

GridLine

Newsletter for National Grid Transco electricity grantors

Winter 2004/2005



Last year's British national ploughing champions Don Woodhouse, left from Retford, Nottinghamshire, and Andrew Mitchell (senior), centre, from Forfar, Angus. Field wayleave officer Richard Evans presents the trophies. This year's championships will be at Soham in Cambridgeshire. See pages 10/11.

We're making a big show!

SHOWTIME is just around the corner! We kick off our agricultural relations programme in May at the Devon County Show in Exeter, which last year attracted more than 90,000 visitors.

Over the following months, we look forward to welcoming grantors at another 10 venues, culminating with the National Ploughing Championships at Soham in Cambridgeshire in October.

During last year's programme, we welcomed around 3,000 grantors and guests for lunch, and many more joined us for free refreshments at our hospitality facility*.

"We have been urging grantors to come and meet us at agricultural shows since 1996 — we see the occasions as valuable opportunities for them to drop in and meet their local wayleave contact," said Alan Naylor, field wayleave manager.

"We also welcome their feedback because it's a useful way they can help us improve our service to them.

"We hope that members of our Grantors Club will join us for tea, coffee and a chat — all they have to do is wear their swing badges."

*Not available between 12-2.30pm.

Come and meet us at:

- Devon County Show, Exeter, May 19-21
- South of England Show, Ardingly, West Sussex, June 9-11
- East of England Show, Peterborough, June 17-19
- Lincolnshire Show, Lincoln, June 22 and 23
- Royal Highland Show, Edinburgh, June 23-26
- Great Yorkshire Show, Harrogate, July 12-14
- New Forest Show, Brockenhurst, Hampshire, July 26-28
- Royal Lancashire Show, Ribchester, July 26-28
- Pembrokeshire Show, Haverfordwest, August 16-18
- Dorset Show, Dorchester, September 3-4
- National Ploughing Championships, Cambridgeshire, October 8-9.

Warning on bogus agents

THE Country Land and Business Association (CLA) has warned about bogus "agents" operating around the country.

It says these agents have been cold-calling landowners and farmers and subjecting them to high pressure sales techniques to persuade them to agree to pay a fee of 20 per cent of any wayleave payments they obtain on the owner's behalf.

The CLA's head of rural economy and chief surveyor, Oliver Harwood, said: "Many of these agents are not professionally qualified and there is no need to pay a third party such a large part of the payments which are properly due to the owner under the agreements CLA negotiates with the major utility companies.

"In many cases, our members are best advised to secure the full payment for themselves by following our guidance* and writing to the utility concerned, or to use their own trusted agent."

If you need more information about your existing arrangements with NGT, or wish to consider converting your wayleave to an easement in return for a one-off payment, contact your local wayleave officer as listed on the back page of *GridLine*.

*Download advice on wayleave payments from the CLA website — www.cla.org.uk under Guidance Notes.

Light at the end of Dartford cable tunnel

THE Dartford 400kV cable tunnel project is moving towards completion.

This multi-million scheme was launched in 2003 and is on target for final commissioning in June 2005.

The new 2.4km tunnel, which runs from Littlebrook in Kent to Thurrock in Essex, was commissioned by NGT's civil engineering contractor AMEC in October.

The tunnel contract was worth around £20 million.

ABB, which has the £12 million cable

and switchgear contract, has started work on the installation of two 275kV circuits in the new tunnel. These will replace two 275kV circuits removed from beneath the road deck of the west Dartford road tunnel.

Introducing the new tunnel means future maintenance can be carried out without affecting traffic flow on London's orbital motorway network. The tunnel will also significantly increase the security of major and important National Grid Transco assets.

NGT's Scott Sadler, project manager, said: "The achievement of this important project milestone has needed considerable effort by all parties involved, with both our tunnel contractor AMEC and NGT site supervision consultant Babties working extended hours to achieve the October deadline.

