





Harvest went well across Raby Farms, Shropshire this year despite the soaring temperatures and drought conditions throughout July and August.



Heal Farms, our contract farmers, as well as so many others in the region combined throughout the night whilst temperatures were lower and moisture levels higher in order to avoid the risk of fire. Harvest was successfully completed by the end of August ready for the new cover crops to be drilled shortly afterwards. Our thanks must go to Heal Farms for all those very long hours endured sitting behind the wheel of a combine or a tractor and trailer in order to bring in the harvest. We are also pleased to report that Raby Farms, Shropshire have just entered into a new Contract Farming Agreement with Heal Farms for the next 5 years which reflects the transition from conventional to regenerative agriculture, which both parties have embraced over recent years.

Charlotte Marrison, Shropshire Land Agent

Farmland Birds

It is widely accepted that good farming practices can have a positive impact on farmland birds. These birds can be resident species such as the Skylark or migratory species such as Wheatear that merely make a short stop, often at night, whilst seeking shelter and food on our arable fields. These birds also keep invertebrate pests under control.

A night-time bird survey has been taking place over the last few winters to monitor farmland birds across the Raby Estate. So far, 12 species have been seen using a thermal imager including Grey Partridges, Golden Plover, Skylark and Woodcock. Some of these birds have had metal leg rings fitted under legal license.

The survey is just starting again this autumn, but early indications show there are not as many Skylarks around as in previous years, which may be due to dry conditions or a poor breeding season or both.

James Bellingham, West Midlands Ringing Group

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Updates Raby Home Farm

All is progressing well at Raby Home Farm on our County Durham Estate this season. The winter oil seed rape is now starting to establish with help from the berseem clover companion crop.

These crops may not have produced such positive results if we had used conventional methods. The flea beetle burden could also have been worse if we had chosen to plough. However, our decision to use a direct drilling approach helped to hold the moisture well.

Winter cereal drilling is running ahead of schedule with most of the crop being sown with the direct drills and the wheats drilled in early September are growing well. It seems very different from what we are used to at Raby - seeing this year's crop established through last year's stubble!

The debris from the previous crop has the potential to lesson water damage and soil erosion if we get periods of heavy rain.

The next big push for the farming team over the next few months will be winter bean sowing where our whole approach will be built around a diverse rotation.

Our Raby longhorn calves have also grown well over the summer and we look forward to seeing how we progress grazing through a rye and vetch mix.

