

# GRIDLINE

*The magazine for landowners*

*Spring 2018*

## Inside

The grantors with Roman history under their feet

**Age-old charity that's desperate to help farmers in need**

Business is flying for the baron of birdseed

**WIN A 'time together' experience for two**

# Forest therapy

Why more and more of us are abandoning the family holiday abroad to get back to our roots and make lifelong memories



## Some useful contact numbers

The Land & Acquisition Services team are responsible for acquiring all rights and permissions from statutory authorities and landowners needed to install, operate and maintain National Grid's electricity and gas transmission networks. The group acts as the main interface for landowners with gas and electricity equipment installed on their land. Your local contacts are listed below.

### ELECTRICITY AND GAS

» Land teams – all regions 0800 389 5113

### WAYLEAVE PAYMENTS

» For information on wayleave payments, telephone the payments helpline on 0800 389 5113

### EASEMENT ENQUIRIES

» Email [box.electricityeasements@nationalgrid.com](mailto:box.electricityeasements@nationalgrid.com)

### CHANGE OF DETAILS

» To inform National Grid of changes in ownership or contact details, telephone 0800 389 5113 for electric and 01926 654844 for gas, or email [grantorservices@nationalgrid.com](mailto:grantorservices@nationalgrid.com)

### ELECTRICITY EMERGENCY

» Emergency calls to report pylon damage to National Grid can be made on 0800 404090. Note the tower's number – found just below the property plate – to help crews locate it

### ELECTRIC AND MAGNETIC FIELDS

» For information on electric and magnetic fields, call the EMF information line on 08457 023270 (local call rate). Website: [emfs.info](http://emfs.info)

### GAS EMERGENCY

» 0800 111 999

### DIAL BEFORE YOU DIG

» Before carrying out any work in the vicinity of gas pipelines, overhead power lines or underground electric cables, you should contact Plant Protection on 0800 688588 so that searches can be made to determine the exact position of any National Grid assets

### CUSTOMER COMMENTS

» Write to Land & Acquisition Services, National Grid House, Warwick Technology Park, Gallows Hill, Warwick, Warwickshire CV34 6DA. Or email [ld.customercomments@nationalgrid.com](mailto:ld.customercomments@nationalgrid.com)



Gridline is produced by

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This is the picture that electricity grantors David and Tracey Grigg never thought they'd see when their world turned upside down two years ago – read their story on page 6







# Welcome



**I never cease to be amazed by the determination and resilience of our grantors, but sometimes even they can wilt**

**under the pressure.**

It's good to know that on the rare occasions that does happen, there's a charity that's waiting in the wings ready to help.

The Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution, a grantor based in Oxford, was there when fellow grantors, the Grigg family from Devon, needed it most to get them through a difficult stage in their lives. The picture to the left tells only part of the story about the healing effect of this remarkable 168-year-old charity that actively encourages farming landowners to get in touch if they need a leg-up.

Looking after yourself is a theme in this edition as we've been discovering how to take a step back from the hustle and bustle. We took a relaxing stroll around a company that uses Forestry Commission land to help us get back to our primal roots... by immersing ourselves in one of Britain's best-kept secrets.

A grantor who turned his arable farm into a thriving birdseed business insists feeding the birds is the best, cheapest and easiest way to relax without leaving your own home, but read his story, try it and make your own mind up.

We're also taking a look at some of the great projects that National Grid is supporting in areas where the company has been carrying out upgrade work and give information on how organisations near you might be able to benefit.

I hope you enjoy reading the magazine as much as we have putting it together.

**Dawn McCarroll**  
Editor, Gridline

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## Royals get tunnel vision

**National Grid** has completed the most significant addition to the capital's electricity system since the 1960s with the London Power Tunnels project.

HRH The Prince of Wales and HRH The Duchess of Cornwall visited the new energy superhighway (right) to see some of the 32km of tunnels stretching from Hackney to Willesden and from Kensal Green to Wimbledon. The deep underground tunnels carry 200km of electricity cables to make sure growing demand can be met. The £1 billion project to rewire London was delivered on time and under budget.



Greg Clark, Business and Energy Secretary, said: "This important infrastructure will help increase productivity by cutting the number of roadworks needed for maintenance, as well as powering London with the safe and reliable electricity supplies it needs for the future."

National Grid worked closely with communities and schools along the 32km route to promote science and engineering.

### DID YOU KNOW?

If you stretched out the 200km of cables used in the London Power Tunnels project, it would run the length of the M25

# NEWSLINE

*The latest news from National Grid and its landowner partners*

## Happy shoppers

**A series of overhead** power lines have been refurbished with help from an innovative and less disruptive alternative to scaffolding.

During replacement of the lines in Devon, National Grid used Skysafe; a safe way to install new overhead lines using trolleys linked with electrically insulated ropes suspended high above the ground. It meant customers at Trago Mills Family Shopping & Leisure Park could shop without disruption from road closures.

Project Engineer Robbie Griggs said: "We'd like to thank our neighbours in Devon for their patience. We worked hand in hand with Devon County Council to mitigate any problems.

"Refurbishing the power lines is vital in ensuring that electricity keeps flowing to where it's needed. National Grid is investing in similar work across the country."

As well as replacing the 100km stretch of power lines between Landulph and Exeter, National Grid repainted and replaced the steelwork on more than 300 pylons.



The £50 million project will keep energy flowing into homes and businesses in Devon for the next 50 years.



# Cash boost reward for determination

**Enterprising schoolchildren** trying to raise money for a new iLearn centre made a film that impressed National Grid so much, the company gave them a helping hand.

Pupils at Walford Primary School, near Ross-on-Wye in Herefordshire, made the short film about their idea for the new learning space and sent it to businesses to ask for help.

National Grid was so delighted by the children's determination that it donated £38,000 towards

the cabin, which will be used for outdoor learning, science and environmental studies to enhance learning opportunities.