"It means we can now look forward to an overall completion date this summer, and with the commissioning of the two circuits reinstate an important part of the NGT system."



A worker is dwarfed by the cable, which arrived in 950-metre lengths on 63 drums, each weighing 44.5 tonnes

London Connection completion on target

THE countdown is on to the completion of one of the biggest projects undertaken by National Grid Transco.

The £200 million scheme — known as The London Connection — will reinforce electricity supplies to the capital and has involved the construction of a 20-kilometre tunnel running from Elstree in Hertfordshire to St John's Wood in north London.

Launched in March 2000, the project is on target for completion at the end of 2005.

The final stage got under way in 2004 as work started on one of the longest 400kV cable circuit installations in

Europe. The cable arrived in 950-metre lengths on 63 drums, each weighing 44.5 tonnes gross and measuring 4.5 metres diameter, to the installation sites at Elstree, Hertfordshire and Cricklewood in north London.

Cable — designed to require low maintenance — was pulled off the cable drums by winches at a rate of about 20 metres a minute, or 1,200 metres an hour.

The new tunnel, all seven tunnel shafts and head house buildings have been built by Murphy Group, and the work has included the design, procurement and installation of all mechanical and electrical

services. These include ventilation, communications, temperature sensing systems, gas and fire detection and a monorail mounted tunnel inspection vehicle.

Two new 400kV substations are being built at existing National Grid Transco sites at Elstree and St John's Wood and five new transformers have already been installed.

The three-metre diameter tunnel runs at an average depth of 27 metres and has been designed to accommodate a second circuit in years to come.

This will ensure we meet the needs of Londoners well into the future.

Workers told to watch the birdie

NIGHTINGALES don't just sing in Berkeley Square — they also sing in the woods of Whisby Nature Park near Lincoln.

Which is why NGT will be taking care not to disturb their habitat and nesting activities when it undertakes a multi-million pound refurbishment of the West Burton to Walpole line in 2005.

The company's contractors, Balfour Beatty Power Networks, is due to start refurbishing the whole of the 90-kilometre 400kV overhead line from West Burton near Retford in Nottinghamshire to Walpole near Wisbech in Cambridgeshire in March. Completion is expected by the end of the year.

The work will involve the replacement of quad conductors on the line with a new triple set and there will be upgrading of some of the pylon foundations and replacement of all tower fittings and any faulty steelwork.

"Tree cutting work at Whisby will be undertaken outside the nesting period and the erection and dismantling of a railway scaffold and the changing of the wires will be done in two stages, before nesting starts and after it has finished," said field wayleave officer Robin O'Brien.

"On the whole, the line crosses high-quality farmland owned by 135



Teaming up... Graham, left, and Robin
INSET: A nightingale in full song — PICTURE COLIN CARVER

grantors. However, on the outskirts of Lincoln, the line also crosses the Nature Park, Lincoln Golf Centre and a busy road junction of the A46 with a tower situated in the car park of the Gamekeeper Pub at North Hykeham outside Lincoln.

"We will be working closely with everyone concerned to ensure this large scheme causes as little disruption as possible."

Whisby Nature Park's assistant warden Grahame Hopwood said: "Nightingales are one of the most important breeding species at Whisby, with visitors coming from as far away as Yorkshire and Cheshire to see and hear the birds. By working closely with all parties concerned, we have come up with a work programme that ensure the nightingales can breed with the absolute minimum of disturbance."

Pylon perfect for peregrine perch

In the last issue of *GridLine*, we featured a story about the efforts made by National Grid Transco and its contractors to protect nesting peregrine falcons during a refurbishment project in Dorset.

The peregrines were nesting on towers on the 400kV overhead line between

Mannington substation in Wimborne and Chickerell substation in Weymouth.

About three kilometres of the line crosses the northern part of the Army's Bovington Training Area — and Army photographer Alan Atkins was able to capture some shots of a female peregrine as it was about to leave the nest.

