, which are allegedly rare but which we are seeing in abundance, while this year's evidence of climate change and drought means we haven't seen Natterjack toads as we did last year.

"The information we are recording will shape the future of land management and we are choosing to plant species which are drought-resistant. The key is that this is a whole farm approach and, even while producing food, we can have an abundance of nature co-existing alongside."



Helping Wells' next generation to stay

Affordable housing is one of the area's biggest issues, and Holkham's Managing Director Peter Mitchell shares emerging thinking on overcoming the challenge.

Wells-next-the-Sea and many of North Norfolk's other desirable towns and villages have seen profound and structural change in housing provision over the last 20 to 30 years. During this time, house prices have risen much faster than local salaries. A contributing factor is that North Norfolk, like Cornwall, Devon and the Lake District, has become one of the hotspots for holidaymakers, fuelling the purchase of houses in the area for second homes and holiday let properties.

Houses that have been rented to local families for decades are, one-by-one, being taken out of the market and turned into holiday lets. The traditional centre of Wells town, with its narrow lanes and small cottages, has become largely a zone of holiday cottages and second homes. House prices put much of the housing stock in Wells far out of reach

of those whose parents could afford to buy a house a generation ago, and the supply of rental properties has almost dried up.

Consequently, many locals have moved to live in Fakenham, King's Lynn or other inland villages. Is this simply an inevitable consequence of the gentrification of highly attractive coastal towns and villages? Perhaps. But the impact on the community is real.

HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

One of the strengths of Wells is its wide range of key workers. Wells has two teams of school teachers, medical staff at the GP surgery, an RNLI crew and coastguard service, a fire and rescue crew, along with those who run the community hospital and day care centre. Wells has its fishing fleet, a harbour team, a cultural arts centre

and a number of skilled independent retailers.

Everyone has unique personal circumstances, but collectively this group is a good example of a key part of our community which often falls between the gaps in housing supply.

Homes for Wells defines the rental property that should be, but isn't, made available to mid-income families, couples and individuals as intermediate rental. Intermediate renters are often priced out of the few remaining open-market rental properties, but are never going to make it to the top of North Norfolk District Council's (NNDC) housing list and be eligible for social housing.

Homes for Wells has done a remarkable job over the last 14 years. From nothing, today it provides housing for 30 families and has a

waiting list of 48 more. It provides intermediate rental properties and its small team takes on the responsibility for matching (as far as is possible to do so) any property coming available to the right local family and then managing those tenancies.

ASSESSING THE NEED

Three years ago, Holkham commissioned a specialist research company, Housing Vision, to design and undertake a Housing Needs Study to help us to understand and quantify the need for housing in Wells and neighbouring Warham, Wighton, Holkham and Walsingham villages. Wells Town Council accepted our invitation to work alongside us on this study, and we also shared the findings with Homes for Wells and the Walsingham Estate.

The study confirmed that among the resident population in Wells and the four villages, there were 104 families – 57 in Wells alone – looking for more suitable properties. It also highlighted how the supply of rental properties coming onto the market was so slow that it would never dent the unmet need.

By interviewing employers, the study confirmed that local businesses and public organisations struggle to recruit and retain the staff

they need, because of the difficulty faced by these potential recruits in finding somewhere to live. Using published statistics on average salaries, the study concluded that buying a house in the area is out of the reach of the vast majority of those working locally.

Our own experience highlights this point even more strongly. Today, we have a live enquiry list of 200 families, couples or individuals interested in renting a Holkham property. That is ten times more than the total number of properties we can offer to new renters each year.

It is clear there is a profound shortage of rental property in NR23 and PE31 postcodes across social housing, intermediate and open-market rentals, and it is difficult to envisage how properties in Wells will revert from being holiday lets and second homes to year-round rentals for local families without Westminster's intervention.

Some are calling for holiday home owners to be charged double or treble the standard Council Tax rate. Others want to see a change which would require a planning application for the change of use of a residential house to a holiday home. Opinion is divided over whether either will have any impact, but neither solution feels imminent.

Importantly, there is concern among Wells' business community that the town should not appear anti or unwelcoming to those who contribute to Wells' reputation as a successful and welcoming holiday destination.

DOES PRP WORK?

Within the community there is a widespread feeling that 'something needs to be done'.

The 'something' put forward for consideration by the current draft of the Wells Neighbourhood Plan is the Principal Residence

unintended consequences of a PRP policy.

A PRP policy can't and won't reverse the change to Wells which has taken place in the last 20 years.