## Experience

The school community also fundraised with cake sales and sponsored events to help raise the full amount for the centre. The process, from the initial idea four years ago to fundraising activities and the grand opening, has been a learning

experience for the school. Headteacher Louise George said: "We've learned that anything worth having doesn't come easy and also to be more positive, patient and committed."

National Grid Lands Officer Robert Pinney said: "It was great to meet the children and teachers and see how excited they are about using the new room."

**Find out more about National Grid's Community Grant Programme on p16**



## Creating a warmer future

**Around 9,000 families** are set to benefit from the first round of payments from a new National Grid fund to help install affordable heating. The £150 million Warm Homes Fund will target poor households that don't use mains gas as their primary source of heat.

"The aim of the fund is threefold: to help to reduce bills, make fuel-poor households warmer and improve the health of people living with the most severe levels of fuel poverty," said John Pettigrew, Chief Executive of National Grid.

The fund has been set up using part of the proceeds from the sale of National Grid's majority stake in its gas distribution business.

Money from the fund will be used to tackle fuel poverty in the hardest-hit rural and urban communities. So far, £33m has been awarded to 35 local authorities and registered social landlords across the country, which will benefit people from island cottages on Orkney to terraced houses in London.

## Empty gasholder sites set for facelift

**Architects and designers** have been busy submitting ideas to redevelop disused gasholders in a cost-efficient and environmentally friendly way.

More than a hundred former gasholders – the giant metal frames that once held tanks full of gas – will need dismantling in the coming years.

So rather than backfilling them, which can be costly, National Grid launched a competition to look into ways of turning the sites into more useful and sustainable spaces.

National Grid and the Royal Institute of British Architects sifted through 100-plus entries to pick the winning design from Outpost Architecture



and Design Studio, who proposed a sustainable development of affordable houses and flexible business space arranged around a large, sunken communal courtyard (artist impression above).

Laura Watson, Gasholder Demolition Manager, said: "We're excited that our sites can see a greater potential and purchasers will be inspired by the winning design and all the great ideas submitted, and that this will result in sites being brought back into beneficial use in a sustainable way."



# Guardian ANGELS

.....  
HOW HELP FROM AN AGRICULTURAL CHARITY  
GRANTOR MADE A FAMILY ON THE BRINK OF  
HEARTBREAK SMILE TOGETHER ONCE AGAIN  
.....







One of the gang again: Julia needs a helping hand in unusual surroundings, but the farm environment has helped speed her recovery

As David Grigg carried his unconscious daughter down the stairs of their remote farmhouse, the thought that it might be the last time he saw her alive flashed across his mind.

In the fleeting moments it took him and wife Tracey to check on the cows, 10-year-old Julia had suffered a rare form of stroke and was rushed, critically ill, from the family's Devon home to hospital.

If the Grigg family didn't believe in fate before their nightmare began, they do now. An ambulance just happened to be passing through their village of Monkleigh on Devon's north coast and the air ambulance was, by pure chance, at Barnstaple hospital as Julia was admitted for an emergency CT scan.

Consultants told her stunned parents she'd be flown to a specialist unit at Bristol Royal Infirmary, to get their things together and drive carefully to meet Julia after the operation to remove the clot and a fist-size chunk of her brain.

Desperate calls to friends and family to feed the 250 cows and 220 sheep for a few days ended in success and the couple drove into the unknown, leaving their

R.A.B.'S  
WELFARE  
TEAM HELPED  
PEOPLE CLAIM  
**£472,809**  
IN STATE  
BENEFITS  
LAST YEAR,  
**THAT'S A 65%  
INCREASE**  
ON THE  
PREVIOUS  
YEAR'S  
FIGURE OF  
**£286,691**

eldest daughter, 15-year-old Joanna, with relatives. "When we walked into the Intensive Care Unit the full scale of it hit us. They told us it was a brain problem called an AVM, which forces the blood to pump the wrong way," said electricity grantor Tracey.

"The doctors didn't know whether she would live or die, or how much damage it had done. As farmers, we're used to things changing on a sixpence and are quite resilient, but this was something else entirely."

#### **STRETCHED TO THE LIMIT**

As the initial shock wore off and the hours of waiting turned into 14 days as Julia lay in a coma, the reality of the family's livelihood began to loom large once more. David returned to the farm, where the discovery of TB and a late subsidy payment simply added to the family's turmoil.

"It wasn't a good time. Milk prices were on the floor and we were relying on the incredible generosity of people we knew to keep the farm going," said David. "We were spending so much time at the hospital that we had to take on an apprentice, but the cost was stretching us to the limit. Things weren't looking great." >>

*"As farmers, we're used to things changing on a sixpence and are quite resilient, but this was something else entirely"*



## Charity grantor



Take nothing for granted: the Griggs enjoy a stroll through the Devon countryside and take in the sea air from Westward Ho!

On the plus side, brave Julia was on the road to recovery, her mum rarely leaving her side during three gruelling months of physio and language rehab. But on a rare day apart to maintain perspective, Tracey joined an open farm walk in nearby Wiltshire where a chance encounter would ensure the medium- to long-term future of her family's farm.

She said: "I chatted to a woman from the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution (R.A.B.I) about why I was there and she put us in touch with one of their area representatives. I'm so glad I spoke to her.

"R.A.B.I gave us an immediate domestic grant to cover our fuel, phone bills and day-to-day expenses and helped us pay for our apprentice, Lauren, for five crucial months, which got us through the worst. It was a weight off our minds just when we needed it most."

### REASSURING

Two years on Julia is back home, enjoying school as much as any 11-year-old will admit, sharing her family's passion for laughter and is, unless you knew otherwise, like any other schoolgirl. She has lost 25% sight in both eyes, takes time to process information, tires easily and can be withdrawn in a crowd, but as David says, 'she's still here'.

"Being back on the farm was great because of the fresh air. Her school has been fantastic, even setting up a quiet room for her between lessons," said Tracey.

"R.A.B.I's support was so reassuring. We can't thank them enough and are fundraising for all the people who helped us, including the hospital and Air Ambulance. Someone was looking out for us that day."