Changes for centres

NGT is to focus future support on six of its current 12 environmental education centres. It will work closely with partner organisations to improve services and raise greater awareness of energy education.

The company hopes that the remaining six centres will continue their work delivering environmental education in their areas. In future, NGT's support to these centres will be in the form of continued rent-free access to the land and buildings.

External relations manager Ross Hayman said: "The environmental centres were set up at different times over the last 30 years at electricity substation sites and some are now far from where our employees are based.

"The six we intend to concentrate on are close to either our own main office locations or to major population centres. Although we won't continue to provide funding to the other six, we hope they'll be able to take advantage of continued use of the sites and to be able to utilise their independence to expand their markets."

The six supported centres are Bishops Wood, near Kidderminster, Worcestershire, Iver near Slough, Penwortham near Preston, Skelton Grange near Leeds, West Boldon near Newcastle and Canterbury.

Pupils get a helping hand

NGT came to the rescue after vandals ruined a wildlife pond at Windhill Primary School in Shipley, West Yorkshire.

The pupils were devastated when the pond they had designed and created themselves was vandalised shortly before its unveiling.

NGT — which was working near the school refurbishing its network of underground transmission cables — stepped in and came up with the funds to restore the pond and help create a bigger and better wildlife area for the children to enjoy.

Campaign helps save our history

THE Tree Council has launched a Green Monuments campaign to gain special protected status for the UK's ancient and historic trees.

Even those dating from William the Conqueror's time may be at risk because there is no specific protection for historic importance — even for trees as old as Stonehenge are vulnerable.

The Tree Council — which is supported by NGT — wants the government to change this situation.

"Historic trees are as important to our heritage as the great stately homes and castles, yet many of them could be felled tomorrow without contravening any regulations," said director-general Pauline Buchanan Black. "It is the view of Tree Council members that they should qualify as a form of historic monument and should be specifically protected. The fact that no single government department has responsibility for historic and ancient trees should not be an excuse to do nothing."

Pauline said the trees include yews that could have been saplings when Stonehenge was being built, and oaks that have probably been around since before the Norman Conquest.

"There are others which may not be ancient, but still matter very much because of their associations with an important historic event or person or because they were the first of their kind to be planted in this country.

"Such protection that exists for historic trees is coincidental and not by deliberate design. People often assume that all historic trees are protected in some way, perhaps by tree preservation orders. But trees which are not visible to the public are unlikely to qualify. It

means that many of the trees identified by wardens and featured in our *Great British Trees* book, could be ruled out."

The Tree Council outlined the weaknesses and shortcomings in a letter to Tessa Jowell at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in October 2003. The letter was written in consultation with many of its members along with the Campaign to Protect Rural England and Tree Register of the British Isles. A number of these organisations, including the Woodland Trust and Ancient Tree Forum, are taking action to reinforce this campaign.

Pauline said that, so far, there has been no satisfactory response from the DCMS, so the Green Monument Working Party is now compiling detailed evidence for a presentation to Richard McCarthy, director-general of the sustainable communities delivery unit at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. It will include evidence of trees already lost through vandalism, planning or neglect, as well as examples of good practice in local authorities.

Heritage book will play its part

A NEW publication — *The Heritage Trees of Britain and Northern Ireland** — is playing its part in supporting the Green Monuments campaign.

The hardback book, published by Constable & Robinson in association with The Tree Council, contains portraits of 88 trees from around the UK chosen for their outstanding cultural and heritage worth.

It has been written by Jon Stokes, The Tree Council's director of community

projects and co-ordinator of its national Tree Warden Scheme — which is run in partnership with NGT — and Donald Rodger, a Scottish-based tree and woodland consultant.

It features colour portraits by British landscape photographer Archie Miles and Edward Parker, who is renowned for his photography of international environmental issues.

Among the trees featured are Rizzio's Chestnut, planted by the Italian

confidant of Mary, Queen of Scots shortly before his murder, the legendary Bleeding Yew in a Welsh churchyard, and the original Bramley apple tree in Southwell, Nottinghamshire.