While a PRP policy would ensure new-build houses coming on to the market are sold at lower than market prices, the chances are that prices on existing housing stock would rise.

However, the more serious flaw with PRP is that it will have a negative impact on the supply of new rental properties.

Using published statistics on average salaries, the study concluded that buying a house in the area is out of the reach of the vast majority of those working locally.

Policy (PRP). This restriction requires that the house must be the principal residence of the owner or occupier. It would apply in perpetuity to new houses given planning permission during the years that the policy was in effect.

There are several issues about the integrity and enforcement of this policy which are responsibilities that will fall on NNDC. This article is not the appropriate place to make those points or to speak on behalf of the council. The issue to consider here is about the

At the core of national house-building policy is the concept of cross-subsidy. By requiring house builders to provide a percentage of houses in a new development to a registered provider of affordable housing, national policy creates a higher price for open-market buyers and a substantially lower price for housing associations. The subsidy from the buyers of open-market properties funds the supply of affordable housing with social rent tariffs.



We asked our professional advisers to report on the likely impact of a PRP restriction in Wells and their view was that such a policy would lead to a substantial reduction in the open-market value of new housing.

This is because anyone buying a new home, even if their intention is to live in it as their principal residence, will face a restricted market when they come to sell the house, as would subsequent buyers and sellers.

We are worried that the PRP restriction will make it more challenging for the buyer to get a mortgage and more difficult when subsequently selling the property.

The reduced value will impact the very viability of the housing development. The effect may be that fewer affordable homes get built. Quite the opposite of what the proposers of PRP hope to happen.

FRESH THINKING

There are better ways to create more affordable housing locally. We are in a very unusual position in Wells which we believe makes things possible that simply aren't conceivable elsewhere.

The Holkham Estate is, unusually for a housing developer, willing to own and retain property for long-term use as year-round rental housing and has a long history of doing so.

We are a house builder with a track record of building high-quality homes, and our role comes without the uncertainty or additional risks involving third parties with a different agenda.

In tandem with this, Wells is fortunate to have Homes for Wells as an established, credible and well-managed champion for local housing for local people.

We believe this unique position makes it possible to propose better solutions to increase the chances of the next generation of local families to be able to live and work in Wells.

Holkham is willing to invest in the continuing vitality of the town to achieve this.

WHAT IS THE LOCAL PLAN?

A Local Plan, prepared by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the community, sets out how development including housing, business construction and infrastructure such as roads and facilities can best benefit the area.

OUR PROPOSAL – POLICY PLUS PLUS

In the last 12 months, we have been developing ideas to try something innovative. By looking at the cost models for housing developments of different scales, we have established the viability of an approach which we describe as Policy Plus Plus.

Under the national standard policy model, each development is meant to have a percentage of social rent housing and subsidised starter home properties. The percentage is set by NNDC. Such houses would normally be sold by Holkham to a registered provider such as Victory Housing or Broadland Housing Association and they would be occupied or sold to people who meet the criteria of most urgent need on NNDC's housing list who want to live in Wells. All the rest of the houses are normally sold on the open-market.

Under our Policy Plus Plus model, we would voluntarily reduce the number of open-market houses for sale so that the majority of properties can go into the rental market. The larger pool of rental and affordable properties would be split between a) normal registered providers b) Homes for Wells

and c) our own retained rental properties.

We will soon be able to share the target numbers for specific sites as we bring these schemes forward for consideration by the planning authorities and for consultation with the community. This year has seen significant inflation in construction costs and a faltering demand for open-market housing, so pinning down these numbers needs to be done with care.

However, it's already clear we can provide more housing that local people can afford to buy and rent than under the standard policy and substantially more than under the PRP policy. It looks likely we will be able to add between 40 to 45 new properties to the rental and affordable stock within Wells in total across the three tiers of housing at the two new sites in the Local Plan at Ashburton Close and north of Mill Road.

Boosting rental supply in this way is the first 'plus' in our thinking. The second 'plus' is for us to champion and support Homes for Wells as the provider of the intermediate level of rental supply in the town.

This requires flexibility from NNDC and recognition of the importance of intermediate rental using a local list. However, we will link this to our willingness to go beyond the standard policy position expected by NNDC of developers, and to provide additional long-term rental properties.

The support and encouragement we have had so far from Homes for Wells for our Policy Plus Plus approach has been very welcome, and I am confident

strategy at the start of this decade, we wrote about our Five Ambitions. One of these is, 'We will be a force for good in helping local communities to thrive, by providing employment, homes and support for local businesses and charities'. I know we will struggle to meet everyone's expectations of what that means in specific situations, and we will no doubt fall short on occasion, but this gives us a goal against which to judge our own performance.