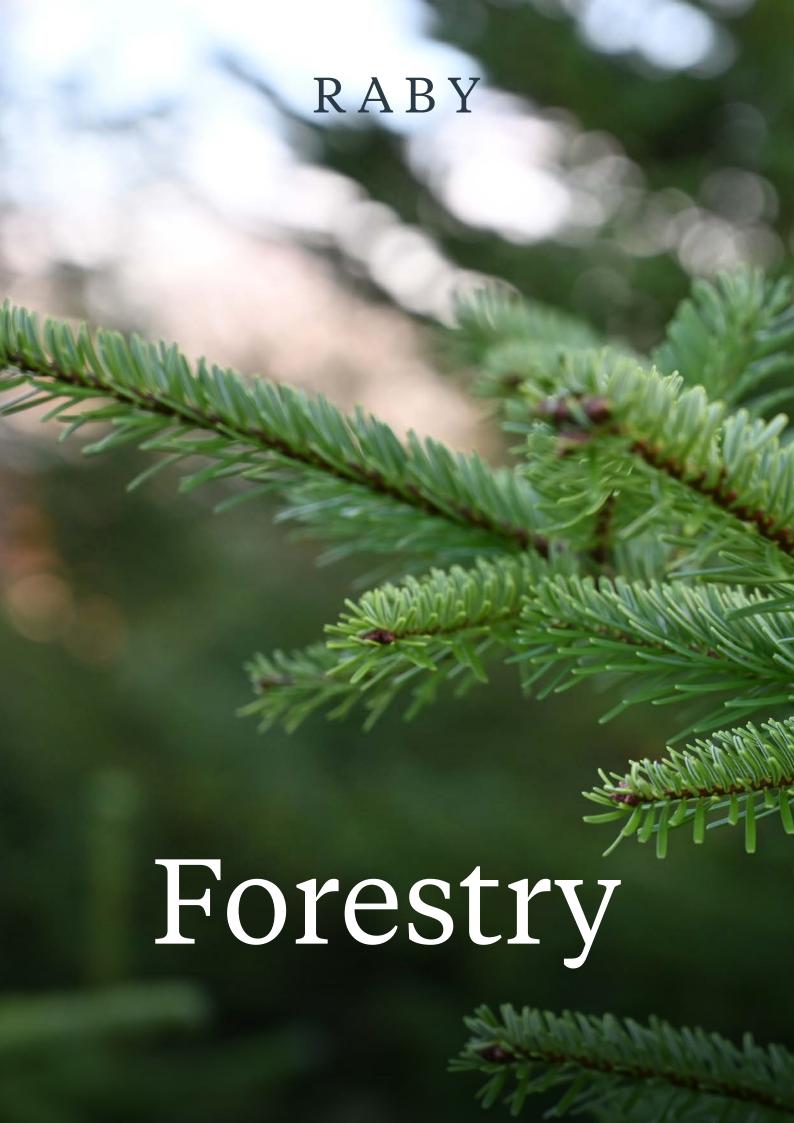
Philip Vickers, Farm Manager



Networking and Knowledge Sharing across the Estate: **Raby Groundswell**

A very informative day was held on the Raby Home Farm in County Durham on 11th July 2022 when the Raby Farms, Shropshire contingent travelled north to share in Philip Vickers' knowledge and experience of regenerative agriculture and best farming practice to date. Both farms have made significant use of and improvements to rotations, crop establishment, cover crops, soil mapping, CSS/SFI Pilot funding, straw incorporation and application of manures along the journey to improve soil health whilst still generating a profit. Philip stressed the importance of attention to detail in all aspects and noted the value of experimentation, trials areas and sharing and communicating best (and worst) practice between the two farms going forward.

Charlotte Marrison, Shropshire Land Agent





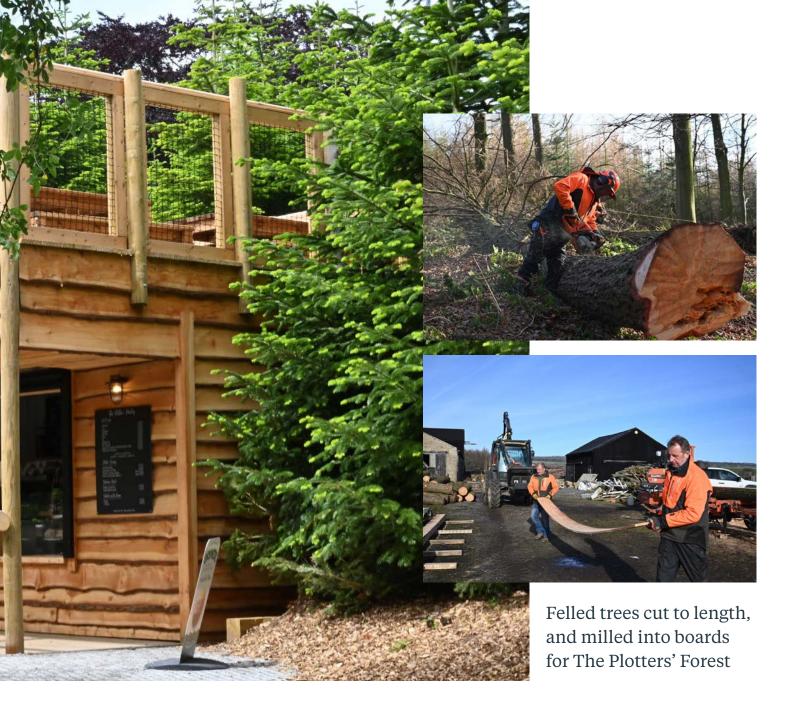
Over recent months there has become an increasing awareness around the importance of high quality, sustainably sourced, UK produced materials. Here at Raby the woodlands are well positioned to meet these challenges.

Running from the moorland edge to the lower river margins at the east of the Estate, the woodlands have a rich diversity in habitat and tree species, that not only supports wildlife and recreation but provides a resource of sustainable timber, with a range of end uses including construction boards and beams, furniture grade hardwoods, fencing and wood fuel. The Estate's woodlands are managed under long term plans, which are independently certified to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard. They make provisions for timber production by felling trees that are mature and thinning younger crops, to selectively harvest a small proportion of the woodland and promote the growth of the best quality trees to be retained for the future.

Over 90% of the timber from the Estate's forestry operations is processed by sawmills, firewood and biomass producers within a 30 mile radius of the woods from which it is grown. However, a recent project has provided the Estate with the opportunity to source timber within 1km of its place of final use.

European larch is an ideal material for cladding buildings and perfectly meets the requirements of the new facilities that have been constructed in The Plotters' Forest, being durable, attractive and in keeping with the woodland environment.