Jon said he is delighted the book has been received so well and hopes it will increase awareness of our national "green monuments" and the need for stronger protection measures.

**The Heritage Trees of Britain and Northern Ireland* — ISBN 1 84119 9591. £16.99.



The Scone Douglas — one of Britain's "green monuments"

Conference spells out overhead supply risks

NATIONAL Grid Transco's relationship with trees was reinforced at a conference in Warwickshire.

The conference at Ettingham Park Hotel at Stratford-upon-Avon was organised by The Tree Council for nearly 60 tree warden network co-ordinators representing councils around the country.

The theme was Protect Our Heritage Trees in support of The Tree Council's Green Monuments campaign. It was chaired by Sue Roe, The Tree Council's chairman.

NGT land and development officer Aileen Smith outlined the public safety and electricity supply reliability issues involved in trees and power lines.

She also described how the company works in partnership with stakeholders to develop its tree policy.

She described how live conductors are uninsulated — or bare — and how electricity can arc or "jump" across to an object that is too close.

A flashover to a tree can result in the tree becoming

live as the electricity seeks a path, causing a danger to the public and resulting in a fire.

A flashover or tree falling on to a line can also lead to a loss of supply, as with recent major power cuts in both the USA and Italy. This illustrated the importance of ensuring trees and vegetation next to and beneath NGT's electricity lines are managed.

Aileen also talked about minimum clearances necessary between high-voltage overhead line conductors and trees, and the safety measures needed when working near overhead lines.

She said a survey of the NGT network revealed that out of about 22,000 spans along 7,200 kilometres of overhead line in England and Wales, 11,000 spans require continuing management of trees and vegetation.

● NGT provides information on how close trees can be planted to high voltage overhead lines — visit www.nationalgrid.com/uk/sen-seofplace



Conference speaker... Aileen Smith

Project should keep trees on right lines

A PILOT project is under way in NGT to prevent tall trees growing too close to overhead lines.

The new system — integrated vegetation management (IVM) — uses herbicide to stop re-growth of tall, fast-growing species.

The pilot involves 100 sites across England and Wales, 10 of which will be assessed by ecological specialists before and after the herbicide application.

Traditionally, trees growing near overhead lines have been pruned or felled to maintain safety clearances between equipment and conductors and prevent faults on the transmission system.

However, this is a continuing task and repeated cutting leads to well-established hardwood tree root systems and even more vigorous re-sprouting.

Using IVM establishes a low growing shrub, herb and grass layer in the area underneath the overhead lines. Once this layer is established,

site visits could be reduced to once every five years.

David Roberts of overhead line national contracts said that advantages include the creation of a biodiverse eco-system.

"A key advantage is the extended maintenance cycles for grantors and subsequent cost savings.

"There are also a number of environmental benefits because herbicide applications don't disturb wildlife and birds, particularly during the nesting season, and there is less need to fell large trees once the low-growing shrub layer has been established.

"The initial feedback from grantors has been very favourable."

The trials of the technique, which has been used successfully in the USA for 40 years, are being carried out by Fountain Support Services as part of their vegetation management contract with NGT.

Cash raised for charity

NGT helped boost the coffers of the BBC Children in Need appeal in November by nearly £44,000.

Half of this money was raised by staff in a fund-raising bonanza that included auctions, dressing-down days, raffles and even samosa sales!

The company matched donations £1 for £1.

NGT community relations officer Trish Handsley and colleagues were in the BBC TV studio to hand over the cheque.



Ron Gilmour beside the North Yorkshire line at Easingwold, Yorkshire

Warden hangs up her boots

SOUTH Wales wayleave warden Sandra Stevens, above, is off to pastures new — retirement.

She has worked at National Grid Transco for 10 years, the past two as part of the wayleave field team.

Sandra says she has thoroughly enjoyed her time with National Grid, especially as a warden, and now looks forward to spending more time with her family and her two young grandchildren.