'We will be a force for good in helping local communities to thrive, by providing employment, homes and support for local businesses and charities'

we can build on this. It is an exciting opportunity to see Homes for Wells substantially increase the number of local families it will be able to house in the town.

We hope that those who have proposed PRP will see that a Policy Plus Plus approach will achieve so much more for the community instead.

When we updated Holkham's

I believe our Policy Plus Plus approach is a positive example of directing the resources and capabilities Holkham is fortunate to have in a targeted way for the long-term benefit of our community. I welcome feedback from those who agree and from those who don't. ■

Peter Mitchell
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Keeping it local

Holkham owns, lets and manages over 250 residential properties across 12 villages in North Norfolk and continues to invest in the development of new homes to further meet the need of local residents.

Holkham's current Bricknel Close project at Castle Acre sees the creation of 15 houses including three affordable homes which were acquired by Broadland Housing Association. The not-for-profit organisation manages 5,000 homes across Norfolk and North Suffolk, and two of the new Castle Acre properties that it has purchased will be rented out to applicants under King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council's housing list, with a third property available via a shared ownership scheme.

While this is the first time it has worked with the estate, Andrew Savage, Executive Development Director at Broadland Housing, says: "We are delighted to have worked with Holkham. The properties are exceptional quality and we would love to partner with them again. There is a real chronic shortage of rural housing in North Norfolk and affordable

homes in our region are in short supply. Many people want to stay local to the area where they have grown up and for their children to attend local schools, but they can't find places to rent and social housing is often unavailable to them. We work closely with King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council on providing this type of housing in our region, but there is a long waiting list. Holkham is progressive in addressing the problem and creating lovely homes."

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

Designed by award winning architects Lucas + Western, the Castle Acre development has been constructed using traditional materials including lime mortar, brick and flint and clay pantile. All are sympathetic to the site's rural, historic setting, along with the inclusion of sustainable building technologies such as air source heating and hot



water, and sustainable drainage systems. Buyer Roseanna Black recently purchased one of the Bricknel Close houses with her partner, having previously rented a Holkham property.

"We were a Holkham tenant for three years after moving from South Norfolk, as I have family in the village. We were living around the corner and when we saw the development begin we registered our interest with the parish council. The pandemic put a delay on the development, so we were lucky with the timings and ready to buy as they came to the market. I work from home and my daughter has just started school in the village, so we are delighted to be able to live here." ■

L-R: Andrew Savage, Executive Development Director, Broadland Housing Association, Rik Potter, Project Manager, Holkham Estate Company Ltd, The Earl of Leicester, Chairman, Holkham Estate Company Ltd, Michael Newey, Group Chief Executive, Broadland Housing Group
Photograph: Bess Coke

From vine to fine wine

Grapes grown in Holkham's Walled Garden have been skilfully transformed into wine by a local vineyard, the perfect accompaniment to a festive feast!

As any winemaker will tell you, it can take a few years to achieve a perfect bottle that you are willing to share with an audience, and so it is with pride that Holkham has launched its first vintage, a collaboration with Burn Valley Vineyard, a local family business. In fact, Norfolk is gaining a reputation as the new bottle in the cellar, catching up fast with Kent and Sussex as England's wine regions. A key moment in its recognition was Surlingham's Winbirri 2015 success, the first English vineyard to win Decanter's World Wine Awards.

Although more modest in scale, Holkham's own vineyard was planted in the estate's Walled Garden in 2013 and grapes were first harvested in 2018. Following some early experimentation, last year the estate teamed with Burn Valley Vineyard in nearby North Creake to convert Holkham's grapes, hand-picked by a team of keen volunteers, into a quality wine with minimal food miles.

"We grow a dark-skinned Regent and green Solaris grape and have a fantastic group of volunteers which work with us in the Walled Garden, so the vines are well tied-in and presented," says Holkham's Head Gardener, Mark Morrell. "We've known Burn Valley Vineyard for a while and they have a great location, very local to the estate. The fruits we harvested in October 2021 were sent to Burn Valley Vineyard last year, and a few months ago the garden team went up to the vineyard for a first tasting and we were really pleasantly surprised. This year, we will bottle a Walled Garden White Solaris and Walled Garden Rosé Regent."