Earlier this spring, several mature larch trees, that have grown for over 90 years, were selected from North Wood, and were felled and extracted by Brian Teasdale and Peter Archer of the Estate's forestry team. A great deal of skill and care is required to fell trees that are over 30m in height, to avoid damage to the timber and impact on the remaining woodland. Once the stems were safely brought to the ground they were cut to length, specifically for the project, for milling into boards with a mobile, Wood-Mizer sawmill operated by contractor Keith Threadgall. The finished timber was then moved directly to The Plotters' Forest, where it was fitted by the Estate's buildings and construction teams to the new structures, providing a top-quality end product which was locally grown, produced and fitted using local skills.





This summer has seen the retirement of Brian Teasdale from the position of Maintenance Team Foreman after 40 years loyal service on the Estate. Brian's craftsmanship and understanding of timber saw him work through the ranks to become Sawmill Foreman, processing wood from a fixed base in the yard at Staindrop. His skills across other rural crafts saw him progress to take on the role of Maintenance Team Foreman and he has been equally at home in establishing or maintaining woodland and undertaking walling to the highest standard on the Park boundaries or high on the moorland edge. His attitude to get the job done with minimal fuss, regardless of the nature or difficulty of the task in hand has won Brian the respect of his colleagues and he will be greatly missed. That is not to say that he has hung up his boots completely, and many of us may see him supporting the Raby Home Farm team at harvest and at busy times. However I would like to extend my thanks to Brian for everything he has contributed to the Estate over the years and we wish him and his family the best for his retirement.

Geoff Turnbull, Head Forester



Durham Spotlight Ladywood Fish Pass



There are many man-made features within the landscape at Raby that have helped to enclose and secure different areas over the centuries. The Deer Park wall at one time stretched to around 10 miles, and the Ha-ha's that still surround the park and woods have successfully contained deer and livestock.

Another such feature which was built by hand before mechanical diggers were commonplace, is the cobbled ford and weir in Ladywood to the south of Raby Park which allows vehicles to cross the Langley Beck. Despite the weir downstream of the ford being built out of concrete, it has eroded over the years causing the north bank of the river to wash out. As the weir and the bank eroded, a step in the river has been created which has led to a series of waterfalls developing and they have acted as a barrier to the passage of fish upstream.

When the ford was created there was an abundance of flora and fauna and the concept of waterway pollution and the damage this pollution may do to our ecosystems was not considered. Whilst not pollution as such, physical obstacles on the waterway such as the ford at Ladywood, weirs, mill races and pipe bridges have created barriers to the passage of fish and other inhabitants of the river system, preventing them moving upstream to vital feeding and spawning grounds.

The modern era has brought with it the realisation of the consequences of the practices of the past, and the impact this has had on our landscape and the fragile ecosystems we share. The Tees Rivers Trust has been instrumental in leading the restoration of the river catchment within which Raby sits. Salmon, Trout and Sea trout all migrate throughout the Tees and the work the Tees Rivers Trust is doing in opening the upper stretches of the Langley Beck (a tributary of the Tees) will provide many more miles of prime habitat to allow these species to thrive.

As part of this work, the Tees Rivers Trust approached the Estate to explore the possibility of removing the ford in Ladywood and installing a Rock Ramp in its place. This Rock Ramp would naturally regrade 30 metres of the river which in turn would allow the uninterrupted passage of fish up and down this section at all levels of water flow.

The work was carried out by Haywood Contracting over 3 weeks in July 2022 when the benefit of a very dry spell of weather meant that the work wouldn't be hampered by a large volume of water in the river. The old weir concrete was broken up and the bank re profiled. 50m³ of concrete was then laid in the bed of the river to provide a solid immoveable base. Into this, 320 tonnes of rock and stone was strategically placed to create a series of shallow pools up the gradient. The flow was analysed, designed and diverted to recreate the natural course and flow that the river would have carved out over time.

As the seasons pass, this work will develop a patina and blend with the environment so that man's intervention will cease to become an obvious intrusion. The result will be an uninterrupted passage for the fish so that they can better utilise the upper stretches of the Langley Beck, hopefully helping to increase their numbers, for generations to come.

Will Witchell, Rural Surveyor

Shropshire Spotlight Birds and Climate Change

Climate change, global warming, climate crisis, call it what you will, the release of heat-trapping greenhouse gases into our atmosphere from human-induced activities, is the greatest long-term threat to nature and people that we face. Rising temperatures and changes in rainfall are changing the timing of migration, laying dates, populations and distribution of our birds, right here and right now, in the UK, on Raby and around the Wrekin.



