

HOLT & DISTRICT FARMERS' CLUB

FOUNDED 1948

President: Peter Perry-Warnes

Chairman: Martin Jensen

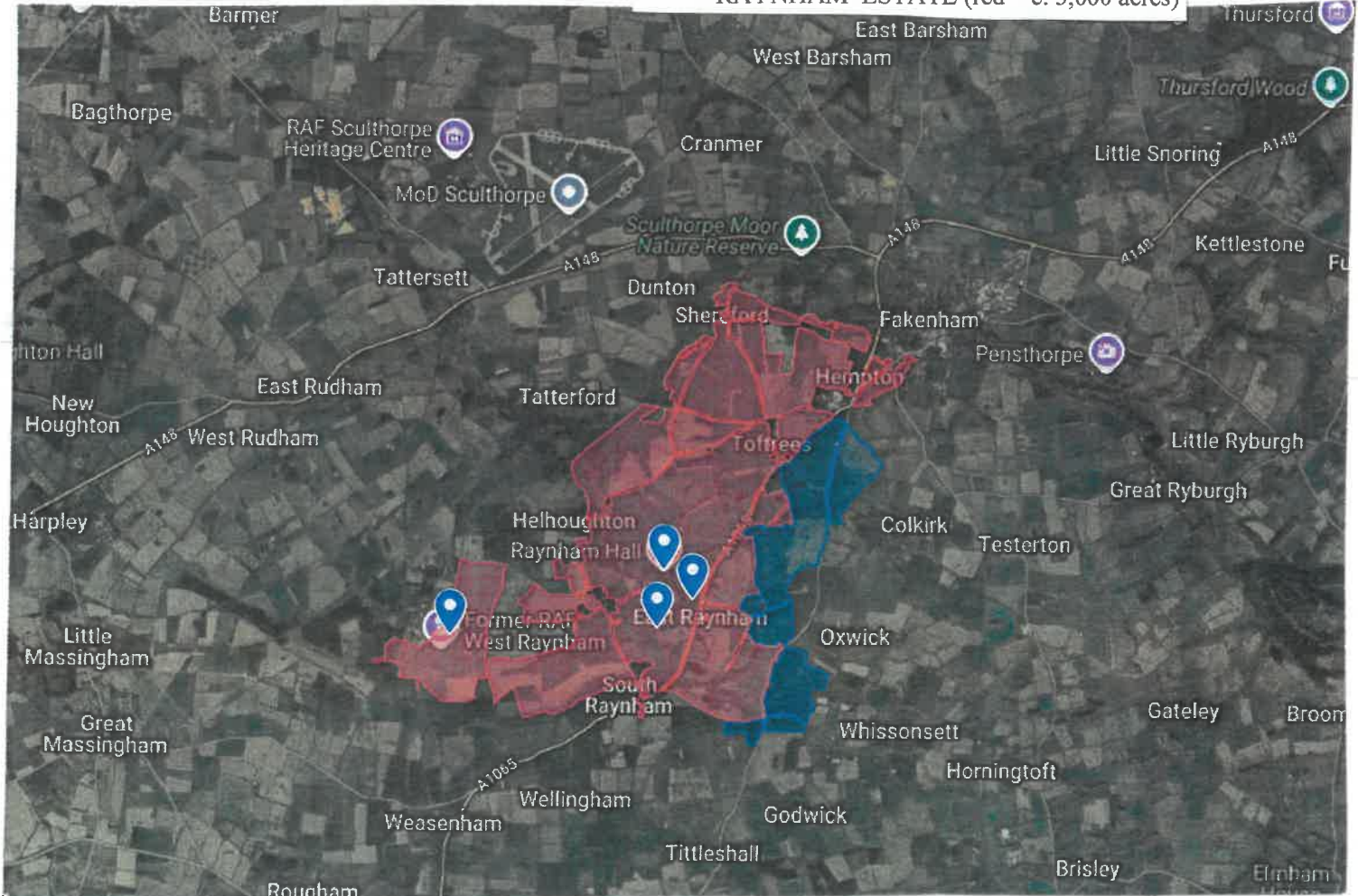
Vice-Chairman: Andrew Ross

www.holtfarmers.club

CLUB MATTERS June 2026

Peter Perry-Warnes has fond connections with the Northern Pennines and this helped him provide us with a most successful three days in The Dales accompanied by his son **Rick** and son-in-law **Sam Clabon**. We started at Croft where the Scottish drovers used to cross the Tees south of Darlington and where we saw the Chaytor family's Christmas trees and Race Circuit. The Metcalfe family have a 1200 cow dairy and multiple other businesses outside Leyburn and from there we had a glorious coach ride up Wensleydale with Peter then taking us to his 'favourite' spot The Buttertubs and back down Swaledale. We were ready to put up with a bit of rain so long as it was raining back in Norfolk and the party seemed in good humour when we visited Smith & Munson's cut flowers operation at Gedney between Holbeach and Long Sutton on our journey home. We are now trying to replicate this success with our evening event at **Raynham** for which there are still a few places available.

RAYNHAM ESTATE (red – c. 5,000 acres)



William Youngs has organised the trailers and is busy finalising the arrangements for *a week on Monday being 22nd June* with the schedule:

- 16:45 Arrive at The Copse, Swaffham Road, Raynham, Fakenham, NR21 7EA
- 17:00 Depart for Tour of the Estate – two bespoke trailers are being laid on
- 19:00 Return to The Copse for Canapes on the Lawn overlooking Raynham Park
- 19:45 (circa.) Sit down for Dinner which comprises: *BBQ Steak followed by Strawberries & Cream*
(could anyone with special dietary or access requirements please let me know in advance ?)

The cost is **£75 per head** inclusive of drinks and please contact me promptly if you have not yet booked. Along with those who have not already done so please pay into *Holt & District Farmers' Club's* Barclays A/c No. 10554197 Sort Code 20-03-26 with **R** followed by your initials as reference.