### "THAT'S WHAT WE'RE HERE FOR"

Welfare Officer Chloe Rigler admits she gets emotionally involved with some of the people she visits as part of her job.

The R.A.B.I officer covers the Devon and Cornwall area for the 168-year-old charity, which paid out nearly £2 million in grants to people in need in the farming community last year.

Chloe (above right) said: "To do the job professionally, you have to connect with people and be human and understanding about their situation. It's incredibly rewarding to change someone's life."

The Oxford-based charity, an electricity grantor itself, is a safety net for farmers, past and present, needing help with care home top-up fees, bills, disability equipment and home adaptations. In fact, almost anything.

"Many farmers at the moment are pushed to the limits and most farms have to have a sideline to keep going, so when a tragedy like this happens it makes things even more difficult," she said.

"We see a lot of farmers or their

partners with injuries or fighting cancer, so the healthy person ends up keeping the farm running. That's where we can step in, even if it's just with a little extra funding or some time out for a massage."

Much of the charity's money comes from fundraising and legacies, with every penny ploughed back into caring for the farming community. But R.A.B.I faces a battle to get the money where it's needed most, explained Chloe: "Farmers are very proud and tend not to talk about weaknesses or ask for help until it's too late, but that's what we're here for."

David said: "We didn't even know R.A.B.I existed, let alone that it's been around for 168 years. We're so glad they were there for us when we needed them."

Tracey said: "We raised £700 from a shoot for R.A.B.I, collected for Bristol Hospital's Wallace and Gromit Appeal, and are fundraising for Air Ambulance. We're so grateful and want to make sure someone else gets the support we did when they really need it."



To contact R.A.B.I call the  
Freephone Helpline on 0808 281  
9490 or visit [rabi.org.uk](http://rabi.org.uk)



Remember, remember...

# TO BE BONFIRE SAFE ALL YEAR ROUND

Drive the same route every day for 10 years and there's a good chance you'll start to ignore the scenery around you.

The hills, rolling meadows, that peculiar bend in the road, can all merge into one when they become part of the daily rub.

And that's a concern for National Grid's team of overhead line experts who repair, maintain and look after the safety of the high-voltage power lines spanning grantors' land.

National Grid Lands Officer Mike Rockett said: "It's very easy for things to become so familiar that they're not prominent in our everyday thoughts. Most landowners have worked their fields for generations, but we still see some who are unaware of the importance of staying a safe distance from the cables."

## LOST LIVELIHOOD

The Energy Networks Association's national Look Out Look Up campaign is driving an appeal for landowners to consider the cables before any work. And that message is especially relevant as bonfire season approaches.

Mike said: "Bonfires in the wrong position can damage overhead line conductors and in the most severe circumstances can cause live conductors to fall to the ground."

If you have any doubts or safety concerns, seek further advice before placing a fire or carrying out any activity near to power lines.

Mike added: "Damaged conductors could see a large number of homes without power or cause a larger fire, injury or loss of life, not to mention weeks of disruption.

"It's vital we know that our grantors understand the immediate dangers and effects this could have on their wellbeing, that of their family and their livelihood."

## 7 WAYS TO KEEP SAFE

**1**  **ASSESS THE RISKS**  
Look Out Look Up. For advice, call us on **0800 688 588**

**2** **WATCH YOUR DISTANCE**  
If you have to have a fire, place it as far away from the side of the line as possible. Don't store flammable objects, such as straw bales and pallets, nearby. Personnel, vehicles and attachments should be kept well away from lines.

**SIZE MATTERS**  
The bigger the fire, the more heat it generates and the greater the risk to the line and to you.

**3** **MATERIAL**  
Combustible materials generating dense smoke could have higher carbon content and could provide a conducting path, which could result in a flashover.

**4** **STAY IN CONTROL**  
Implement control measures such as a safe boundary. Know what's safe and what isn't. Share the 10-metre work rule with employees, contractors and anyone else on-site.



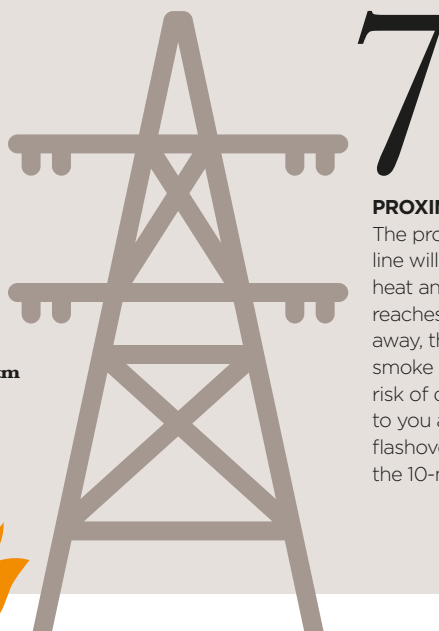
**6** **KNOW THE DRILL** In a power emergency - if overhead power lines are damaged, fall low or break - keep yourself and others clear and contact the local electricity network operator by **calling 105**. It's the national Freephone number for power cuts and power emergencies across the UK. Also follow the HSE guidance on organising public events.



## WHAT EXACTLY IS A FLASHOVER?

An arc flash or 'flashover' is the light and heat produced as part of an arc fault. It's a type of electrical discharge that results from a low impedance connection through air to ground or another voltage phase in an electrical system.

Smoke from fires containing conductive particles can also create a current path when placed too close to overhead line conductors.



**7** **PROXIMITY TO THE LINE**  
The proximity of the fire to the line will affect the amount of heat and density of smoke that reaches the line. The further away, the weaker the heat and smoke density. That means less risk of damage to the wires, to you and your family or of a flashover. Don't be dumb, use the 10-metre rule of thumb.