The timing of bird migration for many species has advanced, so that swallows typically return from Africa to their traditional nest sites in farmland barns two weeks earlier than they did forty years ago. Warmer springs means insects on which swallows feed are active earlier than they used to be, giving them more time to raise their young and ensuring later departure dates.

The call of the cuckoo, the herald of spring, still resounds from the hedgerows and scattered trees across the Raby Estate but it has declined by thirty-eight percent since 1995, attributed to changes in climate here in the UK, and is now red-listed as a species of high conservation concern. Whitethroat, another long-distance African summer migrant that winters south of the Sahara Desert and returns each April to the thorny hedgerows around the Wrekin, is affected by changing rainfall patterns in its wintering area.

Great tits and blue tits time their breeding in the oak woodlands of the Wrekin and surrounding woods in synchrony with the peak emergence of leaf-eating winter moth and green tortrix caterpillars, the main prey for their chicks.

The pied flycatcher or 'Bigamy bird', on account of the male's tendency to go in search of a new mate once his original partner has laid her eggs, spends the winter in Africa, and arrives back on the Wrekin in mid-April to breed. The pied flycatcher has undergone a severe decline attributed to climate change and a mismatch between the bird's arrival from Africa and its principal food – moth caterpillars. A nest box scheme on the Wrekin aids their conservation.

With temperatures set to rise further, this conflict between birds and climate will continue to play out and new challenges will no doubt arise.

Some birds are clearly adapting, and others may do so over time, but many will lose out and the community of birds will look very different in decades to come. Long gone from Shropshire are nightingales, red-backed shrike and turtle dove, all impacted by climate change to some degree. Some, such as spotted flycatcher, swift, tree pipit, yellow wagtail and yellowhammer are just hanging on, others like wood warbler on the Wrekin, are disappearing at a worrying pace.

We need to appreciate and understand what birds we have around us and secure healthy populations. Sympathetic management of our woodlands and regenerative farming in a sustainable way that protects the soil and works with nature is vital. How we ultimately mitigate the impacts of climate change and manage the land our birds occupy may prove crucial.

Glenn Bishton







Uppington House and Old Estate Office

The former Land Agent's residence for several generations came back in hand this summer but due to the high costs involved with a total refurbishment the decision was made to sell the property. At the time of writing, an offer has been accepted with completion anticipated to take place at some point in the New Year.

Cottage Refurbishments

Over the last 5 months and using our in-house team we have completed a full refurbishment of 10 Aston, a 3-bed semi-detached cottage to a very high standard throughout, whilst increasing the EPC rating from an E to a C making it an energy efficient home. Pete Smith, who works for Raby, Shropshire has moved into the property with his young family to be back on the Estate after a period living away.

The same in-house team are now undertaking a full refurbishment of 14 Aston, situated at the foothills of The Wrekin ready for a new tenant to move in shortly. The same attention to detail is being employed throughout in order to achieve a high standard of refurbishment and an energy efficient home. 14 Aston is expected to be completed by the end of October.

Despite the ongoing energy crisis and increasing interest rates at present, the rental market remains strong in Shropshire.



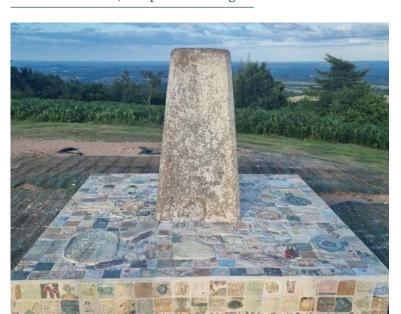


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Wrekin Public Art Project

To commemorate Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Telford & Wrekin Council commissioned a group of local artists to create a new tiled base for the Trig point on top of The Wrekin. The unveiling of the piece of public artwork took place on Thursday 8th September 2022 with the Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire and the Mayor of Telford & Wrekin Council in attendance.

Charlotte Marrison, Shropshire Land Agent





Buildings

There are many restoration projects happening all across the Estate. Here are the latest updates.



Welcome to new tenants Andrew Brown and Jane Coates

Following a fantastic refurbishment by the Raby buildings team this season, Raby welcomes new tenants, Andrew Brown and Jane Coates to Langdon Beck. We caught up with them to find out their future plans for this iconic country hotel.

Upon opening we were received with what we can only describe as 'open arms' and we soon felt part of the family. This touched both of us very strongly and we thank everyone for such a warm welcome. We set out to be there for all of the local community and to cement the very strong community feeling in the area.

