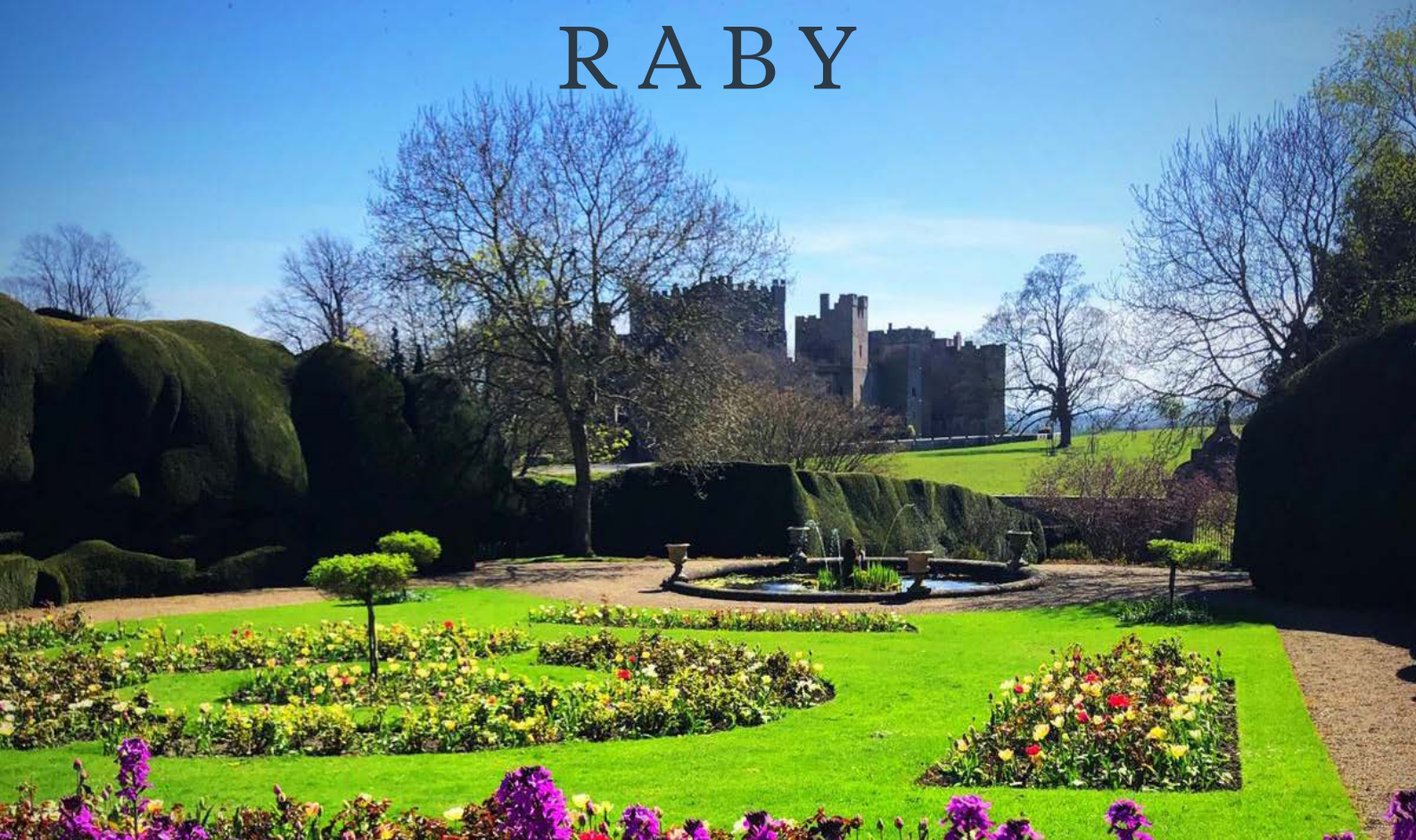


# R A B Y



## Welcome

It is with some trepidation that I write the foreword to this Spring 2020 edition of the Raby Newsletter given that it is the impact of Covid-19 that must now be foremost in all our minds.