For more information  
**Organising a display**  
[hse.gov.uk/explosives/fireworks/using.htm](http://hse.gov.uk/explosives/fireworks/using.htm)  
**Useful safety info**  
<http://bit.ly/2FyZoPq>  
**Overhead lines safety**  
<http://bit.ly/2pdpVGX>







# BACK TO OUR ROOTS

.....  
THE GRANTORS  
BRINGING AN  
ENTIRE COMMUNITY  
TOGETHER WITH  
A SHARED LOVE  
OF ITS PAST  
.....

**W**hen metal detectorist Dave Derby discovered Roman coins that had lain scattered beneath a grantor's field for 1,500 years, they raised more questions than answers.

Arable and sheep farmer Nick Adams had given Dave permission to comb some of his 460 acres, little knowing that his land would unearth this fascinating insight into life in ancient Britain.

Roman coins were the first items painstakingly recovered from the soil and local archaeologist Stephen Young was brought in to advise. Building material was discovered and trial trenches turned into excavation... and a Roman villa and bath-houses saw daylight for the first time since the first century.

Brooches, rings, pot fragments, animal bones, even engraved drinking glasses and wine goblets – all were carefully retrieved from the soil.

Since the turn of this century Stephen's sage presence on the rolling fields overlooking the M1 and Grand Union Canal to the west of Northampton has sparked a series of events that have changed a community's life. The site has been a constant hive of

activity, with schoolchildren, archaeology students and an army of volunteers all desperate to stumble across the next big find. They have flocked to Nick's Whitehall Farm from as far afield as Japan and Australia to help reveal an incredible multi-room Roman villa, roundhouses and two bath-houses complete with tessellated mosaic floors and timbers that had remained hidden beneath his Nether Heyford land until recent times.

## **NOTHING CHANGES**

The pilgrimage never ceases to have a profound effect on Nick, whose family has farmed the area for almost 400 years: "It's sobering to consider that the 100 or so people in this Roman settlement faced the same issues with weather, soil and topography to feed themselves and survive that I do today."

Plum stones, remnants of hazelnuts, around 25,000 animal bones, including songbird and hare bones, and a wolf's jawbone – one of only three pieces of wolf identified from Roman Britain – all give an insight into the lifestyle of the settlers, likely to have been a large extended clan group living in view of at least a dozen



other settlements within a five-mile radius. Nick's sense of being a guardian of the land was heightened when Dave's metal detector shrieked over the shield of a Roman – affectionately named Marcus by his rescuers – whose likeness has been reconstructed using facial recognition.

The skeleton of an early 1st-century Roman was also discovered, and Stephen said: "This was a deviant burial, possibly for a criminal. Later we dug elsewhere on the farm, nearer the famous Watling Street road from London, and discovered the grave of a 5th-century teenage girl. This has led to us discovering more 5th and 7th-century burials."

The finds – some on land owned by Dave Hayward – have left former Northampton University lecturer Stephen with a nagging belief that somewhere close by there is a Roman burial ground to match the 5th/7th-century Anglo-Saxon one – complete with shield-bearing soldiers – that they have also discovered.

He's lucky to have the support of CLASP, the Community Landscape & Archaeology Survey Project formed following the villa find, whose volunteers have helped with everything from digging and excavating right through to creating a forensic digital record of where, when and how every one of the thousands of objects were found.

Stephen, CLASP's Director of Archaeology, said: "Without our volunteers and the cooperation of our two grantors, these treasures would have remained buried forever. They offer a fascinating insight into our ancestors' lives and have brought the local community together in a way we'd never have thought possible."



The support of grantors Nick Adams and Dave Hayward (inset) has been crucial



### THE GRANTORS – NICK ADAMS AND DAVE HAYWARD

**Nick** "More than 600 volunteers have spent around 45,000 hours in total on my land when the crop is off and I haven't got a single regret. I was surprised when they found the coins but intrigued at what else might be there, so when they found the villa and the burial ground it was amazing.

"We held an open day to gauge local interest in helping with the project and dug a trial trench to see if people would be interested in finding out more about amateur archaeology and around 400 people came over the hill!

"I'm hugely proud and privileged to have been involved with it. It's wonderful seeing the process and people's reactions when they find something but sadly, despite many promises, we've found very little gold!"

**Dave** "The project has grown and grown and has brought the community together. I've been chair of the trustees of CLASP for several years and help with a lot of the contextualising (making sure there's a record of each artefact for future generations). I was a police sergeant, so love the forensic side of collating and curating. People in the area now have a greater sense of the history of where they live, and their sense of community and pride in it is greater as a result."



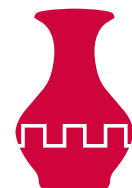
Facial reconstruction meant the team could create a likeness of how the soldier (above with his spear) would have looked (left)

### IN NUMBERS



2,500

fragments of glassware from all corners of the continent



20,000

pieces of pots and ceramics found near the villa



25,000

animal bones found nearby, proof of farm-type activity



560

Roman coins dating from as early as the 1st century





### THE DETECTORISTS - DAVE DERBY AND ALAN STANDISH

**Dave** “The first time my detectorist colleague Steve Pulley and I searched the ploughed field we found 25 coins, pottery and carved stones, and were certain we’d found a Roman site. We told Nick and further finds confirmed we’d discovered a Roman settlement. It’s a tremendous feeling to hold something untouched by human hand since the first century, but one of the greatest moments came at the open day when I showed a youngster how to use the detector. She found a Victorian penny and I’ll never forget the look on her face. The queue to ‘have a go’ was huge that day.

“Another time we were checking a field and found a lovely Saxon brooch, a piece of iron that turned out to be the end of a sword and a body, one of the first of 17 skeletons – some of them military men buried with their weapons – at the Saxon burial site. We were respectful, but it was a very emotional moment.”

**Alan** “I’d been a teacher at a local school for disadvantaged children until I retired. I brought them up here and the effect on them was incredible.”

### THE ARCHAEOLOGIST - STEPHEN YOUNG

“This is one of the most established community archaeological projects in the country and there’s no reason why there can’t be more to ensure the nation’s heritage secrets don’t stay that way. There could be Roman settlements in grantors’ fields around the country. All it takes is a willing landowner and volunteers prepared to work with him or her. The rewards are endless if unearthing the past is as thrilling to them as it’s become to me.”