This started with the Langdon Beck Show which, by all accounts was a happy and successful day. Everyone we have spoken to since has been enthusiastic in their comments of the day, from the weather to the brass band. The beer bar on the field seems to have hit the spot and will be repeated next time.

The introduction of a Sunday Lunch Carvery has been equally well-received, drawing in people from throughout Teesdale and Weardale. This may be extended to other special events in the future. We have managed to complete our menu for lunch and dinner times – which will be published soon.

The Dominoes is progressing well, both teams in full swing. The Darts start next week – we are looking forward to more friendly rivalry. A pity about the pool league, we missed the final entry date by a few weeks, but will be looking to get our own action going soon.

The monthly Farmers meeting has started with the next meeting in a few weeks.

We are able to run special dinners and meetings, and will be publishing the Christmas menus at the end of the month.

As we slow down, after the stresses of moving (and finding place for all of it) we will be consolidating the great start we have had and start to put into action some of the ideas we have – and been given!

So again, a very big thank you to everyone for all the help and wonderful welcome we have been given. We are looking forward to what comes next.

Andrew and Jane



Langdon Beck Cottage

The Raby team are undergoing a full refurbishment of this property including changing the internal layout. They will also be looking to develop the large garage to create a family kitchen and utility space, as well as re-developing the rear of the property to create a large secure family garden. New central heating will be installed alongside floor coverings and general decorating.





Hilton Hall

Hilton Hall is a two-storey building with medieval origins located in the hamlet of Hilton. Currently on the national list of historic and architecturally important buildings, the Hall has undergone a full restoration by the Raby buildings team.

During significant restoration of the building, historic elements of the former chapel of St Catherine, a chantry to Staindrop Church, have been uncovered and the team has worked closely with Durham County Council and Historic England to retain these historical features.

Several recesses in the formal sitting room have been carefully restored and leaded windows - which had been covered over to create storage areas within the Hall - have been revealed and preserved using traditional materials and methods. Intricate ceiling mouldings, which had been painted over and lost their unique features or had been damaged beyond repair, have also been brought back to their original design using specialist methods or replacement plaster mouldings created by the buildings team.

The most significant change is to the first floor with the addition of bathrooms, and elsewhere the changes have created improved spaces for

modern living, whilst retaining the historic fabric and therefore special interest of the building.

Once finished, Hilton Hall will comprise of four bedrooms with two en-suites, a large kitchen and a living room with original decorative features and will become part of Raby Estates' let residential portfolio.

Raby Estate hosted an open day at Hilton Hall on Thursday 6th October for local visitors to view the transformation of this historic property, which will soon be available as a residential let.

"Hilton Hall has been a really enjoyable job. It presented many challenges, from the completely overgrown gardens and the restoration of the interior works and original features. Seeing where it is today after the work that has gone into the project is really rewarding."

Billy Ward, Projects Supervisor

West Forcegarth

West Forcegarth, another Raby property undergoing renovation, is currently nearing its completion. The property has undergone a full Raby refurbishment to ensure it is, and will continue to be compliant and energy efficient. Internal insulation as well as an energy efficient boiler has been fitted, making it suitable for modern living. We have utilised the adjoining store and created a new en-suite bedroom, a modern kitchen/utility has been fitted along with a new bathroom. The property will be completed this month and will have spectacular views down the Dale.



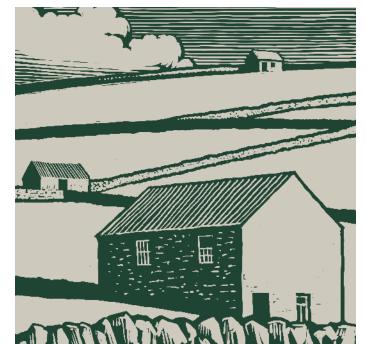


Ivy House

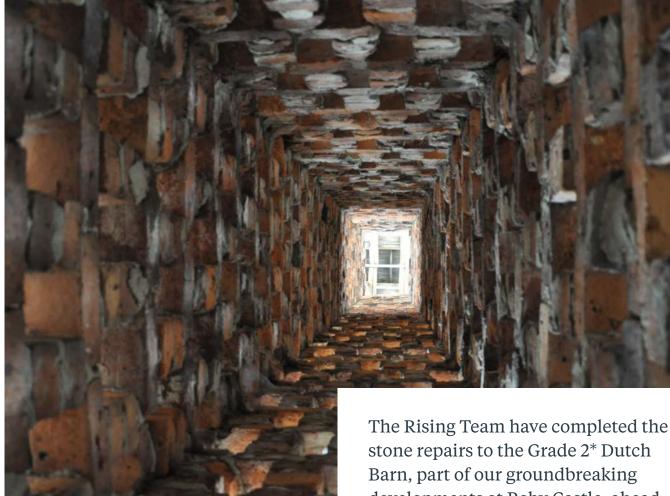
The team are currently undertaking a larger refurbishment on this grade 2* listed building in Piercebridge this season. Building works include decorating, adding floor coverings, new central heating and a new kitchen/utility space. The bathroom is to undergo renovations as well as the creation of a new en-suite off the master bedroom. Extensive refurbishment work to the property's existing windows will also be achieved whilst ensuring the traditional appearance is maintained.

