

HOLT & DISTRICT FARMERS' CLUB

FOUNDED 1948

President: Bill Poortvliet

Chairman: Pat Cubitt

Vice Chairman: Andrew Ross

www.holtfarmers.club

CLUB MATTERS

August 2020

We might see a changing of the guard this year. In terms of quality and quantity it's been bit of a horror harvest - although I hope you've all finished – and the prospects for sugar beet don't seem any better. Andrew Dewing reported that the farms east of the A140 may have fared slightly better than those on our west side so that **William Mack's** reign may be in danger. Thanks are due to **President Bill** for chasing up entrants and anyone who has still not entered should ring **Chris Borrett** on 01603 722372 as soon as possible. As I drove home in the pouring rain along the A148 on Friday night there was a strawstack fire at Highborough Farm on the High Kelling side of Bodham which somehow seemed symptomatic of our current troubles. The EDP said it was hay on fire at Gypsies' Lane in Lower Bodham – a bit of fact checking required – and presumably it was arson reflecting the American reaction when their country is going to hell in a handcart.

Gypsies' Lane is in fact the road to the east running north past Richard Amies's free range campsite at Weybourne Brecks where he finally got a decades late planning consent. *En route* is the Crayfish & Crabbs garage in a building with a planning history of its own. In the 1980s Gordon Wright grew lettuces for Sainsburys and paid top dollar to rent land locally as some is Grade II in this vicinity. Even though this is part of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty NNDC granted permission for a refrigerated store but the public then switched to a different type of lettuce which bankrupted Gordon. These two cases highlight the unpredictability of local and national planning regimes – the Coalition Government's relaxation of the rules on barn conversions is a more recent example. The current government is now proposing a further revolution in rural planning at a time when we have several current cases that are controversial.

Also in Bodham in the 1980s John Shrive started his attempt to get permission to convert a tumbledown bullock shed and spent the rest of his life trying with three failed attempts two of which he took to appeal. His son has now taken up the cudgels by not only applying again for a conversion but also for a bunker dwelling. In doing so he has recruited our friend Dr Carl Sayer whose father Derek has land at Street Farm in the parish. Since he told us about cruciate carp and the remarkable ability of pondlife to re-establish after as long as 150 years Carl has established his Ghost Ponds Project. In the early days he got great help from **Richard Waddingham** at his Briston Manor Farm where Richard has won conservation awards for his no nonsense approach. Incidentally **Peter Perry-Warnes** now farms the land and tells me that Richard is no longer up to managing the place but is comfortably settled. **Martin Jensen** is another who has been lending his support to the project along with **Chairman Pat** from his Bodham Manor base. Benjamin Shrive is also proposing re-wilding of the surrounding area and invokes Paragraph 79 as the exemption under which dwellings of exceptional and innovative design are occasionally allowed in rural locations where new builds are normally refused.

Paragraph 79 was the route tried at Letheringsett by Raven Cozens-Hardy but without success. However what a famous Norfolk family with a double barrelled name can't do a Lord of the realm can. Tom Coke was still a Viscount when he spoke to us but he has achieved success as the new Lord Leicester at Holkham. Some of you will have seen recent reports in the press of the mansion that has been approved – on the casting vote of the Chairman I might add - between South Creake and the ruined church at Egmere. There was already a farmstead and gardens here and the approved design is described as 'unashamedly traditional', another commentator called it 'grandiose'. To me it looks suspiciously French but this might not be a valid objection (there weren't any formal ones apparently) since Holkham Hall is Palladian and Mr Palladio was, I believe, Italian.

At a humbler level the village of Aldborough is up in arms at the proposal to resurrect and expand a pig unit upwind in **Hammond** country. Experts and lawyers are making a concerted case for refusal whereas the consultant behind the application is from the East Riding and rarely loses. Another fiercely contested case is at Field Dalling where an attempt is being made to renovate a row of three vernacular cottages that were abandoned 80 years ago and are totally derelict. The government seems torn between trying to reduce red tape and speed up the planning process while also giving greater power to local communities in furthering the Coalition Government's Localism policies. Corpusty & Saxthorpe Parish Council has held a referendum so that it can determine applications like these and it will be interesting to see whether decisions are fairer than those made by NNDC.

Some sad news is the death of Greg Anderson in a traffic accident on the A149 at Stalham; he was a member of that farmers' club for many years and his sister is Peggy Deane. The family farmed at Abbey Farm, Haveringland which their father Ian established after a struggle once he had come down from Cambridge. Ian had a keen interest in development projects and involved **Michael Pollitt** with his charity Norfolk Overseas Aid; he retired to Brinton and then Holt. Greg was his younger son and a tractor run is planned at Hirsty's Family Fun Park, Hemsby, NR29 4NL on Sunday, 13th September. There will be refreshments so numbers are limited with proceeds going to YANA and you are asked to register at glatractorrun@gmail.com by 5th September.

Finally news reaches me from Jenny Slapp, Ted's widow, that her family is finally relinquishing Pear Tree Farm at Wickmere. Ted's grandfather rented this on the Barningham Estate in 1930 before Oswald, a past Chairman of our club, took over in 1942. His brothers were also involved until Ted, after a spell as a butcher in Taverham, took over in his own right in 1969. I attach Jenny's touching memories of Ted who was a club stalwart and is much missed.

Tim

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