There can be no one untouched by the spread of this virus and the measures to contain it. My thoughts are with you if you are experiencing difficulties at this time and my deepest sympathies go out to those who have suffered the loss of a loved one.

Whilst Raby Castle, Park and Gardens along with High Force have been closed, some Estate operations continue with the necessary precautions around social distancing, hygiene and other safety measures in place. Other areas of our operation such as the Estate Office operate virtually through home working and effective communication is being maintained through telephone, email and video conferencing.

Communities up and down the dale, as well as in Shropshire, are pulling together and in our own small way we are also giving thought to how we can help. The café and High Force food stocks have been sent to local food banks and the NHS. Contact has been made with local parish councils to offer support and where appropriate, we're planning to create permissive paths to aid social distancing and provide local opportunities for exercise.

This newsletter seeks not only to provide an update on news at Raby but also to look ahead to a more positive time when our daily lives will start to get back to normal. Please accept my sincere good wishes during this challenging period.

Lord Barnard





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## Estate News

# Development Update

As many of you are already aware, Raby has a long term objective to significantly expand the visitor offer at Raby Castle, Park and Gardens, bringing jobs and economic benefits across the County. We are proud to work with superb local suppliers and hope that this network will grow as we evolve. More visitors also mean that we can share Raby's history with a wider range of people and support ongoing maintenance and restoration of our historic buildings.

The leisure and tourism development will be facilitated by residential development and we have taken care to make sure this will provide a positive legacy for the residents of Staindrop and Gainford, where new housing is planned. The project will also include the restoration of Gainford Hall, a building which we know is close to the hearts of Gainford residents.

Raby has enlisted the assistance of a design team with huge experience to ensure the project is delivered in the most professional and sympathetic way. We are delighted to work with Ben Pentreath and Patrick James of the Landscape Agency on the housing schemes and with Francis Maude of Donald Insall Associates on the Raby Castle buildings. Luciano Giubbilei has been appointed to design the Walled Garden scheme and Alistair W Baldwin Associates are providing the wider landscape design. We hope to include more news from our design team in future editions but for now you might be interested to follow them online and see their fantastic portfolios of work.

Our design team has found it invaluable to share their proposals with residents and discuss them in person, listening to concerns and sharing the thought process behind the designs. The architectural approach respects local style and vernacular and, once submitted, the planning application will be available to view online. We will provide a link from our webpage.

The buildings are characterised by simple detailing taking inspiration from existing buildings within the village. The houses and apartments will be built from local sandstone or render, picking up the local colour palette. Roofs will be either clay pantiles or slate with careful consideration given where each material is used. Doors and windows will be authentically detailed and well proportioned.

In terms of Raby Castle itself, the proposals are far-reaching and will be phased to allow for staged investment. Raby seeks to retain its current visitors whilst also attracting new markets by interpreting its fascinating history in fun and new ways.



Gainford proposed view

The historic uses of the various components of the site will inspire their re-use including the housing and care of carriages; the growing of flowers and vegetables and bringing them to the table; gardens laid out to provide both quiet contemplation and spaces to host concerts. Raby has a long-established history of public opening and we hope that these spaces will continue this tradition.



Duchess's Walk and Coach House – image courtesy of Alistair Baldwin Associates

At the centre of the site, a new circular visitor centre will provide information about Raby and orientate visitors. The main walled gardens will be re-landscaped, retaining key historic attributes such as the splendid yew hedges and water features. The Grade II\* Coach House, already open to the public, will be re-purposed to create spaces for interpreting the history of Raby, classroom space and retail displays for Estate and local produce. The Riding School will form a magnificent venue for events and exhibitions of all kinds and the rarely seen Dutch Barn behind, provides a perfect setting for a covered seasonal market.