GOOD NEIGHBOUR

Burn Valley Vineyard worked closely with Mark and his team, providing viticultural advice and co-ordinating the wine-making process. "The Walled Garden is a nice sheltered spot which helps to produce plenty of fruit," says Burn Valley Vineyard



Co-owner Laura Robinson. "This was harvested last autumn, pressed and fermented in oak barrels for several months and then stored in steel tanks before bottling. The White Solaris is made in the style of a white Burgundy while the Rosé Regent has a lovely fruity flavour. We'll produce 200 bottles of the Solaris and Rosé this year, but there is the potential to expand and try different styles of wine."

Holkham's wine is available at the Courtyard Gift Shop.

The Samuel Wyatt Vinery provides an opportunity to establish new vines. "We hope to grow a full batch of red grapes to produce a red wine in future years," says Mark Morrell.



Your club needs you!

Many of us enjoy a relaxing drink at the end of the day, and the Wells War Memorial Institute Club, located on Theatre Road in Wells-next-the-Sea, is reaching out to locals to take up membership.

The club, which formerly belonged to the British Legion, was handed to the town and is now run on behalf of the community, providing a wide range of sports entertainment, live music and events.

Chairman Garry Platten says the club is hoping more residents will take up membership, which is £20 for the first year and £10 per year thereafter, with day membership available for £3 per guest. "The club was founded over 80 years ago and has been recently refurbished. "We are proud to say we have the cheapest beer in town with a great atmosphere and warm welcome," he says. "The club is family-friendly and dogs are welcome too, so we hope more people will visit and join to ensure this community asset will continue to serve locals for many years to come."

The Wells War Memorial Institute Club is open 4-11pm Monday to Friday and 12noon-11pm Saturday and Sunday.

Be inspired to make a difference

Wells-next-the-Sea charity Heritage House, which has been providing day care and support for the elderly and isolated members of the local community for more than 35 years, is urging more locals to become a volunteer. The organisation has close links with Holkham which has supported it for many years and staff are encouraged to volunteer through the estate's Go Help scheme. The Countess of Leicester is Patron of the charity and regularly volunteers as a minibus crew member and delivering meals to people in the community.

"We are crucial to the local community," says Heritage House's Chair Nicky Milner, "but we are always looking for volunteers. Many of Holkham's team support us, with members of the gardening team working to keep our beautiful grounds looking their best, and we are fortunate to have a number of recently retired Holkham staff helping out on a weekly basis. We need more volunteers like this and, whether you are able to help once a week, month

or anything in between, you will be helping some of the most vulnerable people in our area."

Addie Granville, who is a volunteer at Heritage House, says: "The commitment is as little or as much as you like, but the rewards are enormous. Being part of the volunteer team has been so special. I have met some wonderful people both on the team, in the staff at Heritage House and with the visitors. You might deliver lunches to those who cannot come into the centre, while away a morning with dominoes against demon players, sing songs, take part in carpet bowls or simply have a chat and a cup of tea. You might have an hour to give, you might have two, you might have a day a week. Maybe you would like to drive a minibus and collect visitors? Whatever it is, you can give someone who is isolated the chance to have a great day, meet friends and become part of the Heritage House family."

To find out more about volunteering at Heritage House, call 01328 711333.



Holkham's Training Calendar 2022/23 includes a wide range of courses covering sustainability and management, alongside mental health and financial wellbeing.

Where talent grows

With a myriad of opportunities, Holkham is a fascinating place to work and each role is integral to the estate's success. With the launch of the 2022/23 training calendar, Alex Triplow, Head of HR, explains how its people are key.

No matter where you go at Holkham, there is something simultaneously unique and universal about the work of the various teams. It may sound contradictory yet, while each employee has their own individual role, there is a unifying sense of pride, professionalism and passion about delivering the best outcome of each job. Whether tending the grounds, providing a tour of Holkham Hall or crafting a new window frame, the

same degree of care and attention is taken to deliver a consistently high standard in all aspects of the estate's daily work.

"We want Holkham to be a great place to work, where talent is developed, teams set their own high standards and the human touch is never lost," says Holkham's Head of HR, Alex Triplow.

"Our training programme is central to this ambition and underpins our commitment

to developing talent. We want to recruit and retain fantastic staff and we know that career development and progression is central to this. We know how rewarding it is for people to see us investing in them, and so each year we work hard to develop our programme to provide more opportunities for learning and growth.

"Historically, training has tended to focus on management development

or been predominantly statutory-based in areas such as health and safety or first aid. However last year, as the restrictions of the pandemic eased, we were able to deliver a far wider programme and, with a permanent staff of 260 employees, 120 people – just under half of our workforce – benefited from training.”

