

## Putting venison on The Vic's menu

How closed loop management of Holkham's deer park is helping to reduce The Vic's food miles count

## Saving lives at sea since 1830

Protecting the coastline, read about RNLI Wells' new lifeboat house and fleet

## Efficient and effective or a lot of hot air?

Do alternative heating systems really work? Two Holkham residents share their experience

# HOLKHAM GAZETTE

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Sustainability sits at the centre of the estate's plans. Rising energy costs have sharpened interest in renewable energy and in this issue we look at air source heating as an alternative for housing. We also show how the estate's management of the deer park with a closed loop approach is helping to reduce the food miles of The Vic's menu. Elsewhere, we celebrate completion of RNLI Wells' lifeboat house and a new food support service for Norfolk. Meet some of Holkham's youngest team members and learn about an historic moment. Enjoy the issue! Daska Davis, editor

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## Estate forging ahead with government's roadmap for a cleaner, greener country

The estate has welcomed publication of the government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 which sets out a five-year roadmap to restore nature and improve the environmental quality of our air, water and land.

As part of this, the government has committed to creating and restoring a minimum of 500,000 hectares of wildlife habitats, with 70 projects to develop 25 new National Nature Reserves and expand existing sites. With a pledge to ensure everyone has access to nature, the plan aims to create and support jobs in conservation and the environment.

The government will support landowners and farmers in adopting nature-friendly farming practices and to create or restore hedgerows, work which Holkham has already embarked on as a participant in a trial scheme. The plan will encourage landowners to restore 400 miles of

rivers and establish 3,000 hectares of new woodlands along England's rivers. The estate is already active in a project with Norfolk County Council and Norfolk Rivers Trusts to support the restoration of 2,000 hectares of new wetlands, flower-rich scrublands, chalk grassland and woodland.

Jake Fiennes, the estate's General Manager of Conservation, says: "Defra's announcement reflects everything that the estate already delivers or aspires to. The intentions for the first five years of the government's 25 Year Environment Plan mirror many of the aspects of our own ambitious WONDER sustainability strategy and reaffirms everything that we are doing to manage natural habitats and create access to nature in our region."

**Read about WONDER, our sustainability and conservation strategy, at [holkham.co.uk/wonder](http://holkham.co.uk/wonder)**

# Positive response to consultation on local housing proposal



A proposal for new housing in Burnham Market presented by James Bracey, Holkham's General Manager of Land and Property, to the community at the start of the year has received a positive response. The plan will see the delivery of 12 high quality, traditionally designed, new homes off Creake Road.

The scheme comprises a mix of bungalows, terraced, semi-detached and detached houses, each of which will have parking, pedestrian access and soft landscaping.

"The proposal includes 20 percent affordable housing in line with the government's First Homes scheme

to help buyers get on the property ladder. Additionally, Holkham will retain properties for private rent by locals.

"We received fewer responses than we anticipated," says James Bracey. "The comments were largely positive, and the main feedback was about ensuring the development serves local housing need.

"The scheme will provide two affordable homes and some of the other houses will also be retained for private rental. We intend to make a planning application in February and we will inform the local community throughout the process."



## Driving ambition

Pinewoods' vintage 1951 Leyland Tiger bus, which arrived last summer as part of a new transport solution between Wells Town and Wells Beach, has been well received by passengers and drivers alike.

Semi-retired driver Albert Middleton recently wrote to the Pinewoods team to thank them for the opportunity to have been part of the bus' launch service, writing: 'The past six weeks have been a dream come true for me. I have been involved in driving and operating buses and coaches for most of my working life. Considering I retired some 12 years ago, I can't seem to leave the industry. In fact this opportunity to drive the vintage bus has been my most enjoyable summer of all time. If I can sum up, with this opportunity, you have undoubtedly made an old man very happy.'

A bus driver since 1966, Albert launched his own company, which was later sold to Sanders Coaches, and now runs a wedding bus hire business with his son-in-law. "It was a real privilege to drive the Leyland Tiger, I felt so proud," says Albert. "I've applied to be part of the team and hope to be back on the bus for summer 2023."

**Find out more about seasonal job opportunities at [holkham.co.uk/vacancies](http://holkham.co.uk/vacancies)**



## Planting progress on the estate

Holkham's forestry team has planted 50,000 saplings in the last year as part of its ongoing silvicultural work. The achievement by the forestry team is one part of its proactive management of woodlands, to enhance the historic landscape and protect it for future generations.





## Planting the right mix

Designed and planted almost 300 years ago, careful management of the parkland, to reinstate the past with an eye to the future, will protect it for the next generation.