In addition to the development within the Ha-Ha, the plans will include a high-quality, bespoke children's play area located within the old tree nursery to the north of the proposed car park.

Not surprisingly, the outbreak of Coronavirus has slowed progress over the last few weeks but once life at Raby gets back to normal, plans will be reassessed and revised timescales for the developments will be communicated.

Please keep up to date on progress through our website [www.raby.co.uk/about-us/development/](http://www.raby.co.uk/about-us/development/)

Duncan Peake, CEO

## Raby Longhorns

As the Raby Longhorn herd continues to thrive and grow, we have started to see the first of our own produce featuring on our menus and on the shelves of the Stables Shop.

Both the High Force Hotel and the Stables Café have introduced Raby Longhorn beef to their menus with great reactions from customers. High Force's Sunday lunches were already hugely popular and have been booking up in record time since Longhorn beef hit the menu.

Andrew Lindsey, General Manager at High Force said: "Customers love to know they are eating local produce and it doesn't come much more local than within the Raby Estate itself, with just three food miles between farm and fork."

Longhorn beef has been selling well in the Stables Shop too this year, where it is sold alongside a range of rubs and sauces. Topside joints are particularly popular for Sunday roast lunches and the Raby team have enjoyed sharing their recommendations for their favourite beef and venison recipes with customers.

Clare Robson, Leisure and Tourism Operations Manager, said: "We have always had lots of interest in Raby venison and game during the season but our food sales really took off when we introduced the beef, especially as we created some signage to let people know all about the herd and the various cuts we sell."

"Once we closed the café due to Coronavirus, we quickly adapted to sell groceries for a short period where supermarkets were struggling with demand. It gave many people a chance to try Raby produce for the first time and we really hope we can expand this area further, once we reopen. I quite enjoyed being a grocer for a short time!"

Spring is a fantastic time of year for everyone involved with the Longhorns as this is when the majority of the herd calve. Since the New Year we have welcomed 19 new arrivals, all of which are now out with their mothers, grazing around the Castle. Last year's calves remain at Raby Home Farm and it is the intention to try and ensure there is a regular supply of Longhorn Beef for the Hotel and Café throughout the year.

Our current Bull, Raby Kaiserchief is now an old man. He will be 10 this year and this has prompted us to acquire some new blood for the herd. Southfield Puma will be joining us shortly from Raby tenant Harry Hodgson's herd at Piercebridge. He will be arriving later in April so look out for more news on the website and social media in due course.

Claire Jones, Head of Leisure and Tourism

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## Spotlight

# High Force Hotel Refurbishment

Before its temporary closure in March due to the Coronavirus outbreak, refurbishment work had begun at the High Force hotel to update 5 more bedrooms to the same high standard we introduced last year, bringing the total number of letting rooms to 11.

The rooms are all individually designed, and Lady Barnard has chosen some beautiful fabrics and paint colours to accent the traditional furnishings. Mod cons are not in short supply either, with newly installed bathrooms and luxury touches such as coffee machines in each room.

Also undergoing a facelift is the function room, now known as the Garden Room in recognition of its sunny outlook onto the gardens and courtyard. The room is being stripped back and bespoke panelling and window shutters added, to revive the Victorian splendour of this beautiful room.

The Garden Room is the perfect venue for celebrations and events and even has a licence to host wedding ceremonies. We cannot wait to reopen and host our very first Waterfall Wedding later this year.

None of this work would be possible without our fantastic team of skilled tradespeople and our trusted local contractors. It really has been a local team effort and we would like to thank the following for their contribution:

Teesdale Renewables for plumbing works, A Colling electrician, J Gray and Anthony Nixon for joinery work, decorators S Nicholson and sons, C S Scaffold, H&M Construction Ltd, Specialist Chimney Services and Middleton Forge.