HEALTH AND WEALTH

The 2022/23 Training Programme, launched in late September, sees an even broader range of courses at all levels of development and with increased accessibility. “We received some feedback from staff that it was difficult to take a full day out for training,” says Alex, “so we have introduced half-day courses to make them more accessible and are offering some sessions online.

“The cost of living is challenging many households at the moment and so we’ve introduced financial wellbeing sessions during Talk Money Week in November. Afterwards, participants (with their partners) can speak to a financial coach by telephone for further advice.

“There are also sessions on child mental health, menopause and dementia awareness, along with time management and stress resilience – broader life skills which help people both in and outside their work. We want to provide as much practical support as possible, as we know people

are happier and work better when they’re not worried.”

FUTURE FIRST

Reflecting Holkham’s sustainability focus, there is a spectrum of training, ranging from half- and full-day introductions to environmental sustainability to a five-day course to qualify as an associate of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA). “We have sustainability at the centre of our vision,” says Alex, “and we want to provide development opportunities for more staff. Last year’s graduates of the IEMA course have gone on to pioneer and lead projects across the estate, and our team members will inspire others and visitors, so we want as many people as possible to embrace these courses.”

Reflecting Holkham’s commitment to supporting career progression among staff, this year also sees the introduction of a new course to gain a Level 3 Award from the Institute of Leadership and Management, along with coaching training. “We are building the next generation of leaders for Holkham,” adds Alex, “and with opportunities for apprentices too, from a first foot on the career ladder to senior management training, we want to see our people thrive and achieve their ambitions.”

To find out more about career opportunities at Holkham, visit holkham.co.uk/about-us/join-us

A day in the life of... Josh Creasy



As a catering assistant in the Courtyard Café, Josh Creasy enjoys being part of Holkham’s team.

Q. HOW DID YOU COME TO WORK AT HOLKHAM?

A. “My girlfriend works at the Beach Café and I had just finished working at a local pub when I heard about a job at the Lookout Café. I joined the team and loved it! I went to study geography at the University of Leicester and would work during holidays. Holkham is really flexible and I loved being able to remain part of the team during that time. Once I completed my degree, I knew I would come back to Holkham and there was a role available as a catering assistant at the Courtyard Café.”

Q. TELL US ABOUT A TYPICAL DAY?

A. “I love driving past the deer on the way to the café in the morning, that’s always special. Once I arrive, I start preparing food and getting the café ready. We have a quick team meeting and get ready for our first customers. We serve hot food, sandwiches and salads, and it’s really busy in the kitchen, predominantly around lunchtime.”

Q. WHAT TRAINING HAVE YOU UNDERTAKEN?

A. “We have to complete our food hygiene training and it’s quite straightforward as we can do this via the staff portal which is quick and efficient. I’m definitely going to look at some of the other training on offer this year.”

Q. WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

A. “There are lots of different jobs at Holkham and I would love to be able to use my geography degree in some way, perhaps on the Holkham National Nature Reserve or working with the Environment Agency. I love being part of the estate as it’s a team that’s not too big or too small, and you know everyone which makes it special.”



Candlelight Tours run throughout December. Starting with a drink in the Courtyard Café, these magical tours provide the perfect opportunity to share a festive moment with family and friends.

Christmas is coming!

With a return to tradition, Holkham is putting the final touches to its celebration of the festive season.

Most of us enjoy decorating our homes for Christmas, and Holkham is no exception with Lady Leicester, Christmas Co-ordinator Catherine Zoll and their team beginning plans even before the previous year's ornaments are packed away. There is something magical about Holkham when it is bedecked with festive decorations and exciting ideas brought to life which make a Candlelight Tour an unmissable part of so many people's celebrations.

The team is looking forward to a full return to tradition this year. "We missed being

able to visit Father Christmas and his elves last year," says Catherine, "and we are delighted to welcome FX Live back to create one of its snowy scenes."

With Holkham's commitment to sustainability, the team is also incorporating more living material in its displays this year. With such a vast canvas, how does the team draw inspiration? "Ideas pop up all the time," says Catherine. "We note these and they often appear in a year or two. Some themes grow, so a single decoration may evolve into a room design in future years!" ■

Behind the scenes

It's no secret that Lady Leicester adores Christmas, so we asked for her top tips.

What trends should we look for this year?