Set over 1,200 acres, Holkham Park is the jewel in the crown of the estate and provides the backdrop for day-trippers, historians and naturalists alike. While it serves many audiences, the parkland's continued success is, in no small part, down to the work of Head Forester Harry Wakefield and his team. They carefully manage the landscape and implement new planting which is sympathetic to the setting, yet sustainable for the future. This balancing act requires knowledge, vision and collaboration with stakeholders, and also working within Holkham's Heritage Management Plan (HMP), which provides a framework for decisions about planting and maintenance.

Steven Thomas of Historic Landscape Management, a company which specialises in heritage estates and parkland management, works closely with Harry in delivering the HMP and guiding the selection of

planting species that reflect Holkham's history, but which also best serve the estate in light of climate change.

### ROOTED IN HISTORY

"Holkham has a long-running programme of replanting which started in the 90s and largely emerged as a result of storm damage in the late 80s," explains Steven. "In recent years, there has been a reinvigoration of the park, with the full support of Lord Leicester. On the North Lawn we are reinstating some of the historic formal layout created by the estate's architect, William Kent, and on the South Lawn we have looked at different periods to create a plan which acknowledges the past, while looking to the future."

"The HMP sets out from an historic point of view where individual trees were planted," adds Harry. "Where we have lost trees over the years, we want to reintroduce them, but we also have to be dynamic in that if we plant



Top to bottom: Map of the park, 1744-59; a survey of Holkham by H. A. Biedermann c. 1781

some of those species they may not survive today, due to climate changes. There is a level of fluidity in our approach, but we are mindful that we are an historic, Grade I registered park.

“Tree risk management is important, as we have around one million visitors each year and have a duty of care to ensure they are protected while enjoying the landscape. We have parkland trees, areas of wood pasture and woodland, and over the years we have lost trees in each of these areas due to deer damage, natural decline, impact from events and people, droughts and wind. Historically there wasn’t always the forethought to replant, so at the moment the park is comprised of trees which are over 200 years old or five years old, and there’s not much in between, other than the 7th Earl’s plantings.

“The situation is further exacerbated by high levels of Acute Oak Decline in the mature oaks in the North Park. If we lose these historic oaks, we will be left with a very scarred landscape, so we are trying to get ahead and address the biodiversity threat by cutting down unrecoverable dead trees and replanting in affected areas. We are working closely with Forestry Research (Great Britain’s principal organisation for forestry and tree-related research) to further understand the evidence and provide scientific services to support sustainable forestry.

“As part of this enrichment planting, we look at the

species composition in the park, consider what was there historically and what can be added that will cope with environmental change.”

#### TOMORROW’S WORLD

“Different planting mixes will retain the character of the landscape and distribution of planting,” adds Steven, “but with more diverse species if one is affected there are others to take its place. Harry is very much on the front foot and engages with the Forestry Commission and Historic England in terms of embracing the historic landscape and conservation of its character and special interest. It’s encouraging to see that the historic nature of the park and what was put forward in the 18th and 19th centuries is being reviewed, interpreted and taken forwards, which has always been Holkham’s way.”

“We’re not trying to reinvent the wheel,” says Harry. “We’ve got plans which were put in place centuries ago and it’s our job to continue this work to protect and sustain the woodland. With the ever-present bio-security risk, extremely wet winters and dry summers as we’ve seen in recent years, if we don’t act now, in 20–30 years we won’t be in a comfortable position.

“The drive and energy to do something right is here at Holkham. We have an archivist to provide the historic evidence to work from, and with Steven’s support we can execute the plan and ensure that the next generation will see the results of our efforts.” ■



## PLANS, HINTS & SKETCHES...

During the 1780s, Coke of Norfolk, renowned for his agricultural innovations, made large-scale changes to the estate, and in 1789 landscape designer Humphry Repton set out plans for new pleasure gardens in his first ‘Red Book’. Between 1781 and 1804, Holkham’s Head Gardener John Sandys planted 700 acres of woodland, which his notebook details.