Claire Jones, Head of Leisure and Tourism



Garden Room refurb in progress





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## Spotlight

# Harwood Moor Shoot

Last year Raby took the decision to lease the sporting rights over the Harwood beat in Upper Teesdale. The sporting lease is for a 12 year term commencing on 1st November 2019 and extends over all estate land in the upper dale west of High Force Quarry and Ettersgill.

The new sporting tenant is Mr Richard Kelvin Hughes of Harwood Rural Services Ltd. Mr Kelvin Hughes has extensive grouse moor management experience having previously operated the grouse shooting on the Knarsdale Estate in Northumberland. The newly established shoot will be known as Harwood Moor.

As incoming sporting tenant, Mr Kelvin Hughes will be preparing a programme of investment in the upper dale including the restoration of Thompson House and New House at Forest in Teesdale. Each property will be occupied by his game keeping staff. Work has already started on New House with an anticipated completion in late spring. Plans are currently being drawn up for the restoration of Thompson House which will act as the base for and work will start here later in the year.

As an Estate we look forward to working with Mr Kelvin Hughes in developing his grouse shooting operation at Harwood.

His approach is a traditional one that respects farming and nature conservation interests as well as bringing welcome inward investment.

Head Keeper for the Harwood Moor is Rob Mitchell who is currently living at West Moor Riggs before moving across to Thompson House once restoration works are completed. Jane Gibson has also been appointed as Shoot Administrator. Their contact details and those of the rest of the Harwood Moor team are given below.

We know Mr Kelvin Hughes is keen to get to know and work with the Upper Teesdale community and if they haven't done so already the Harwood Moor team will no doubt be making themselves known to those of you living in Upper Teesdale shortly.

Duncan Peake, CEO

## Contact Details:

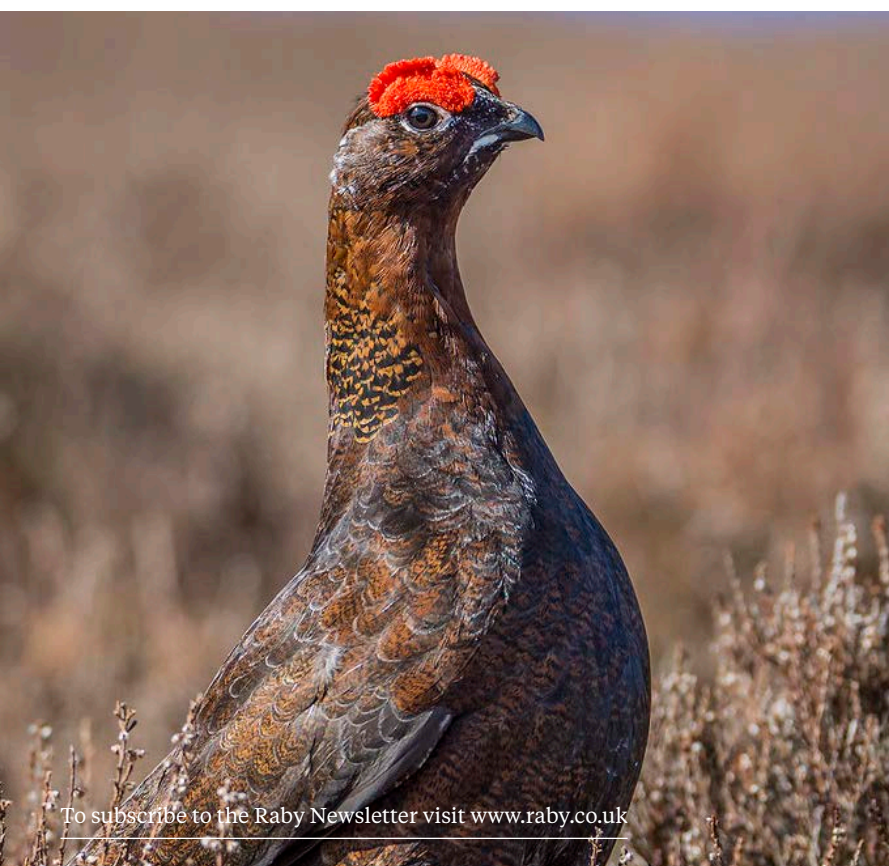
Shoot Administrator – Jane Gibson  
Tel: 07515 777688 E: [jane@harwoodmoor.com](mailto:jane@harwoodmoor.com)