Use house plants in interesting ways – group plants with little fir trees and fairy lights to create a Christmas installation. Use elements from the garden by drying and spraying flowers and foliage, and then draping the display with lights. Scent is important, so use herbs and natural oils to make your home smell seasonal.

How about dressing a festive table?

Choose a couple of colours and theme the tablescape around these. Look in antique shops for interesting china, candlesticks or ornaments to fill with flowers or foliage for an original feel.

What was it like to be featured in Channel 4's Historic Homes at Christmas series?

I was nervous it might hinder the creative process, but the team was so lovely and enthusiastic we soon relaxed and forgot we were being filmed.

How Caesar came to Holkham

A small plaque of Julius Caesar in the Statue Gallery holds a story of the past, writes Holkham Archivist Lucy Purvis.

The magnificent Statue Gallery is, for many visitors, the jewel in the crown of the splendid collections in Holkham Hall. The room is full of antique statues and busts, but then, tucked away on the fireplace, is a fine medallion of perhaps the most well-known Roman statesmen and general, Julius Caesar, who was assassinated on the Ides of March 44 BC.

This small, free-standing plaque shows Caesar in profile to the right. His face is instantly recognisable, with his prominent Adam's apple and clear aquiline nose. His closely cropped hair is partly covered by the victory laurel wreath, which also helps hide his receding hairline.

Medallions and plaques of this kind were often developed from coins and can be found in many Renaissance paintings. This Italian marble dates from the late 17th or early 18th century. Unlike all the other statues

and busts in this room, the marble was purchased by Matthew Brettingham for Thomas Coke, 1st Earl of Leicester, at auction in London from the remarkable collection of Dr Richard Mead (1673-1754).

Dr Mead was an eminent court physician and played a very important role in the creation of the Foundling Hospital in London where he was a Governor and gave his clinical expertise pro bono.

CLASSICAL ERA

Mead also persuaded many of his patients to financially support the hospital, including the Earl. Living in Great Ormond Street, Mead's house backed onto the Foundling Hospital, and in the garden he had a separate room built to house an extensive library of more than 10,000 volumes, works of art and collections including antiquities and an Egyptian mummy.



Although a private collection, scholars and artists could use and study the items to further their research. His collection rivalled that of Sir Hans Sloane, who bequeathed his collection to form the British Museum, British Library and the Natural History Museum.

Dr Mead had a personal connection to the Coke family: he was physician to Lady Margaret Tufton during her confinements and a regular visitor to Thomas' heir, the rather sickly Edward.

In 1727, he gave the family a Dutch Mastiff (now more commonly known as a Pug). Both men had similar classical leanings and a shared love of antiquity would have prompted them

to move in similar academic and social spheres.

Perhaps it was this shared love of the Classical age that prompted Thomas to acquire the item, following the death of Dr Mead, in a mega 56-day auction of his magnificent, unique collection.

Initially, the medallion was displayed in the dining room at Thanet House, the London house of Thomas Coke. It is first recorded at Holkham in 1773 in the Green State Bedroom, where it would stay for the next 150 years before moving to its current location, during the mid-twentieth century. ■



Win a Holkham Hall by Candlelight Tour for four

Christmas at Holkham is a truly magical experience and we are offering one lucky reader and three guests the opportunity to win a Candlelight Tour on a date of their choice, subject to availability. To enter, visit holkham.co.uk/gazette-comp and submit your details by 9am on Monday 14th November 2022.

Autumn & Winter events

30th November & 5th December

Weave Some Christmas Magic Workshops

Throughout December

Christmas Tree Shop Open

Various dates in December

An Audience with Father Christmas

1st December

Candlelight Musical Tour and Concert

2nd & 16th December

Silversmithing Necklace and Ring Workshops

3rd & 17th December

Cut, Stick and Be Merry Workshops

4th December

Wreath Making Workshops

4th-29th December

Holkham Hall by Candlelight Tours

6th & 7th December

'Winter at Holkham' Oil Painting Workshop

10th & 11th December

Christmas Food, Drink & Gift Market

20th December

Canine Carol Concert

See holkham.co.uk for full details and to book tickets

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Terms and conditions: 1. The winner will be contacted by email on the week commencing Monday 14th November 2022. 2. If there is no response from the winner after three days, the prize will be reallocated. 3. Travel to and from Holkham, including accommodation if applicable, is the responsibility of the entrant. 4. Prize includes four tickets to a Holkham Hall by Candlelight Tour. 5. Prize has no monetary value, is non-transferable and must be taken between 4th and 29th December 2022.