*Plantation on the south side of the Staithe Wood, the east end planted in 1783 and the west end in 1784*

- Oak 13,450 (c.14%)*
- Ash 23,900 (c.25%)*
- Sycamore 11,500 (c.12%)*
- Beech 7,950 (c.8%)*
- Elm 12,750 (c.13%)*
- Cherry 6,400 (c.6.7%)*
- Spanish Chestnut 1,850 (c.2%)*
- Horse Chestnut 900 (c.1%)*
- Birch 1,030 (c.1%)*
- Larch 600 (c.0.6%)*
- Lombardy Poplar 1,170 (c.1.2%)*
- Arbele (White Poplar) 3,800 (c.4%)*
- Willow 800 (c.0.8%)*
- Weeping Willow 400 (c.0.4%)*
- Oriental Plane 200 (c.0.2%)*
- Hazel 500 (c.0.5%)*
- Scotch Fir 3,100 (c.3.2%)*
- Spruce 4,900 (c.5%)*
- Weymouth Pine 160 (c.0.15%)*
- Evergreen Oak 250 (c.0.2%)*
- Privet 400 (c.0.4%)*
- Spindle Tree 120 (c.0.1%)*

Total 95,130 Broadleaves make up c.90% of the plantation mix with conifers c.10%





The old lifeboat station at Wells has been replaced by a state-of-the-art boathouse which accommodates equipment to make the volunteer crew's roles safer, faster and more effective.

# Passing the baton for a new era of sea safety

As the *'Duke of Edinburgh'* replaces *'Doris M Mann of Ampthill'* as RNLI Wells' operational all-weather lifeboat, the final chapter in an upgrade of the area's coastal emergency service is almost complete.

The mile-long walk from the quayside in Wells Town to the Beach Café, which neighbours Pinewoods holiday park, is a favourite of holidaymakers and locals. At the end of the path visitors will now discover a stunning

new building which also plays a vital role in protecting the coastline.

In November 2022, work completed on the build of a new RNLI lifeboat station to house a Shannon class 13-46 lifeboat,

the 'Duke of Edinburgh', which replaces 'Doris', the Mersey class lifeboat which had served Wells for 32 years. Taking just over two years to complete, the brand-new building was essential to accommodate the updated vessel which arrived from Poole on 8th October. While many had a fond affection for the old boathouse, which had stood since 1895, its demolition was a stipulation of planning permission and was completed on 25th November 2022.

### STRIKING ARCHITECTURE

The new boathouse is a stunning structure which blends sympathetically with the coastal setting, its timber-planked elevation softening the appearance of the building. On the ground floor, a visitor centre with educational display boards tells the fascinating history of the Wells Lifeboat Station, which has been operational since 1830. Climbing a few steps, the state-of-the-art Shannon lifeboat reveals itself, an impressive sight, even while stationary on its ramp.

Entirely publicly funded, the lifeboat house sits within estate land and Chris Hardy, Lifeboat Operations Manager at RNLI Wells, says Holkham's support has been important. The Earl of Leicester, president of RNLI Wells and Sarah,

Countess of Leicester, vice-president, joined crew members and their families at a flag ceremony to mark the transfer from old to new on 13th November. "We've worked hand-in-glove with the Holkham Estate, especially Pinewoods," says Chris, "and they have helped to make it a smooth, fluid process for which we are very grateful.

"Sea safety is so important for both visitors to the coastline and locals alike, and the new boathouse ensures we are able to raise awareness and provide an improved rescue service. The station forms a working partnership with Holkham in promoting a coastal experience with sea safety at the forefront.

"In 2005, we were assured the longevity of a lifeboat at Wells by the RNLI, and on 5th December 2013, during the night of the Southern North Sea storm surge, water seeped over the bank by the Beach Café and exposed the vulnerability of the site. It was a pretty horrendous night which could have affected the outlook for the whole area and certainly focused interest in creating a brand-new, purpose-built lifeboat house.

"The old lifeboat house was iconic and very emotive for many, but people didn't understand the fragility of the building and that



it couldn't be retained and repurposed going forwards."

### HERITAGE FEATURES

While the old lifeboat house may be gone, parts of its history have been incorporated into the new building with hand-painted service boards, some more than 100 years old, used to frame the boarding platform around the Shannon. Fittings which held horse harnesses used to launch the lifeboat until 1936 now provide hooks for the service volunteers' life jackets, and wooden righting poles once used by crews are displayed in the visitor centre.

Celebrating the past, the new lifeboat house ensures a vital resource for the coast, and a final official naming ceremony in the summer will complete this chapter in RNLI Wells' almost 200-year history, securing its future for many years to come. ■

**Book a boathouse tour at [wellslifeboat.org/visit](https://wellslifeboat.org/visit)**

## BOAT CLASS

The Mersey class lifeboat, named after Liverpool's famous river, was the RNLI's first carriage-launched, all-weather lifeboat, introduced in 1988. Until her retirement, 'Doris' was the oldest serving all-weather lifeboat in the RNLI fleet, having been operational since July 1990, saving 37 lives and aiding 303 people on 699 callouts.