### THE VOLUNTEER - TONY KESTEN

“The dig has changed my life. I’ve learned about archaeology, working in a context team and handling the media side of what we do. The site is now one of the most recognised and best established in the UK.”



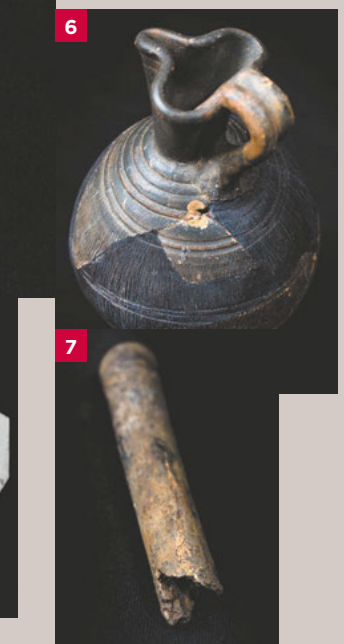
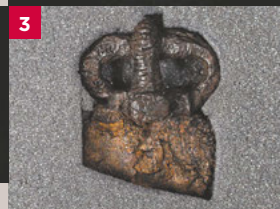
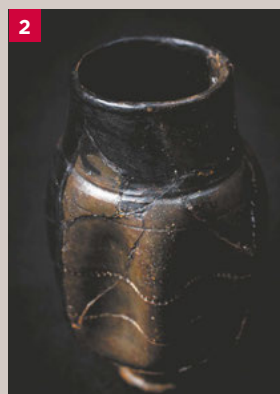
### CHECK FIRST TO STAY SAFE

Planning work near or in the vicinity of a pipeline? You can do one of the following:

- ▶ complete a free online request at [beforeyoudig.nationalgrid.com](http://beforeyoudig.nationalgrid.com)
- ▶ email [plantprotection@cadentgas.com](mailto:plantprotection@cadentgas.com) (you will be sent an automated response to confirm receipt)
- ▶ call Plant Protection for free on **0800 688 588**.

## THE SEVEN WHITEHALL WONDERS

- 1 A 2nd-century Roman Samian cup for drinking wine.
- 2 Late 3rd-century indented beaker from the Rhineland.
- 3 Iron belt buckle from a 5th-century female burial site.
- 4 Post-Roman spear and personal knife from the 5th century.
- 5 Roman roof tile with graffiti of man holding a bow.
- 6 An ornamental oil jug for bathing, smashed in a ritual.
- 7 Wooden handle - minus sponge for intimate personal cleaning!





# LOSE YOURSELF

BRINGING YOUNG AND OLD  
TOGETHER TO HELP THEM  
REALISE THAT A BAD MOBILE  
SIGNAL NEEDN'T BE THE END  
OF THE WORLD





## Forest therapy

There's something strangely primal about walking through a forest that links us to ancestors long departed, for whom work-based stress and patchy internet connection meant nothing. Their main concerns were foraging for food, staying warm and seeking shelter as they lived side by side with nature without a mobile phone in sight.

Rediscovering that state of simple satisfaction and closeness to our origins, even if only for a few days, is at the root of the success of Forest Holidays... admittedly with a bit of luxury thrown in.

The company runs 10 locations in the UK, set exclusively within land owned by National Grid partner the Forestry Commission, including a Cornish valley, Sherwood Forest in Nottinghamshire and two loch-side retreats in the Scottish Highlands.

Charlie Houlder-Moat, Forest Ranger at Thorpe Forest near Thetford in Norfolk – home to 63 luxury cabins – said: “Nothing brings a family together quite like making a fire and toasting marshmallows.”

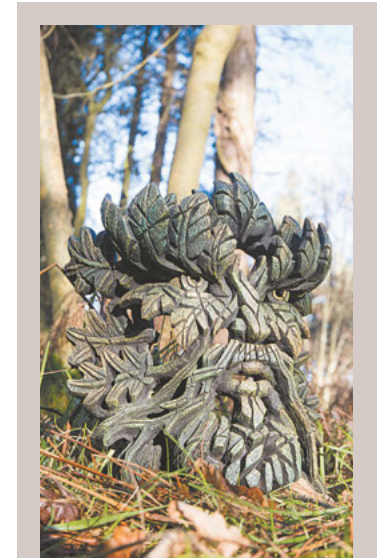
### SURVIVALIST

That's just one of the activities she runs as part of the Forest Survival course, which educates visitors in how to build shelters and explains the best way of surviving on intuition alone, like her hero Bear Grylls.

“Everything we need is here in the forest, so we take visitors away from their hot tubs and cabins for a few hours to make them really feel like they are part of the natural environment they're staying in,” she said.

“The survival course ends with us testing the shelters they've made to see if they're waterproof – the kids love it if they're not and mum and dad get soaked – and foraging for nettle, wild raspberry and sloes. We don't try to be quite as adventurous as Bear though.”

When she's not spreading the survivalist mantra and wielding Swedish fire steels over dried kindling, Charlie



leads Forest Bathing sessions, the Japanese therapy of Shinrin-yoku or ‘taking in the forest atmosphere’. Forest Night Vision courses for guests armed with infrared scopes and detectors help them pick out nocturnal life and the sound of nearby bats, while geocaching – a form of electronic orienteering – is popular and a reasonably priced add-on for groups eager to learn about nature through fun.