Moving on, but same line of work

WHEN Ron Gilmour left school at 16, having spent his first 15 years abroad as a serviceman's son, he went to work in the office of a steel construction and fabrication firm in Harrogate.

"The company provided steel for 400kV pylons — little did I realise then that one day I might be standing in a field talking to a grantor next to a pylon we had provided the steelwork for!" he said.

Ron, now 56, retires at the end of March after almost 30 years in the electricity supply

industry. He joined the accounts department of the former Central Electricity Generating Board's (CEGB) North East regional HQ in Leeds in 1976, and later moved into purchasing contracts and stores before joining wayleaves in 1985 at CEGB's offices in Harrogate.

"I was encouraged to apply for an opening in the department by a couple of friends, both wayleave officers, Mike Ford and Scott Stephenson — Scott, of course, is still a wayleave officer in the North East."

After a couple of years in the records office, Ron joined the field wayleave team — and never looked back. "I have really loved the work, because no two days are ever the same and I've a chance to meet a wonderful, diverse mix of people," he said. "One minute you can be chatting to a humble farmer with a smallholding, the next talking to a titled grantor with thousands of acres of land.

"Some projects have involved cable work in the centre of large cities, while other projects have

seen work being carried out on overhead lines across inhospitable terrain, perhaps 1,000 feet up on the Pennine Hills where in some cases helicopter was the only practical way to transport materials to site.

"You really see life as a wayleave officer — there are lots of stories to tell, but probably not in *GridLine!*"

For the past 11 years, Ron has been closely involved in wayleaves for the £230 million second Yorkshire Line project which was completed in 2003

and the subsequent dismantling of the overhead line between Middlesbrough and Stockton. He has no intention of letting the grass grow under his feet and is keen to continue in the same line of work on an agency basis.

He and his wife Rosemary have three grown-up children who are busy forging their own careers — "but still living at home," said Ron. A keen DIY man, he built his own house in Harrogate 20 years ago; he also expects Rosemary will have a few jobs lined up for him!

New recruit loves the outdoor life

SUE Dunham loves the Great Outdoors — which is why she is delighted to join NGT's wayleave field team in East Anglia as a wayleave warden.

After years in sales and marketing — she sold posh hairbrushes to London stores — law degree studies and office-based roles, she is looking forward to getting out and about in the countryside.

Sue, who has two grown-up sons, is a keen dinghy sailor and loves being close to nature... so much so, that she has lived for the past six years on a 1947 motor fishing vessel on the River Deben in Suffolk.

The boat, called *Monbretia*, is moored near Woodbridge. "It's an idyllic

setting for observing wildlife," she said.

After working in sales and marketing, Sue became a mature student and studied law at Hertfordshire University, graduating in 1995. She worked in a chartered surveyors' practice for some time, before joining NGT in December 1999 as section co-ordinator for engineering services maintenance based at Bramford in Suffolk.

She later joined Gridcom, the company's telecommunications infrastructure division, to help run the access teams.

● Sue takes over from Amy Jones who is now a land and development officer based at NGT headquarters in Warwick.



Sue Dunham beside her house boat Monbretia

The Exmoor pony is said to be rarer than China's giant panda — it's certainly listed as an endangered species by the UK's Rare Breeds Survival Trust.

The pony is a survivor that for many centuries existed on the moor with little human interference. But in the past 200 years there has been a decline as the result of enclosure of much of the moor, agricultural intensification, the spread of motor transport and the "improvement" of our native ponies by cross-breeding. NGT grantor Des Girdler and his wife Gill in Cornwall are fighting back with their Helman Tor Exmoor pony herd...

Exmoors feel the benefit thanks to a departure from Gatwick to Cornwall...

Ponies boosted by couple's 'escape'

THE Girdlers "escaped" to Cornwall 16 years ago, and say it was the best decision they ever made.