The Shannon, the first named after an Irish river, is the RNLI's latest, all-weather lifeboat and is propelled by water jets instead of propellers, making it highly agile and manoeuvrable. Capable of 25 knots, it can act more quickly and with a greater range, and the 'Duke of Edinburgh' will serve alongside the station's D-class inshore lifeboat.





## SHRINKING BASKET

According to the Office for National Statistics, food and non-alcoholic drink inflation rose by 17.6 percent in the 17 months to December 2022, the highest increase since September 1977.

“Smaller supermarkets and artisan shops don’t often carry value brands, so for someone on a limited budget it’s a real challenge to afford the basic essentials. These were unique problems to overcome and we now have a growing number of customers.” Wells’ Coastal Community Supermarket also signposts other support services and can offer advice on bills, budgeting and benefits, to help its clients.

Holkham is helping the charity by raising awareness, supplying fresh produce and considering the best way to provide financial help to support its operations. “Holkham is a centre for agriculture and we are hoping to get more local growers and producers involved in supplying the Coastal Community Supermarket too,” adds Graeme. “On occasion, produce ends up being wasted when it could feed people. We want to change that and ensure Norfolk comes together to alleviate food insecurity.”

**See [coastalhealthwellbeing.org.uk](https://coastalhealthwellbeing.org.uk) for more information**

# Nourishing Norfolk

A new Wells-based community hub, launched at the end of 2022 as part of the Norfolk Community Foundation initiative to alleviate hunger in the county, is helping local people access healthy food.

As inflation has spiralled, food poverty has become a challenge for more people and ensuring that local families are able to eat well has led to the launch of a new community food hub in Wells. The Coastal Community Supermarket is run by Coastal Health and Wellbeing, formerly Wells Community Hospital, from their Mill Road site. It provides a daily store and community café with a

warm space, and serves nine communities across Norfolk via its ‘pop-up’ delivery van.

As at a regular supermarket, shoppers can choose fresh produce and store cupboard items – typically at 30 percent less than mainstream supermarket prices – using a points-based system, which equates to 10p per point. Accessible to all, unlike a food bank, customers are not means-

tested and can select the items they need with a sense of pride and no perceived embarrassment.

### VALUE ADDED

“The supermarket gives people dignity and choice,” says Graeme Tolley, Community Development Manager at the Norfolk Community Foundation, which launched the Nourishing Norfolk programme in 2020. Today, there are 17 affordable food hubs, clubs and social supermarkets across the county serving more than 6,000 households. The Wells team currently supports 740 people. “We knew we couldn’t have one large hub as we need to serve lots of smaller rural communities, so the mobile unit best serves the area,” says Graeme.



# The perfect local ingredient

Holkham's fallow deer have roamed the park since 1840 and long provided food for the estate's kitchens, and now its hotel and restaurant, The Victoria.

Many of us are thinking more about the food we eat. From minimising food miles to checking meat provenance, we all have the opportunity to make informed choices which reduce our impact on the planet. Holkham has a long tradition of using its resources to be as self-sufficient as possible and the use of venison from the deer park has always played an important role in the kitchens of the hall and, more recently, The Victoria.

Managing the deer population falls to Head Keeper, Mark Fitzer, and his team whose job it is to maintain the landscape and ensure the food chain remains balanced. Fallow deer were introduced to the park in the 1840s and today there are around 450 animals which rises to 600 during breeding season. To keep numbers in check, around 150 deer are humanely culled each year. Outside the deer park, the estate is also home to increasing numbers of muntjac, Chinese water and roe deer, wild species which can damage young trees. "Each species has its own season, so we shoot

year round," says Mark. "This produces a variable mix of meat which we butcher on site and supply to The Vic, Norfolk Lavender and Arthur Howell Butchers, and also sell at our food fairs and markets.

"Venison is an extremely healthy meat, which is low in fat and offers a sustainable alternative to beef. Our venison has an incredibly low carbon footprint and travels yards, not miles. We take an ethical approach which causes no stress to the animal, and every keeper or stalker who shoots is a trained, professional hunter.

"Every part of the animal is used including offal to make pâté at The Vic, and antlers for dog chews. People mistakenly consider venison an expensive meat, but they are usually judging farmed, New Zealand venison from a supermarket, which has a strong game flavour. Our venison forages on natural fruits which gives it a slightly nutty flavour."