Sinkhouse

Sink House is a 3-bedroom farmhouse complete with additional agricultural buildings located just outside of Ingleton on the Raby Estate. The team have undergone a small refurbishment this year decorating and renovating the kitchen and master bathroom for prospective new tenants. The property also includes two reception rooms, a separate utility room and cloak room on the ground floor.











developments at Raby Castle, ahead of carrying out the extensive repairs to the roof.

A warm and dry summer have enabled the works involving lime mortar, which is very sensitive during colder, wet periods, to be carried out with minimal protection from the elements during curing.

Our stone mason has repointed many areas on all elevations where the lime pointing had perished. The works included the relocation of one keystone and two voussoirs back into their original positions which had become loose and slipped over the last 240 years.

The works entail replacing upwards of 300m of common rafters, repairs and replacement of purlins, King, Queen and Princess posts and dragon ties. Wherever possible the original timber has been saved, only replacing the rotten timber. The new and old timber will be connected through a wide range of splicing, new tenons, face repairs and scissor joints blending the new and old sympathetically whilst maintaining structural integrity throughout.

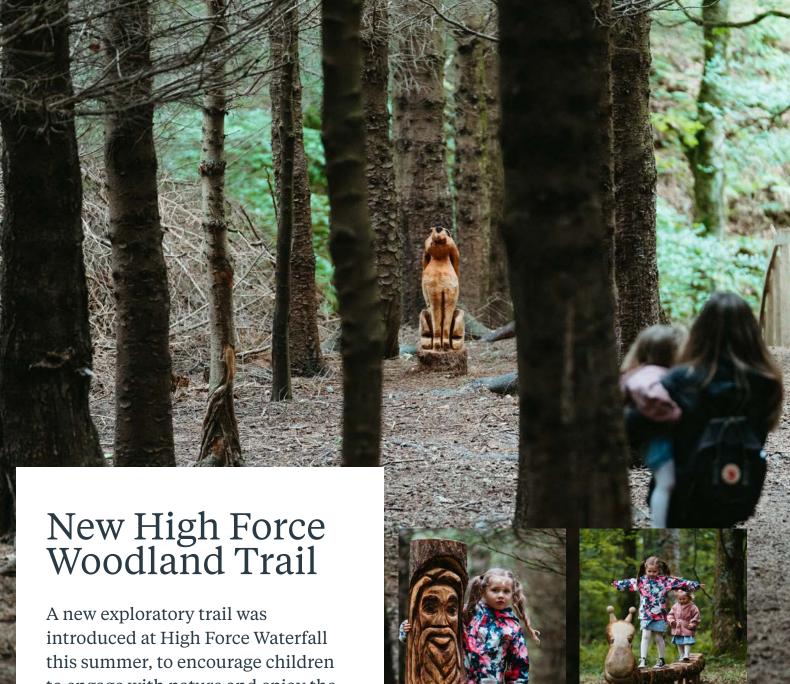
Once the timber repairs are complete, the entire roof will be re-slated with a combination of the existing, salvaged and locally sourced reclaimed slates.

Works will be complete to the roof prior to Christmas 2022, enabling the scaffold to be removed in preparation for the commencement of the hard and soft landscaping in the New Year.

Simon Hills, Construction Manager







to engage with nature and enjoy the benefits of outdoor play.