It's certainly one that has benefited the future of the Exmoor pony — and part of the Cornish countryside that has been returned to its natural state.

Des, 65, and Gill, 69, moved to their 180-acre farm at Higher Trevilmick, Lanivet, near Bodmin, when life became untenable in Surrey.

"We ran a poultry farm in Lingfield, directly under the flight path to Gatwick Airport," said Des. "Air traffic was becoming increasingly heavy, the great storm of 1987 severely damaged our poultry buildings, and then we were hit by the salmonella scare. We decided it was time to move on!"

The couple and their two children Colin and Jennifer — plus the family pony, llama and a collection of goats, cats and dogs — ended up at Higher Trevilmick, in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and with Redmoor Memorial Reserve on its boundary and the Neolithic hill settlement Helman Tor on its doorstep.

"We intended to move to Exmoor — but



fortunately fate brought us here instead," said Gill.

Higher Trevilmick had been intensively farmed and the previous owner had kept a beef suckler herd. Des and Gill were keen to enhance and conserve the natural landscape by returning the land to moorland. "We were one of the first farms to benefit from the Countryside Stewardship Scheme which allowed us to develop an upland sheep farm," said Des.

Exmoor ponies first came to the farm 14 years ago thanks to Gill, who has been "horse mad" all her life.

She said: "I probably rode a horse before I walked. I grew up living next door to the farm in Reigate owned by J Arthur Rank, the film producer. He had lots of Shire horses and some of my earliest memories are of being taken for rides by carters.

"I never had a pony of my own — I'd beg, borrow or steal a ride — so when our children came along, we bought one for them. Colin started riding at 18 months and grew up to do well on the show jumping circuit.

"We thought that keeping and breeding Exmoors



would be something we could do together. We started off with two six-month-old foals and today we have a semi-feral herd of 37 ponies, including two licensed stallions. Most we have bred ourselves, although we have re-homed some ponies, including one from a riding school."

Des said that they faced criticism to begin with. "A few people thought we were being really cruel, because we didn't provide stables or field shelters," he said.

"They didn't realise it's not necessary — nature has designed a pony suited to survival in the cold and wet. It doesn't need man and we didn't want to interfere with nature, although obviously we look out for their welfare. They eat the grass, heather and gorse, get extremely fat in the summer and live off this fat in

the winter when food is scarcer. I've seen an Exmoor turn its nose up at top quality horse feed in favour of gorse!"

The ponies graze about 100 acres of the Redmoor Reserve, part of the Cornwall Wildlife Trust's Helman Tor Nature Reserve. "When we came here, Redmoor was like a jungle and I actually got lost in it once!" said Des. "The ponies soon made tracks through the reserve and by grazing along these tracks they made a safe trail that can be used by visitors."

Occasionally the couple exhibit some of their Exmoors at events like the Royal Cornwall Show. "But the real pleasure comes from simply enjoying them and seeing them out there in their natural habitat," said Des.

"It's good to know that we are doing our bit to protect their future, and that they, in turn, are doing their bit to manage the land the way it should be."

● Higher Trevilmick is crossed by the 400kV Landulph-Indian Queens overhead line.

"The coming generations will have good reason to call us unfaithful stewards if when we are gone there are no little horses on the Exmoor hills."

Mary Etherington, 1947

Mary, who lived on Exmoor, championed the future of the Exmoor pony. The late 1940s nearly saw their demise — gates left open and ponies stolen to provide food for city dwellers contributed to a dwindling pony population. By the end of the Second World War, no more than 50 Exmoor ponies survived. Mary rallied the breeders who set about re-establishing their herds.



Des and Gill Girdler have a close encounter with one of their charges, Pinkery Fuschia

Right: ponies tuck in to their favourite meal of grass, heather and gorse

They're born to be wild

● Exmoor ponies are thought to descend from the first wild ponies that came to Britain between 100,000 and 200,000 years ago, walking across a swampy plain that was later to become the English Channel. Archaeological evidence dating back over 60,000 years bears an uncanny similarity to the Exmoor pony of today.