The Vic's Head Chef, Michael Chamberlain, echoes Mark's praise for Holkham's venison and says the meat lends

itself to a wide variety of dishes on the seasonal menu. "We'll dice and braise the shoulders, breast meat and trimmings into a venison curry, mince it for meatballs and koftas for our lunch menu, and use the loin for our main menu. Even the haunches are made into jerky! If you kill an animal, it is right and proper that you use all of it, and we use the bones to make stock.

"Muntjac and Chinese water deer are non-native species and technically pests, but we use as much as we can. The animals don't do much work as they roam naturally, and age is less important as the meat remains tender. It's less than a mile from the estate's game larder to The Vic and we can trace an animal's entire journey from woodland to fork – it doesn't get much better than that! ▀





Air source heat pumps can save more than two tonnes of carbon per year, contributing up to 20 percent less CO<sub>2</sub> than gas boilers and up to 70 percent less than electric heating systems.

## Renewed energy

More homeowners are turning to air source heat pumps as a sustainable way to warm their property, but can the alternative system work for everyone?

As energy costs have soared over the past 12 months, many of us have dialled down the thermostat, pulled the plug on energy vampires, put on a jersey and keenly sought ways to trim our gas and electricity bills.

Simultaneously, as part of its strategy to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050, last year the government

announced changes to building regulations to reduce energy use and carbon emissions during construction and home improvements.

While these pressures have focused attention, it is widely recognised that our reliance on energy from fossil fuels has to change, and Holkham is already moving to ensure

its current and future housing stock is ready. The estate owns, lets and manages 280 residential properties across 12 villages. James Bracey, General Manager for Land and Property, says that, while new developments have been built with high levels of energy efficiency, including modern insulation, double glazing and air source



## WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES?

In simple terms, air source heat pumps use the differential in temperatures from the air outside to warm your home and provide hot water. An average system will cost £7,000-£13,000, depending on the work required to retrofit and install new pipework and radiators. Air source heating will cut a house's carbon emissions, although not necessarily reduce energy bills. Mark Steward-Brown, owner of MSB Heating & Plumbing which installed air source heating at the new Bricknel Close and Blacksmith's Yard developments, says there are several alternatives. "Air source draws on the air around it, so it can struggle when temperatures plummet and it then uses electricity," he says.

"Ground source systems, such as those used at Longlands offices in 2015, work on the same principle, but draw their ambient temperature from a coil two metres below the ground, where it remains at 11° – this heats a low-boil refrigerant which changes from liquid to gas and expands to create energy. While a more controlled heat, you need a large plot to bury the coil – 14kms in 12 acres at Longlands – or to borehole it underground, which can be expensive.

"A solar photovoltaic (PV) system uses roof panels to collect energy from the sun. This is brilliant when combined with air source, and you can sell any overspill back to the National Grid. A typical domestic PV system will cost, on average, £5,000-6,000."

heating, it's not always possible to retrofit these into traditional dwellings. "With older properties, unless there is significant investment in internal wall insulation, secondary glazing, an air source heat pump can prove to be a disadvantage and be costly to run," he says.

"We are driven by Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) which rate the energy efficiency and environmental impact of the property. All new lettings require a rating of E or above. Achieving a high rating is a challenge with a period property. Over the past 12 months, we've seen the cost of

refurbishments double, and in some instances you could build a new house for the cost of retrofitting a traditional property to accommodate an efficient air source heating system."

"While our ambition is to move away from fossil fuels, we need to ensure modern interventions do not come at the detriment of a building. By over-insulating old, traditionally built houses for air source systems, we could create issues of damp and mould. Work can be disruptive, so we consider each property – ultimately, we want our properties to be better houses to live in. ■

## THE HOMEOWNER'S VERDICT

Sylvia Langfield and her husband purchased Plot 3 at Bricknel Close, the Holkham Estate Company's Castle Acre development, in July 2022.

"We were looking for a property with an air source heating system as my son has had one for a couple of years and we've often discussed it, so we had no reservations. We've had no problems since we moved in, with plenty of running hot water for showers and washing up, and at one point we were actually too hot!

"It's clean and tidy, as opposed to gas or oil heating systems, and you only pay for what you need – each room has a thermostat and the system kicks in when necessary, so it's extremely efficient. Our previous property had oil heating and the costs have risen sharply. Air source heating does use electricity, which is still quite expensive, but it's difficult to compare the two. We are lucky that the air source unit sits at the back of the house where there are no windows, so we don't hear or see it, and to me it's the perfect system, I wouldn't go back to anything else."

## THE TENANT'S VERDICT

Lottie Webster moved into an old Holkham rental property in Holkham Village in July 2022, following the renovation and installation of an air source heat pump at the semi-detached cottage.