Head Keeper – Rob Mitchell  
Beat – Widdybank  
Tel: 07796 954016 E: [robert@harwoodmoor.com](mailto:robert@harwoodmoor.com)

Beat Keeper – Brandon Wearmouth  
Beat – Dubby and Willyhole  
Home – Scar End, Ettersgill (then New House)

Beat Keeper – Christopher Redford  
Beat – The Bands and Valence Lodge  
Home – Brumwell Street, Ettersgill

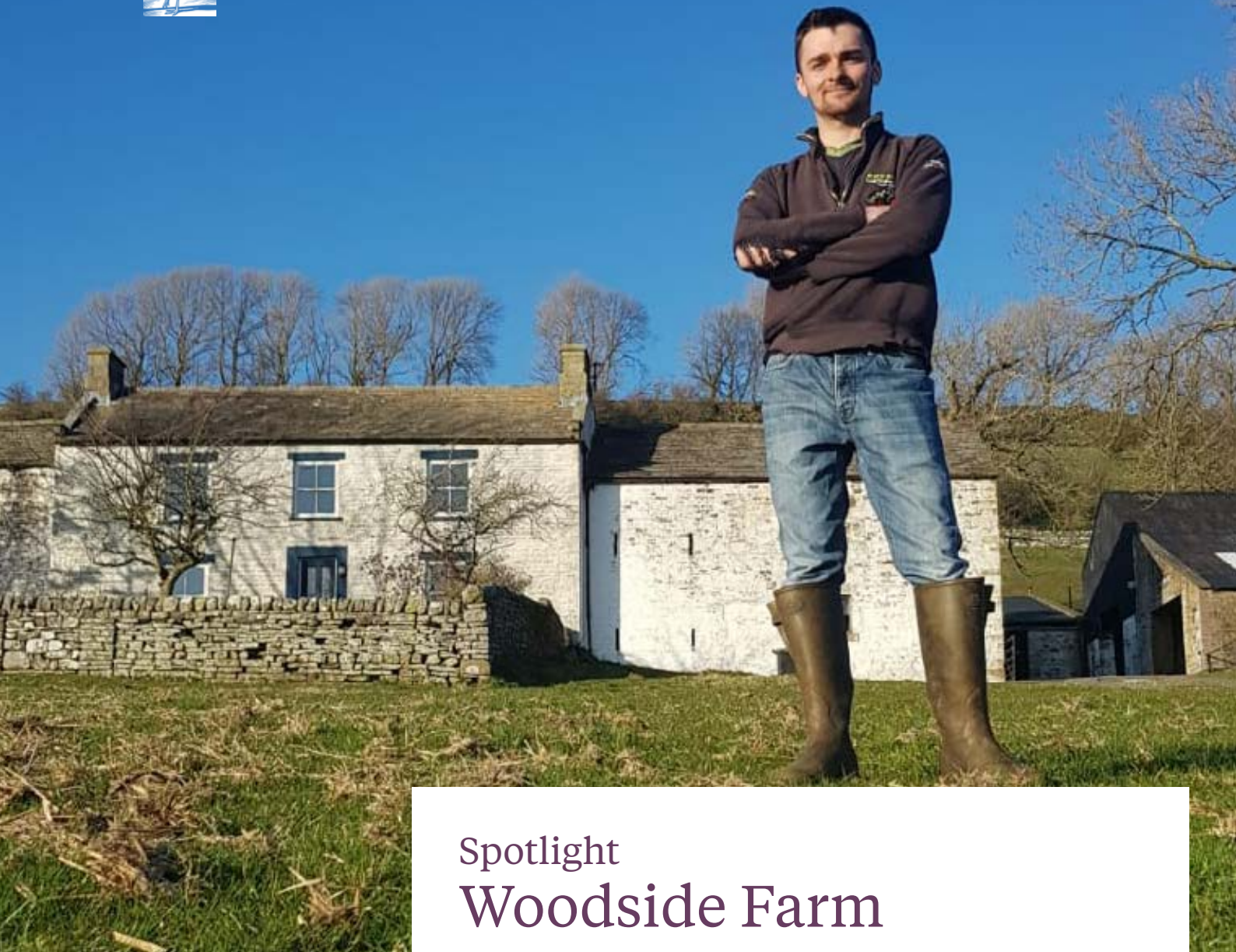
Beat Keeper - Conner Peart  
Beat – Ashgill Head and Grasshill Common  
Home – Force Foot, Harwood