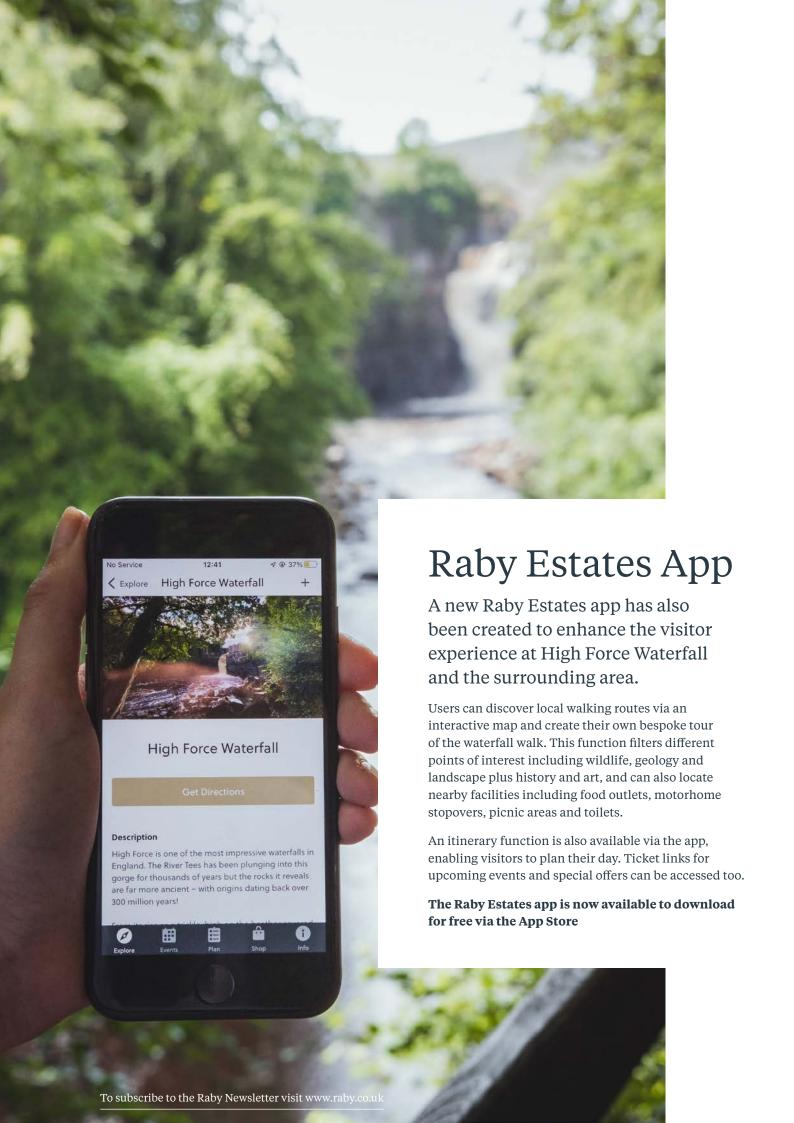
Created by talented wood carvers, a series of intricately carved and thoughtfully designed woodland sculptures have been placed along the walking route for families to discover. From a moongazing hare and an observant owl to a beautiful fox and a giant caterpillar, the majestic woodland creatures have made their homes in the magical woods close to the waterfall.

Children can also climb onto a giant's chair, discover a living bug hotel - which has been created by our Estate Ranger, Andy Gibson - and spot a selection of bird boxes in the trees.

Families can pick up a complimentary activity sheet upon arrival which encourages children to engage their senses on this magical woodland adventure - listening to the sounds all around them and witnessing the delights of nature in this landmark location.

"High Force Waterfall is a spectacular natural landmark with a fascinating history and incredible setting, and we're incredibly proud of the new experience we've incorporated. We hope the new trail provides families with an engaging and immersive way to experience this area, encouraging them to think about the important wildlife habitats it supports, and providing them with fun ways to interact with this stunning landscape."

Claire Jones, Head of Leisure & Tourism







Leisure & Tourism

Upcoming Events



Stargazing Suppers
High Force Hotel
Selected dates from October 2022 - February 2023

The Plotters' Forest Halloween and After Dark Trails Raby Castle 15th - 30th October





Witches and Wizards Trail
Raby Castle
15th - 30th October

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Raby Christmas Tree Sales
Raby Castle
26th November - 24th December



The Plotters' Forest Enchanted Christmas Trail

Raby Castle Selected dates in November and December



12 Days of Christmas Trail Raby Deer Park 26th November - 24th December









Find the Raby Reindeer Trail High Force Waterfall 26th November - 31st December





Raby Estates

New Faces and Fond Farewells

At Raby we offer the opportunity to work in extraordinary locations in an exciting environment where no two days are the same. By joining Raby you're not only part of an ambitious team but also a family of talented and like-minded individuals.

This summer we have welcomed a host of new team members to the Raby Estate. Laura Blakey, Rachael Whitehouse, Shannon Walker, Eleanor Morris, Emily Teasdale, Ella Willis and Christopher Wilkinson have joined the Leisure and Tourism team as General Assistants. Emma Metcalf, Daisy Phillipson, Abbie Salkeld, Eloise Robinson and Meghan Bell have also joined as General Catering Assistants.