● Today, the ponies participate in every sphere of equestrian activity, be it showing, riding, driving, jumping, long distance riding or riding for the disabled.

● About 140 Exmoor ponies are still free-living on the moor.

● The Exmoor is about 12 hands in height. Its colour is brown, bay or dun with black points and mealy muzzle. The ponies are very stocky and strong with deep chests and large girths. A unique feature is the "hooded eye/toad eye" or heavy upper brow to protect the eyes from wind and rain.

● The body hair grows in a surface drainage pattern. It lies in an arrangement of whirls and vortices which maximise water dispersal away from the vulnerable parts of the body and body openings. The winter coat grows in two layers which in effect provide "thermal underwear" and a "raincoat".

● The Exmoor Pony Society was formed in 1921 and today has a membership spread throughout the British Isles. For more information, visit www.exmoorponysociety.org.uk

Don takes title with 'DIY' plough

A 71-YEAR-OLD retired agricultural engineer took top honours at the British National Ploughing Championships — using a plough made from scrap.

Don Woodhouse from Retford in Nottinghamshire was the surprise winner of the British Conventional Ploughing championship, beating former world champion James Witty from Malton, North Yorkshire, into second place by 11 points.

It was Don's first championship victory in more than 20 years of competition.

"I've competed in this class for about 10 years, and for 10 years before that in the vintage class. But all I've ever won are local competitions," he said.

"It's a case of third time lucky as I've made it to the final plough-off twice before."

Don designed and built his plough — the DW2000 — in 2000, using bits of old ploughs and other scrap. "This is the third one I've built and the most successful to date," he said.

Don left school at 15 to work on a farm. After some time in the Army, he took up lorry driving before getting involved in commercial vehicle fitting. He worked for a firm importing agricultural machinery before setting up his own business in agricultural engineering.

The reversible ploughing contest and the National Grid Transco Award was won by Andrew Mitchell from Forfar, Scotland. Andrew won by a huge margin of 46 points, over reigning world reversible ploughing champion Simon Witty, the brother of James.

National Grid Transco was again a main sponsor of the event, along with Total Butler, Goodyear and Firestone, and more than 15,000 visitors converged on the site at South Stoke, near Reading in Berkshire. The organisers, the Society of Ploughmen, also



hosted the European Vintage Ploughing Championships which attracted competitors from 10 countries.

There was something for everyone — not just the ploughing spectacular, but a host of trade stands, rural craft displays, vintage tractors and engines and magnificent shire horses at work.

For once, the weather was good and the ground conditions were perfect. "But as we found out on the second day, surface conditions can be deceiving," said Ken Chappell, the Society of Ploughmen's executive director. "It's not until you start ploughing that you find out what really lies beneath the surface."

"The soil conditions in the final plough-offs were among the trickiest I have seen for several years. That produced a few surprises, which is good for the future of the championships."

Visit www.ploughmen.co.uk for more information.

● **DIARY DATE:** the 55th British National Ploughing Championships will be held at Soham, Cambridgeshire on October 8 and 9, 2005.

Champions... Don holds the Conventional Ploughing trophy while Andrew, also pictured above, receives the National Grid Transco Award from field wayleave officer Richard Evans



Backing for new environmental education guide

NATIONAL Grid Transco has backed a new guide designed to support those involved in environmental education and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

Published by the Council for Environmental Education (CEE), *Measuring effectiveness: evaluation in education for sustainable development** will help them integrate evaluation into the planning and delivery of learning programmes.

It was developed by a CEE working party that included a National Grid Transco representative.

Nick Jones, head of Policy and Programmes at CEE, said: "We hope the guide will be a useful tool. Thinking about evaluation needs to be integral to the planning and implementation of learning programmes as this enables people to determine from the

outset how they make judgements, based on evidence, about the outcomes, value and quality of a programme."