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## Spotlight Woodside Farm

Woodside Farm is an upland livestock farm on 283 acres of south facing land between Newbiggin and Middleton in Teesdale. It was offered for reletting over the winter following the retirement of the former tenant.

The Estate received a significant level of interest and, after careful consideration, a tenancy was offered to Edwin Wood. He will be moving in this month, having previously lived nearby at Low Houses where he helped out on the family farm. Edwin also runs his own successful plant hire business, which will now operate from Woodside Farm.

The tenancy will offer Edwin the chance to establish himself as a farmer in his own right and gives him plenty of space for his existing herd of 20 cattle. He also plans to stock around 150 white faced sheep.

We would like to welcome Edwin to Woodside and wish him well for the future.

Joe Robinson, Land Agent, County Durham

## Spotlight Countryside Stewardship



Conservation and sustainable land management is a key part of Raby's vision for the Estate and we are delighted to have entered into a second Countryside Stewardship scheme to complement the main scheme that started in 2019.

This new scheme began on January 1st and focuses on an area known as Black Bottoms, about a mile east of Staindrop.

The aim of the scheme is to create a mosaic of wet grassland, wetland and arable edge habitats, which will provide vital breeding and nesting sites for Biodiversity Action Plan priority bird species. These priority species include Lapwing and Skylark, which already nest in these areas in large numbers, along with more occasional visitors such as Snipe and Curlew. The scheme will also support diverse populations of flora and invertebrates.

To help achieve the desired habitat, the Estate will be using a number of the existing herd of Longhorns to create a sward more appropriate for invertebrates, break it up to allow seeds to establish and birds to feed, whilst grazing the vegetation that more modern breeds of cattle would ignore.

A number of new scrapes will provide bare ground in dry times and, by holding water in wetter periods, will also create wet habitats for the priority bird species. New fences will be put in to protect these areas along with livestock handling facilities for the Longhorns.

Whether all this can be achieved in the current climate is uncertain but in the longer term, this scheme can only be of significant benefit to the biodiversity of the lowland Estate.

Robert Sullivan, Raby Farms (Durham)

### Superfast Broadband

The Alncom installation continues to make progress in Upper Teesdale and many residents are now able to connect to Superfast Broadband as a result. The infrastructure needed to connect homes is being funded by the Rural Broadband Scheme which Alncom can help administer. The High Force Hotel has been connected since December and has found it a huge benefit.

To find out more about the scheme and how to access Superfast Broadband please contact Alncom direct on 01665 604 816 or at [info@alncom.co.uk](mailto:info@alncom.co.uk) quoting "The Raby Alncom Project".

Katrina Appleyard, Operations Manager



## Spotlight

# Tenant Farmer: Kel Jones

Avenue Farm, Uppington, Raby Shropshire Estate



The Jones family have been working the land at Avenue Farm on the Raby Shropshire Estate for more than a century, since Kel's great great grandfather moved there in 1917. We caught up with Kel to find out what life has been like on the farm in a year that has seen autumn and winter floods followed by the recent coronavirus outbreak.