"We are a family of seven, although we are not here all the time as we travel for work and the older children are often away, so there is no typical week. However, we were all at home at Christmas and the heating worked perfectly. Key to it is the way the cottage has been insulated with filled cavity walls and double glazing, so whenever the heating is on, it stays warm. There are large, oversized radiators and, although these don't get very hot like a traditional gas or oil heating system, they are warm and provide constant heat. In fact, we have a wood burner which we've not lit yet, as it would be too warm. We've not noticed much condensation and, although there is a small extractor in the bathroom, I just tend to leave the door open for air flow. We can get three showers before the hot water runs out, but it heats up again quickly and is ready to go in an hour or so.

"As a tenant, we are benefiting from Holkham's investment, but as a property owner I would be thinking about the long-term environmental benefits of air source heating, particularly in a smaller home. At Christmas we used a lot of energy with us all being here, and our December bill was £290."

## A place to learn and thrive

With a team of around 300, Holkham provides fantastic opportunities across its businesses for apprenticeships and traineeships.

‘Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.’ It’s a well-worn epithet, but experiential learning is an incredible way to gain knowledge and a skillset in the workplace. It’s an ethos which sits at the heart of the estate’s ambition to develop talent, and a shining example of this can be seen in Holkham’s trainees and apprentices.

Alex Triplow, Holkham’s Head of Human Resources, says the estate provides a fertile learning ground, particularly given the mixed demographic of its employees. “Our team spans four generations, from baby boomers to Gen Z,” Alex explains. “Norfolk attracts many retirees and Holkham appeals as an interesting and flexible workplace. As a result, we have a fascinating and diverse workforce which includes former managing directors and police officers, people with fantastic life experience to share with younger team members. Conversely, Gen Z are digital natives who use technology intuitively, and we often see reverse mentoring of older employees, which is hugely valuable for both.

“We already have a number of trainees and apprentices across the estate, from forestry to finance, and we are always interested to bring in catering apprenticeships. We work closely with local schools and colleges and want young people in the area to know about and get involved in work experience and apprenticeship opportunities at Holkham.”



**Mai Sussex**  
Trainee Forester

“I was studying forestry and arboriculture at college and applied to Holkham, joining in July 2022. I’m from Brighton so I knew I would have to move to do this kind of work and Holkham has helped me to find accommodation. The traineeship is incredibly varied and well-rounded, and I love the fact that we are stewards of the woods. I enjoy the mix of theory and practical training and I feel supported and encouraged, I couldn’t ask for more.”



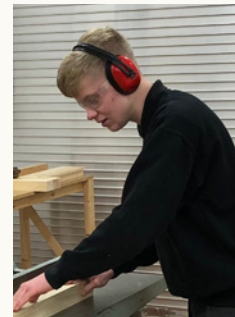
**Laura Booth**  
HR Apprentice

“I started my apprenticeship in 2021 and it’s been incredible. I feel more confident in my ability and skills and I’m on track for attaining a CIPD Level 3 Foundation Certificate in People Practice. I highly recommend an apprenticeship – I did some university study a few years ago and found it hard to translate what I learnt into practice, but here it has come to life. As I come to the end of my apprenticeship, I’m excited to see what lies ahead when I return to New Zealand.”



**Jack Spedding**  
Farm Apprentice

“I always wanted to work in farming and joined Holkham in September 2022. It’s going really well and I attend college three days a month, alongside learning on the farm. I started with simple jobs such as harvesting potatoes and most recently I’ve been working on maintenance of equipment. I hope there will be a role for me at the end of my apprenticeship as I like working on the estate. The most challenging thing was starting out and talking to people, but I feel more confident now.”



**George Argent**  
Carpenter

“I started my apprenticeship three years ago, just before the pandemic started, but I was fortunate enough to be able to continue my studies and I qualified at the end of 2022. I had big expectations and my apprenticeship has definitely lived up to these. Within the first year of my apprenticeship, I knew I would stay and I enjoy being part of the team. I’m still learning every day and I would love to support someone else on the same journey.”



# All in a day's work for... Simon Raven

Working across several teams, Simon Raven is Conservation Technician at Holkham.

"I'm based at the farm and we start the day with a quick meeting at 7.30am to catch-up on what needs to be done. I've been with Holkham for 13 years, having previously worked on Jeremy Hancock's arable farm at Overy. I enjoy the variety of my role as I work across the estate with the farming, conservation, gamekeeping and parking teams. Arable crops take time to grow, but here I am involved in drilling conservation margins, hedging, sowing bird cover or flower mixes, and I see something different each day.