Over in our construction team, working on our ground-breaking Rising Development at Raby Castle, we'd like to introduce Nigel Chadburn, Sam Raine and Stephen Ryder. Joiner, Andrew Smithson, Stonemason and Plasterer, Andrew Atkinson and Site Supervisor, George Mcqueen have also started work with us alongside new Assistant Site Manager Dickon Harding.

The gardens team have welcomed new Assistant Head Gardener, Jeremy Shaw, Senior Gardener, Matthew Whale and Gardener, Daniel Dickson who has transitioned from the construction team. All will be involved in the redesign of our beautiful Walled Gardens.

The castle team would like to welcome Events Executive, Chloe Wright and Collections Intern, Rebecca Hercock.

Heading over to Home Farm, the farming team have introduced new Harvest Worker, Jack Innis and Benjamin Vickers as a General Farm Worker. Brian Teasdale has also joined the farming team after retiring from an incredible 40 years of service in the forestry team. The Estate would like to say a massive thank you to Brian for his hard work and commitment to Raby.

The Raby Estate Office has seen some new starters in the finance team.

We'd like to welcome Finance Project Manager, Natalie Richardson, Finance Clerk, Sharon Barker and Chief Financial Officer, Mark Smales, who started with us on the 17th October.

Last, but not least, our buildings team would like to welcome Christopher McGuire and Ashton Shield who join us at Selaby Hall.

Sadly we say our farewells to staff who are moving on to pastures new. We would like to say a big thank you to Josie Graham, Will Witchell and Sofia Freitas for their hard work and dedication to the Estate.

We wish well Ben Heath, Lydia Newberry, Maisy Newberry and Susan Newcombe for their support within our hospitality team.

During the interim period at Langdon Beck we were joined by Manager Sue Matthews and Food and Beverage Assistants, David Deaves, Grace Bell and Theo Clapp who have now returned with our thanks to support the new tenants.

We also say goodbye to Alfred Walton, James Gray, Andrew Fortes, Ben Hall, Kevin Butterfield, Mark Jeramiah and Nicola Riley.

Thank you to all for your contributions to the Estate and we wish you all the best with your future endeavours.

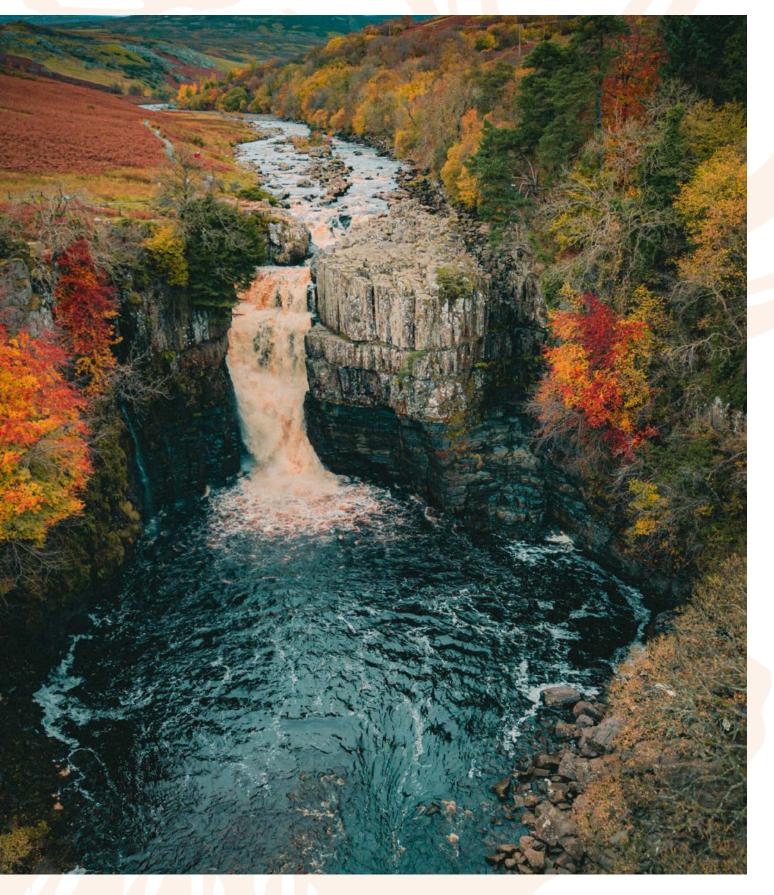












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