My other reminder is for the *Clay Pigeon Shooting Match between Holt and Stalham Farmers' Clubs* on *Friday, 3rd July*. The arrival time is 16:30 for a 17:00 start at Bayfield Estate, near Holt, NR25 7JN. The what3 words are *flirts/heartened/vine*. 40 to 50 clays over 4 or 5 stands are anticipated but dependent on numbers. The cost is £35 per gun and for another £15 The King's Head at Letheringsett is providing a beef or chicken Burger & Chips meal. **Shane Barnes** needs to confirm numbers for both so please contact him at barnes.business@outlook.com or on 07733 780913 with prior payment to be made into *Holt & District Farmers' Club A/c No. 10554197* Sort Code 20-03-26 using B followed by your initials as reference. There should be silverware to be won and prizes for the Combined Top X scores from each club. Anyone who wants to shoot but not eat or *vice versa* will be equally welcome.

BAYFIELD ESTATE



Once more I am drawn back to the Bluestone backwater between Cawston and Oulton Street where the **Harrold family's** latest planning controversy is an echo of past disputes. Not only was there the Cossey poaching gang v. The Hon. George Edwardes (who was killed) and the Heydon gamekeepers two hundred years ago but there was another 'little local difficulty' long before then. Elizabeth I had inherited some of her Boleyn family rights from her mother Anne of Blickling including the local brewery. There were also royal inheritances from Harold (of Hastings) and Edward I who is said to have hunted here in the Cawston deer park and may even have witnessed bear-baiting and cockfights. While Elizabeth's reign was drawing to a close towards the end of the sixteenth century the open fields here were being enclosed by the lord of the manor for sheep and to the east on Cawston Great Heath, for rabbits. There was Richard of Rougham (Suffolk) who laid claim to the deer park while in 1587 Roger Townshend (presumably an ancestor of the Raynham family) leased to Thomas Hirne 160 acres at Jerbrigge (Jervys) Wood which is roughly where **Chris and Nick Harrold's** Docking Farm now lies. The fields either side of the farmstead were called Coney Hill Breck and Horse Pit Breck which I see as evidence of the large warrenry that was established by this time. Rabbit meat and fur were lucrative commodities and, by aggressively enclosing large sections of the manor that were termed 'waste', landowners started to deprive the locals of their feudal rights. Naturally the rabbits proliferated and ruined what little grazing was left after the parishioners had been excluded from much of the heath where traditionally they would have been able to graze their animals, gather timber and wood for fuel as well as cut turf.