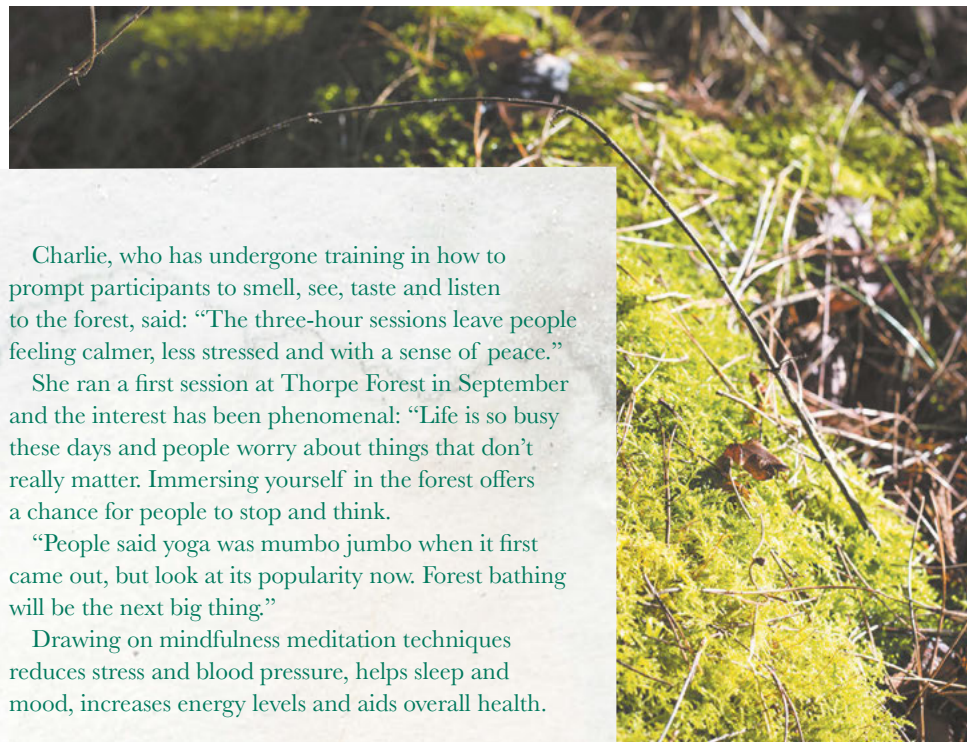
Charlie also liaises closely with the landscape management team to ensure the forest is well-maintained within Forestry Commission guidelines to offer an attractive ‘real’ environment for the wildlife that co-exists just feet from visitors’ cabins. Testament to that is the towering woodland of Corsican pine and silver birch that whispers in the wind as the possibility

### REST AND RELAX

- ▶ Many guests cite the hassle of travelling abroad for their stay.
- ▶ The location works with Go Ape! and Thorpe Woodlands Adventure Centre for archery, canoeing and climbing.
- ▶ Third-party providers offer spa treatments in the cabin.
- ▶ A small shop stocks local produce, including Norfolk Gin.
- ▶ Forest Holidays treats dogs as members of the family.

*“We make the forest, nature and reconnecting with what really matters the focal points, and our customers love it”*





## FOREST MEDICINE

Forest Ranger Charlie is one of the nation's first teachers of a new alternative therapy currently sweeping the United States.

She's aware there might be cynicism in some quarters over the medicinal qualities of Shinrin-yoku, but is unequivocal about the benefits of practising mindfulness under the canopy of a living forest. Forest



Bathing, to give it a more manageable name, is based on the concept that if a person visits a natural area and uses their senses in a relaxed way, it will bring calming, rejuvenating and restorative benefits.

Charlie, who has undergone training in how to prompt participants to smell, see, taste and listen to the forest, said: "The three-hour sessions leave people feeling calmer, less stressed and with a sense of peace."

She ran a first session at Thorpe Forest in September and the interest has been phenomenal: "Life is so busy these days and people worry about things that don't really matter. Immersing yourself in the forest offers a chance for people to stop and think.

"People said yoga was mumbo jumbo when it first came out, but look at its popularity now. Forest bathing will be the next big thing."

Drawing on mindfulness meditation techniques reduces stress and blood pressure, helps sleep and mood, increases energy levels and aids overall health.



of spotting hares, owls, nightjars, bats and muntjac deer ensures visitors, young and old, remain alert more than 100 feet below.

## RECONNECTING

That 'oneness' with nature in the company of loved ones is just one of the many factors that Thorpe Forest General Manager Lee James says contributes to the year-round 92% nationwide occupancy rate at Forest Holidays' locations.

"We encourage visitors to forget the outside world. Many live in cities within 90 minutes of our locations and when they get here we make no apologies for the mobile reception. Within hours you can see them relaxing," he laughed. "We make the forest, nature and reconnecting with what really matters the focal points, and our customers love it."

Various-size cabins, from a romantic hideaway for two to a luxury treehouse for 10, nestle discreetly in the heart of Thorpe Forest, but there's no imperative to remain on-site. The team actively encourage visitors to get out and experience one of the 12 walking and



Making unforgettable family memories is at the root of the company's ethos, insists Thorpe Forest General Manager Lee James



For more information:  
[forestholidays.co.uk](http://forestholidays.co.uk)

three cycling trails from the forest, including the Peddars Way, whose quiet lanes lead walkers to nearby Thetford and Castle Mound, at 40ft high one of the largest in the country.

Partnerships Executive Charlotte Thorogood develops relationships with local partners and it's a model she insists sets the business apart from its rivals: "We actively promote local activities and attractions, and urge people to explore beyond the forest. Being part of the community is a strength for us. We also work with National Trust properties, with the overarching aim of helping people rediscover the countryside."

The lure of bringing disparate family of varying ages together is the main feedback from many of the 328 guests at Thorpe Forest staying there at any one time. Lee said: "It's about creating those moments that you'd love to bottle and remember forever. I've worked here 18 months and just being close to the forest and countryside every day changes your outlook on life.

"I can honestly say that we are one of the countryside's best-kept secrets."



# CONNECTING

A SERIES OF NATIONAL GRID GRANTS ARE BRINGING SMILES TO FACES IN AREAS WHERE IT OPERATES

For the past two years National Grid has been investing in the community through its Community Grant Programme. The scheme, now in its third year, helps organisations and charities in areas where the company's operations and site activities have had an impact on local people.

The investments provide a much-needed financial injection for a number of projects run by local charities and community organisations. And through these projects it is hoped communities gain an improved quality of life through the resulting social, economic and environmental benefits.