### **How much is farming a family affair at Avenue Farm?**

I'm the fifth generation of the family to farm here and with five sons aged between 9 and 17, I have plenty of help lined up for the future. The eldest two lend a hand during the school holidays and although my Dad's been retired now for 8 or 9 years, he still helps out when needed. We also have two full time staff, plus one employee who we share with a neighbouring farm, and contractors for busy times, like now when we're planting potatoes.

### **What is the size of the farm and how much is dedicated to potatoes?**

There are 427 acres at Avenue Farm and for the past 20 years we have also been farming another 150 FBT on the estate. Plus, we rent almost 180 acres a year from the estate farm nextdoor to grow potatoes on. Potatoes account for 380 acres altogether. We can only use the land for potatoes once every 6 years so we plant on rotation – wheat, oilseed rape, wheat, maize, wheat then potatoes.

This year we have planted 40 acres of spring barley for the first time and we also grow beet for fodder. We have pigs on the farm and sheep in winter.

### **How badly were your crops affected by the autumn and winter floods?**

We're lucky that we harvest between July and October so the potatoes were already out of the ground before the worst of the rain hit. We have always harvested across a long season to spread our risk in relation to the weather and it certainly paid off this year. We're not near the river so we weren't badly affected by floodwater thankfully.

The next challenge of course is coronavirus and with 100% of our potatoes supplying McCains we are not sure how this year will go. Their main markets are the likes of McDonald's and KFC which have been badly affected by the lockdown.

### **What do you enjoy most about your job?**

I have a real interest in making sure that our activities on the farm are in harmony with birds, insects and nature. I have a degree in environmental biology and am signed up to environmental schemes that help us minimise our impact on the world around us.

### **When you're not farming, what do you like about living on the Shropshire Estate?**

The Wrekin is a fantastic place to be and my two eldest sons and I all enjoy mountain biking locally. We're very lucky that we live in such an amazing location with so much beautiful countryside on our doorstep.

## From the Potting Shed



There may not be any visitors to Raby's Walled Gardens at the moment but our gardeners have plenty to keep them busy.

The digging over of borders, lawn cutting, edging and weeding is relentless at this time of year but the hard-working team is rewarded by the glorious colours that greet them each day. At this time of year there are bright yellow forsythias, primula denticulate, urns and troughs filled with pretty white hyacinths which attract bees and butterflies and of course tulips. The roses are starting to ready themselves for summer after taking quite a battering over the harsh wet and windy winter and, after a major prune, the magnificent magnolia is taking centre stage, ushering in the spring.

Our gardeners are missing seeing and chatting to the visitors who usually flock to the Gardens at this time of year and they wish everyone well and hope their hard work can soon be admired again.

Claire Jones, Head of Leisure and Tourism

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## Update Raby Events

After a busy and successful Christmas season, things were just starting to pick up for Spring when lockdown brought everything to an abrupt halt. The Castle opened on 4th March, only to shut down again soon afterwards.

However, before it did, we enjoyed opening the Park for the very first time on New Year's Day. It was a glorious day where around 3,000 visitors blew away the cobwebs with a brisk walk (or for some a run!) and supported our charity of the year at the same time.

Raby offered free admission to everyone on 1st January 2020 but asked for voluntary donations to support the Teesdale and Weardale Search and Mountain Rescue Team. We could not believe how generous everyone was, raising £1,155 for this great cause.

Another first in early Spring was our celebration of International Women's Day with a special interest tour focusing on the remarkable women who have lived and worked at Raby Castle over the years.

The tour explored parts of the Castle not usually open to the public and was very well received and enjoyed by all those who came along. The event was such a success that we will look to repeat it, hopefully in the Autumn.

Over 300 people attended our very first Great British Dog Walk, raising awareness and funds for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. The event also raised more than £3,000 for the assistance dog charity and saw visitors enjoy two different routes across the Park, one 3km and one 8km. Whilst we were disappointed to cancel so many events in the short term, we are spending this time making plans for the future, particularly Christmas at Raby, which is always a magical time for families.