"I cover around 1,200 acres across the estate. At the moment I am hedge-cutting and spend longer days in my tractor and typically cut around 35 miles each day. I try to do a farm at a time and, as part of our approach to conservation, we only cut the field side of a hedge once every three or four years. I'll do a field and miss a field, so there's always food for wildlife. Each year, we trim the road side and tracks, but since Jake (Fiennes)

has been at Holkham we've started shaping hedges more carefully to ensure habitats are protected.

"Towards the end of February, I'll finish hedge-cutting and then, in early spring, grass raking in the park starts and assessing plots which need to be sprayed and prepared for seed sowing. When the shoot season ends, Mark (Fitzer) and I will discuss what's needed to support the game birds and where we need to sow. The estate is signed up to the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS), so by June onwards we'll be drilling a variety of mixes. If the car parks need cutting I'll slot that in, but the summer months are always busy. When the season comes to an end in September, I'll begin topping margins, to spread the seed and encourage next year's growth, before hedge-cutting begins again.

"I enjoy working across the estate and juggling my time. I always say my



tractor cab is my office and we are encouraged to work autonomously to enable the estate to be its best. With its air conditioning and heater, I'm very comfortable. I am a bit of a loner and am happy in my own company, I've always been that way, but I also enjoy explaining and promoting our conservation work in the local parishes and at the Open Farm Sunday. I think it's important people understand what and why we do what we do.

"I finish work around 5.30-6pm, or in the summer months around 8pm as we are always chasing the light to get jobs done. My grandfather was Holkham's Head Gardener many years ago, and I've always been passionate and felt a deep connection to the estate. It really is the perfect job for me". •

"The wildlife is often quite tame and comes up close to the tractor – I've taken some incredible photographs over the years."

## What's happening at Holkham?

With a wide range of events taking place at Holkham in 2023, we caught up with the estate's events team to find out how it plans a year of fun!

Parkrun, arts and crafts workshops, opera, outdoor cinema, food festivals... There is something to tempt everyone to stay local and enjoy a day out at Holkham and, with such a diverse range of events on the calendar, the burgeoning list includes old favourites and fresh formats. The team behind creating these is Sophie Coles, Events Operations Manager, and Shirley Browell, Event Manager, who say that the estate offers infinite inspiration for new ideas.

"One of the challenges is trying to fit everything in!" says Shirley. "We get together at the beginning of the year and look at upcoming national events and how the estate can put its spin on them. We also consider enquiries from outdoor cinema and theatre companies. Plus our weddings team manages around 35 weddings at Holkham each year, so these need to be factored in too. We'll brainstorm ideas and

then whittle these down to create a calendar which offers plenty of value-added visitor experiences."

"It's important that our events don't just focus on key times of the year, such as Easter and Christmas," says Sophie, "and that we create plenty of reasons for people to return to the estate through the seasons. We listen to feedback and take inspiration from what visitors tell us. During lockdown, many people enjoyed spending time outside enjoying nature, and so we have continued to develop activities in the Walled Garden and workshops which are inspired by nature."

"Many people love visiting country houses," echoes Shirley, "and so we've created attic tours and a walking tour of Holkham Village, which have been hugely popular. Our guides have incredible knowledge and provide an insight into aspects of the estate which you wouldn't otherwise know."



### PICK YOUR PACE

"Events range from small workshops with 12-15 people, to large-scale productions such as our Feast in the Park, North Norfolk Food and Drink Festival and the Christmas Market, which can each attract up to 10,000 visitors," says Sophie.

"We work closely as a team to manage logistics and ensure everyone who comes has a great time. It's important that we evolve and constantly improve our events. For example, we want as many people as possible to have the opportunity to attend the Festival of Sport, which

brings together professional sportspeople and coaches to train children in a variety of activities. So this year, we've introduced monthly payment plans to support this."

"And, if you're looking for something relaxing, our outdoor cinema season offers a wonderful shared experience," says Shirley. "We've increased capacity with afternoon and evening showings, so pack a picnic and enjoy a film with friends in the Walled Garden." ■

**For a full list of events, visit [holkham.co.uk/whats-on](https://holkham.co.uk/whats-on)**





# A man for the people

A small piece of parchment in the South Drawing Room reveals a lesser-known historical moment in Holkham's history, writes Archivist Lucy Purvis.