Last year National Grid provided 22 community grants across the UK totalling £296,072 to pay for everything from new camping equipment to theatre redevelopment.



**1 WARWICKSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF YOUTH CLUBS (WAYC)**  
**GRANT FOR Brunswick Summer Scheme 2017**

The WAYC was awarded a National Grid Community Grant for £12,440 to support the costs of a five-week summer activity programme for 80 disadvantaged and diverse young people aged 10 to 19 from low-income families.

**LOCATION** Leamington Spa  
**REGION** North West & Central

**2 STONY STRATFORD IN BLOOM (SSIB)**

**GRANT FOR Stony Stratford North End Pond project**

The team wanted to improve access to the wildlife conservation area of a former gas decompression site, which consisted of overgrown and heavily littered wasteland.

National Grid awarded SSIB a £5,000 Community Grant to help with the project. The grant covered the costs of extending a pathway, levelling ground and adding railings around the pond area, allowing for a viewing jetty to be created with room for a visitors' picnic area.

**LOCATION** Milton Keynes  
**REGION** London & South East



**3 1ST CONNAH'S QUAY SCOUT HQ**  
**GRANT FOR Replacement of the Scout headquarters' roof**

The Scout group applied for a National Grid Community Grant of £15,000 to help towards the cost of a new roof as the previous one was leaking badly.

This was on the basis that the new structure would help make the hut more energy-efficient and help to provide some long-term security for a range of local community activities.

**LOCATION** Flintshire  
**REGION** Wales



**4 1ST GOXHILL & BARROW SCOUTS**  
**GRANT FOR New camping equipment**

With their gear no longer fit for purpose, 1st Goxhill & Barrow Scouts were awarded a £1,000 National Grid Community Grant to buy nine new tents, a gazebo and toilet tents.

**LOCATION** New Holland, Lincolnshire  
**REGION** East Coast





# COMMUNITIES



## 5 ILEAP CHARITY GRANT FOR ILEAP Marketability project

The ILEAP Marketability project gives people with learning disabilities the opportunity to work on a market stall and develop skills in arts and crafts, producing items that can be sold.

National Grid was happy to provide a Community Grant for £10,000 to help towards the running costs of the project across the whole of South Warwickshire.

**LOCATION** South Warwickshire  
**REGION** North West & Central

## 6 GREENFINGERS COMMUNITY PROJECT

### GRANT FOR New mower

A grant of £1,500 was awarded to help purchase a new ride-on mower for the Greenfingers Community project, which supports community allotments.

**LOCATION** Lancashire  
**REGION** North West & Central

## 7 ISLE OF ANGLESEY DISTRICT SCOUT COUNCIL

### GRANT FOR Greenfield camping site

As a Site of Special Scientific Interest the Isle of Anglesey District Scout Council decided to work with Natural Resources Wales to help restore the six main field areas back to meadow-like grassland in rotation around camping activities.

They were awarded a grant for £11,000 to help support their project.

**LOCATION** Anglesey  
**REGION** Wales

## 8 HULL & DISTRICT ANGLERS' ASSOCIATION

### GRANT FOR Portakabins for Brough

When five Portakabins were due to be scrapped from the Hatton compressor station site, the Hull & District Anglers' Association spotted an opportunity to upgrade its base and acted swiftly to replace its old home.

But the Association needed a £5,280 grant to help transport the cabins to the fishing club and adjacent sailing club. National Grid obliged.

**LOCATION** Hull  
**REGION** North West & Central

## 9 GROUNDWORK IN BOLTON, BURY, OLDHAM & ROCHDALE

### GRANT FOR Green Doctor project

Groundwork in Bolton, Bury, Oldham & Rochdale was awarded a National Grid Community Grant for £20,000 to help support its Green Doctor project.

The project involves providing fuel poverty education and support directly to affected households and the funding helped pay for staff time along with the cost of items to reduce household energy costs, such as light bulbs, draft excluders and hot-water tank jackets.

**LOCATION** Rochdale  
**REGION** North West & Central

## 10 INSPIRATION CREATIVE GRANT FOR The Fusion project

Inspiration Creative aims to support hard-to-reach members of the community, improve inclusion and diversity, and build community groups. Most adults involved are deaf, blind or have a physical or learning disability, and have a goal to join in a public performance. A £20,000 grant is helping realise the dream for 70 adult members.

**LOCATION** Thanet, Kent  
**REGION** London & South East



To find out more about the Community Grant Programme and how to apply, visit <http://bet.nationalgrid.co.uk/>



# BUSINESS IS *flying*

THE HUSBAND AND WIFE GRANTOR TEAM WHO TURNED A THRIVING FARM INTO A BUSINESS THAT TOOK WING WITHIN MONTHS

“We used to be a farm that had a bird food business. Now we’re a bird food business with a farm.” Andy Wiles admits his journey from arable farmer to boss of a burgeoning seed business began, pardon the pun, on something of a wing and a prayer.

“I bought some bird food locally, took it home and analysed it. I made up a tonne of Brinvale Bird Seed to see if I could sell it and within a week it was all sold,” he said.

That was the catalyst for a change of direction for the 1,000-acre farm spread across 25 miles around the beautiful Vale of Belvoir on the Nottinghamshire-Leicestershire border.

## INTERNET PRESENCE

What started as a small concern selling bird food to locals from his and wife Hilary’s garage in Melton Mowbray is now a thriving purpose-built shop that supports a national internet presence.

Last year Brinvale Bird Foods established itself as one of the country’s leading retailers, with tonne after tonne of seed flying out the doors to the hungry sparrow, blackbird, robin, blue tit and many other feathered communities.

Growing demand for Brinvale’s bird food from the British public – 20% in the last year alone – has seen the family business expand, with recent investment going towards building a packing warehouse to cope with demand.

Timing has been key for father-of-two Andy, who stole a march on the handful of other competitors just as he needed to diversify to support his interest in traditional farming: “Luckily, our son Richard loves that side of the business, so it’s all come together perfectly.”