Sophie Brown, Events Executive



## News from the Raby Team

### Leisure and Tourism Harnesses Girl Power

Continuing the theme of strong, proactive women in Raby's history, the Leisure and Tourism Department couldn't be more delighted to welcome Sophie Brown, Emma Chalder, Clare Robson and Hannah Fretwell to join them this year.

All four new members of staff cannot wait for the Estate to re-open and for the exciting events schedule to get underway. In the meantime, they are all working from home, planning and sharing ideas on a regular basis via video call.

### Building for success

Our buildings team has welcomed two new starters this year to this busy department. Daniel McCauley, Apprentice Plasterer and Carl Slack, Skilled Building Operative were welcomed by manager Philip Dent in January.



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## New Land Agent joins Raby Estates

We have recently welcomed Joe Robinson MRICS to the senior management team as County Durham Land Agent to support our business growth plans.

Before joining Raby, Joe spent nine years as Associate Partner at Carter Jonas in Harrogate where he built up extensive experience of managing both upland and lowland landed and sporting estates across the north of England.

Joe lives near Northallerton with his wife Becky and daughter Elspeth and he will be based at the Estate Office in Staindrop once the current restrictions are lifted. In the meantime, he will be homeworking along with the rest of the Estate Management team.

Joe will support our emerging environmental and land use agenda and help with the delivery of business development activity on the Estate. He will also help manage both our property and sporting interests.



Joe will take over the property management duties previously provided by GSC Grays in Co Durham and John Wallis. However, our relationship with GSC Grays will continue with John and others within the firm providing ad hoc estate management support going forward. John has made a significant contribution to the Estate over the past couple of years and his hard work is greatly appreciated.

Thanks must also go to Tom Birtles, our Shropshire Land Agent, and Will Witchell (Rural Surveyor) who have helping us enormously by sharing the workload between them with regards to estate management on the County Durham estate prior to Joe's arrival.

Joe can be contacted on [Joe.robinson@raby.co.uk](mailto:Joe.robinson@raby.co.uk) tel 07811719968.

## A warm welcome and a fond farewell

The finance team was delighted to welcome Julie Wilkinson as Finance Manager at the end of last year, based in the estate office in Staindrop.

They also said a sad farewell to longstanding member of the Accounts team, Moira Foster who stood down to take early retirement at the end of March, having joined Raby Estates in 1980. For many years Moira worked as Accounts Assistant in the Finance Department and she has been a key member of the Estate Office team, helping deliver real progress during her time at Raby. Moira will be greatly missed by her many friends and colleagues at Raby but has promised to keep in touch.

Unfortunately, due to the current Coronavirus restrictions we have been unable to gather to mark Moira's retirement. As soon as those restrictions are lifted a get together will be organised at the Estate Office so that colleagues have an opportunity to wish Moira well.

## New arrivals

Along with the Spring lambs and calves, another new arrival has been welcomed to Raby Park. Nicky Witchell, Events and Marketing Manager and Will Witchell, Rural Surveyor, welcomed baby boy Jack to their family in late March, to join proud big sister Georgie. The entire Raby Team sends our congratulations!

If you have any contributions for the next edition of the Raby newsletter please send them to [marketing@raby.co.uk](mailto:marketing@raby.co.uk)

## Enquiries

Raby Estates, Office Square, Staindrop,  
Darlington, County Durham, DL2 3NF

Raby Estates (Teesdale) Tel: 01833 660207  
Raby Estates (Shropshire) Tel: 01952 740223  
Email: [reception@raby.co.uk](mailto:reception@raby.co.uk)







# See you soon

Raby has been part of the community for generations and will continue to be so in the future and we look forward to welcoming you back to Raby in happier times.

We'll keep you posted on what's happening at Raby through our website and social media channels, we hope you too will keep in touch with us.



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