Wandering around the Hall, visitors can see wonderful art, statuary and furniture, and often a small, but vitally important piece of parchment can be dismissed. Included in the magnificent portrait of Sir Edward Coke in the South Drawing Room is a small document, pictured above, which, on closer examination, begins, 'Elizabeth'. The document holds huge historical significance for the Coke family. Known as a letters patent, it was

issued by Elizabeth I and appoints Edward to the role of Attorney General. It is written in Latin and uses abbreviations, which can at first glance look like gobbledygook, but fortunately all letters patents follow the same general format beginning by announcing the monarch and a then general greeting. It then sets out that she has appointed Edward Coke to occupy the office of Attorney General, as long as he behaves well in it. The document also describes

what he may do in office and concludes with the witness and date, 10 April in the 36th year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1594).

Being Attorney General in Elizabethan England gave Edward several key roles in parliament, as well as a vast salary. He attended the House of Lords and gave advice to members on points of law, and conveyed messages from the Upper to Lower House. Most importantly, in state trials he had to lead the prosecution for the Crown. As the greatest lawyer in England, he was a man who would win a case with a highly detailed argument. However, it was in the trials of Sir Walter Raleigh, Lord Essex and Guy Fawkes that he cemented his notorious reputation for brutal interrogation of prisoners and witnesses.

In 1601, he entertained Queen Elizabeth at his country house in Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire. Edward was appointed Chief Justice of the Common Pleas in 1606 and would later become the Chief Justice of the King's Bench. This change from his plain black lawyer's gown to the scarlet judge's robe, as seen in the famous portrait, saw a change in Edward – no longer was he sworn to serve the monarch, but the 'King and his people'. Coke fought for a prisoner's right to a public trial and writ of habeas corpus, a man's right not to be jailed without cause, and his right against self-incrimination of a court of law. By including the small parchment in the full-length portrait of himself in later life shows the significance Edward felt towards this great appointment. ■



# Local residents' 2023 PREVIEW

Join us for a preview of Holkham's 2023 season on Saturday 25th March, ahead of the start of our main visitor season.

Simply bring this voucher for free entry of two adults and up to three children to the hall from 12-4pm (other attractions open 10am-5pm).

*Enter via the North Gates (off the A149 at The Victoria).*

## Win a Holkham car pass

There are many ways to enjoy a day at Holkham, and we are offering one reader the chance to win a car pass for Holkham and Wells Beaches, Wells Town, Holkham Village and Holkham Park with entry to attractions too, which can be used until 31st December 2023. To enter, visit [holkham.co.uk/gazette-comp](http://holkham.co.uk/gazette-comp) and submit your details by 9am on Thursday 13th April.

## Spring and Summer events

**2nd April, 21st May & 8th October**

The Secret Garden: private gardens, terraces and arboretum tours

**4th April**

Easter Nesting Workshop

**7th-17th April**

Toys, trails and cotton tails

**8th & 9th April**

Easter Market

**Various Tuesdays from April to October**

Temples, Trees, Turnips and a Tipple –

**7th, 8th & 9th July**

Tractor Trailer Tour

Adventure Cinema –

Elvis, Harry Potter, Dirty Dancing,

Maverick, Matilda the Musical

Outlaw Half Triathlon

**8th & 9th July**

The Untamed Gravel Event

**16th July**

Outdoor Theatre –

**18th July**

Sense and Sensibility

**26th July**

Outdoor Theatre –

**2nd August**

Alice Through the Looking Glass

**6th & 20th August**

Outdoor Theatre – Robin Hood

**8th August**

Children's Nature Art Workshop

**11th-14th August**

Outdoor Theatre – Bad Dad

**16th August**

Festival of Sport

**22nd, 23rd & 24th August**

Outdoor Theatre – A Midsummer

**23rd August**

Night's Dream, The Musical

**30th August**

Bat Walks

**2nd & 3rd September**

Outdoor Theatre – Romeo and Juliet

Outdoor Theatre – The Wizard of Oz

North Norfolk Food and Drink Festival

### Competition terms and conditions:

1. The winner will be contacted by email on the week commencing Monday 17th April 2023.
2. If there is no response from the winner after three days, the prize will be reallocated.
3. Prize is a combined car pass which allows unlimited parking at Lady Anne's Drive, Beach Road Car Park, Freeman Street Car Park, Holkham Village and Holkham Park during opening hours. Pass includes unlimited entry into Holkham Hall, Walled Garden and Holkham Stories during opening times for two adults and up to three children.
4. Pass is valid until 31st December 2023.
5. Winner will be required to provide a postal address to send a pass to.
6. A car pass does not guarantee or reserve spaces in any car parks.
7. Prize has no monetary value and is non-transferable.

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