MEDIEVAL RABBIT FARMING

This sharp practice was a forerunner of the infamous Victorian case at Holt Lowes that I've related to you before. Here the trustees (all local landed gentry and establishment figures) let exclusive shooting rights to a single tenant who proceeded to exclude the Holt townsfolk from their rights to gather kindling and take 'a rabbit for the pot'. Lord Cozens was the only one who saw the unfairness, not to say illegality involved, but he was outnumbered. The Cawston folk of Tudor times appear to have been of sterner stock as they waged a guerilla campaign by staging nighttime raids on Thomas Hirne and his warreners with nets and ferrets to destroy the offending rabbits. These poor, and no doubt hungry, people of Cawston also launched lawsuits and local petitions arguing that these commercial warrens were destroying their 'cheapest living and maintenances' while driving them into deeper poverty. Sadly history has not been on their side.

My expectation that the land to the south between Warren Wood and the Woodrow roundabout would eventually be glazed over has moved closer to being realized. Exagen, the company whose application on these 230 acres of **Youngs** land was narrowly refused before Christmas, have now lodged their appeal. They have just won their appeal against the refusal on a similar application between Nottingham and Leicester so they will be feeling quite confident. Meanwhile the **Harrolds** have prompted quite a flutter in the form of well over one thousand objections to their application for 4 broiler houses between Marriott's Way and the old Bluestone Station. This will be next to their reservoir and Chris tells me that they have had to drill down a considerable depth to extract water. He is not sure how the Docking name arose but the village of Docking near **Melton Harrold's** farm in north-west Norfolk has alternative explanations. It either derives from Docca, an Anglo-Saxon Christian from pre-1066 days or from 'docce' meaning dock plant – to grasp the nettle I prefer the latter. The nickname 'dry' has often pre-fixed Docking as the village did not have its own water supply until a 200 foot deep well was sunk in 1736 and then mains didn't arrive until 1936. Dry can also be used to denote a lack of alcoholic refreshment such as on the B1355 between Fakenham and Wells. This does not explain why Chris's farm sometimes appears on maps as Dry Docking – perhaps we should put this quandary into dry dock pending further research. Also unclear is whether Docking Farm was the site of the lost (Deserted Medieval) village of Alvington as has been claimed. Eastgate, the hamlet between Cawston and Sygate on the opposite (west) side of the B1149 might have a stronger claim but this area has seen so much history from pre-Roman times, through royal excess to disease (Black Death and cholera) and deprivation that it is often difficult to see the wood for the trees. **NICK, GEORGE, BEN, TOM & WILLIAM**



Before we leave here I might mention that there may be another appeal pending. There have been good reviews of the latest **Youngs family** diversification project, namely **George and Tom's Scrum and Bun** eatery on the western outskirts of Aylsham. Tom joined us on our outing to Yorkshire with a convenient start for him from the potato pad next to the aforementioned Warren Wood solar proposal. Regrettably a local poultry producer caused, if not committed, an offence here which led to Tom having to make a citizen's arrest 225 miles away and impose a £200 fine on this foul person. Three or so miles to the north up the B1149 Heydon Straight is the large, supposedly free range, poultry operation which used Permitted Development rights to get established before withdrawing the formal application to include a manager's dwelling. That was after four years whereas, two miles further on at Shrubbs' Fam between Saxthorpe and Edgefield it took the **Seaman family** three years to gain approval for 6 poultry houses. Extraordinarily, after there had been only one private objection, the consent was quashed by the High Court five months later. The activist Communities against Factory Farming were behind this and they appear to be the principal component of the four figure objections to the **Harrolds'** current application. Bravely the **Seamans** have pared back their application and re-applied but I suspect, with the example last year of West Norfolk's refusing Cranswick's mega-farm application at Methwold, both are now facing an uphill task.



WILHELMINA

COENRAD

Finally **Coen van Beuningen**, as imperishable as an organic farming advocate as he is a hockey player in his 80s, is holding another of his **Organic Open Days**. This is at his **Ash Farm, Stone Lane, Bintree, NR20 5NA** just off the A1067 at **2.30 on Sunday, 28th June**. He asks that you book your place by email at info@ashfarmorganics.co.uk or on 07879 452907 and that you bring suitable gear for a trailer ride (clogs optional).

Tim

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