Just as well because 75% of the contents of electricity grantor Brinvale’s 1kg to 25kg bags of poultry mixed corn and wild bird mixes

have played their part in a greater ecological and environmental awareness across the UK.

“We’re a nation of animal lovers but there has also been a tangible shift towards mindfulness, wellness and the therapeutic benefits of attracting wildlife to our gardens,” said Hilary.

“The activity of looking after our wildlife is gathering pace and that extends to birds. We’re seeing a significant increase in both numbers and customer demographic every year.”



## BESPOKE MIXES

Two thirds of Brinvale’s customers – many order Brinvale’s bespoke mixes on repeat – are aged 40 and upwards and hail from rural areas, but schools, city dwellers, ex-pats and families with young children are big growth areas.

Andy is adamant: “We’re not twitchers or birdwatching fanatics, but there aren’t many more relaxing ways to pass the time than watching different birds feeding in your garden.

“We’re also seeing a trend

for buying food for squirrels, badgers, foxes and hedgehogs, as well as a willingness to buy our visitors the best temporary shelters and houses.”

The allure, said Andy, lies in the fact that attracting wildlife is an inexpensive and instantly rewarding activity, thanks to Brinvale’s next-day delivery and lack of cheap fillers that turn to dust: “In a world where bad news grabs the headlines, we offer a plump, quality product that helps create the perfect antidote.”

originate from its fields of wheat, millet, canary and oil seed rape.

## PERFECT ANTIDOTE

Hilary provided the motivation behind the surge in internet orders since 2010, which has retail now accounting for 60% of the order book compared to 10% when the business first started in 2004. She believes the popularity of nature-related programmes such as Springwatch



### JUMBO PEANUTS

**Why** Rich in fat.

**Loved by** Tits, greenfinches, house sparrows, nuthatches, great spotted woodpeckers and siskins. Smaller peanut granules will attract robins, dunnocks and wrens.

### SUET-FILLED COCONUT

**Why** A high-energy food source for wild birds, essential for them in the cold winter months. It's a great source of protein and nutrients for the birds when insects and other food sources are scarce.

**Loved by** Tits, finches, starlings and robins.

### BLACK SUNFLOWER SEEDS

**Why** High natural oil content, protein, vitamins and minerals. The oil content is higher in black seeds than striped ones.

**Loved by** Blackbirds, blue tits, coal tits, collared doves, woodpeckers, greenfinches, house sparrows and robins.

# 6

## OF THE BEST SEEDS

### ALL-SEASONS WILD BIRD MIX

**Why** High-quality mix of sunflower hearts, black sunflower seeds, peanut grains and millet that provides high amounts of energy for wild birds of all sizes.

**Loved by** All wild birds, from dunnocks to reed buntings, including fledglings unable to feed on larger peanuts.

### MIXED SUET PELLETS

**Why** Tasty, easy to digest and full of energy and nutrients in pellet form, but logs and bars are better if you want to watch feeding time.

**Loved by** Dunnocks, collared doves, robins, chaffinches, wrens, great tits and great spotted woodpeckers.

### DRIED MEALWORMS

**Why** Essential source of protein and fat for chicks in the breeding season, especially important if moistened in dry spells.

**Loved by** Softbill birds such as robins, blue tits, wrens and blackbirds.



For more information:  
[www.brinvale.com](http://www.brinvale.com)



# LASTWORD

*Spring into spring with two top prizes*



## AN 'ULTIMATE TIME TOGETHER' EXPERIENCE DAY

Whether it's a short break at a relaxing spa, a cocktail-making class or a helicopter flight, there's nothing quite like having a new experience to look forward to.

We've found 1,000 of the best getaway breaks for two to help you enjoy a fine meal or get your adrenaline racing.

For a chance to win an experience at a location near you, like grantor Bryan Frazer did last time in Gridline's minibreak competition, answer the question below.

### Q What distance rule should be adhered to if you're having a bonfire near overhead lines?

Email your answer, name and contact details to [gridline@madebysonder.com](mailto:gridline@madebysonder.com)

Alternatively, send your entry to **Sonder Time Together Day competition, Victoria Court, 8 Dormer Place, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 5AE to arrive no later than 31 July 2018.**



## SHARE YOUR STORY

Around 40,000 grantors read award-winning Gridline, so why not share your story of diversification, innovation or success against the odds, or to celebrate a lifetime of being a landowner? Remember: quirky is good.

[gridline@nationalgrid.com](mailto:gridline@nationalgrid.com)

## DID YOU KNOW?



# 50

*The number of strategic sites identified by National Grid around Britain for installing superfast charging points for electric cars, meaning more than 90% of drivers would always be within 50 miles of a point wherever they were in the UK*

## LITTLE ACORNS TO A MIGHTY SHOPPING SPREE

**WIN**

Grantor John Hardy Russell-Smith spent the day clearing a stricken oak tree from a stream on his land and took this mystical, misty shot as he prepared to call it a day: "It still rests where it fell and provides a bridge over the stream and I am inspired to leave it just like that. Great to look at and very handy."

John's 'love the land' shot won him a £100 shopping spree, but Gridline is opening up the entry criteria this time and will publish some of the best shots in the next edition. So send your high-resolution picture of the countryside to [gridline@madebysonder.com](mailto:gridline@madebysonder.com) before 31 July 2018.



**COMPETITION TERMS AND CONDITIONS** TIME TOGETHER DAY: The winner will be the first entrant selected at random who correctly identifies the answer and who is a National Grid grantor at the time of the draw. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Gridline reserves the right to change the prize without prior notice. The prize is not transferable and cannot be exchanged for cash. Closing date is 31 July 2018. PHOTO: The winning image will be the one judged to be the most visually appealing, original and relevant to the theme and will feature in the next edition. The winner must be a National Grid grantor. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Gridline reserves the right to change the prize without prior notice. The prize is not transferable and cannot be exchanged for cash. The closing date is 31 July 2018.

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