The guide was launched at a CEE Policy Forum in London that explored progress during the first year of the Sustainable Development Action Plan for Education and Skills, and considered the future priorities in a range of sectors.

The forum, also supported by NGT, attracted 70 delegates from around the country. They represented a wide range of organisations, including environmental charities, county and city councils, environmental education, professional and industrial organisations and academia. They were welcomed by CEE director Libby Grundy and the first session was led by Jonathon Porritt, chairman of the



Sustainable Development Commission.

NGT group corporate responsibility director Gareth Llewellyn was one of the speakers at a House of Commons reception in the evening hosted by Joan Walley MP, a member of the Environmental Audit Select Committee and chairwoman of Learning for Sustainability sub-committee.

Gareth said that assessing

environmental performance is key to continual improvement. "In our recent employee survey, environment was third in the list of issues being managed well. We also use external benchmarks such as Business in the Environment where we are in the premier league** and Dow Jones Sustainability World*** where we are fourth.

"The feedback from these help us constantly to improve our environmental management.

National Grid Transco's Gareth Llewellyn with (from left), CEE president Sir Geoffrey Holland, CEE director Libby Grundy, Joan Walley, MP for Stoke-on-Trent North, and Peter Ainsworth, MP for East Surrey, at Portcullis House, Westminster, London

have scored more than 95 per cent in the annual Business in the Environment (BiE) Index of Corporate Environmental Engagement.

***The Dow Jones Sustainability World Indexes consist of more than 300 companies that represent the top 10 per cent of the leading sustainability companies in 59 industry groups in the 34 countries covered by the biggest 2,500 companies in the Dow Jones Global Indexes.

● CEE's work is funded by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs and the Department for Education and Skills. It aims to influence and develop policy, influence, develop and disseminate practice and enhance the effectiveness and coherence of the sector. To find out more about CEE, visit the website.

"Continual improvement is just as relevant to education as it is to us as a multinational company, so the new guide will be very useful for those involved in environmental education."

*The guide is available free from CEE, 94 London Street, Reading RG1 4SJ. Tel: 0118 950 2550. Also available on the CEE website www.cee.org.uk.

**The premier league recognises companies that



Robin Smith picks his spot in the clay pigeon shoot

Grantors in clay shoot-out

WITHOUT doubt the most fun I have had for a long time" and "a day to remember".

These were just some of the comments from grantors taking part in the grand final of our clay pigeon shooting event.

It summed up the enthusiasm of all 15 finalists who gathered at the NAC at Stoneleigh for the shoot-out and celebration dinner. They had qualified at the five regional competitions held around the country earlier in the year.

Richard Biggs, Scott Stephenson, Richard Evans and Phil Burgess from the field wayleaves team were hosts on the day as our guests showed off their marksmanship. Alan Naylor, field wayleave manager, presented trophies to the winners.

"Clay pigeon shooting is one of the country's fastest growing sports — the Clay Pigeon Shooting Association reports

membership increasing by 180 per cent in the last 10 years. It's also a sport that can be enjoyed by young and old, and people with disabilities," said Alan.

"We were delighted to welcome grantors to our second clay pigeon shooting events and equally delighted with the obvious enthusiasm of our guests — they are already talking about the next round this year."

● If you would like to find out more about clay pigeon shooting, visit www.cpsa.co.uk, or contact the CPSA at Edmonton House, Bisley Camp, Brookwood, Woking, Surrey GU24 0NP.

RESULTS

- Winner experienced: Graham Andrew, from Sutcombe, Devon.
- Winner novice: Richard Grant from Coventry
- Flush: Idris Roberts from Flintshire, Peter Jones from South Wirral, Cheshire and Paul Rosbottom from Manchester



Left: Wayleave's Richard Evans lets rip



Below: Helen Roberts takes aim



Peggy and Richard Grant



Stuart Brown and catch of the day



Dawn Webb



Hector Pearson

Reel good day's fishing!

NEARLY 20 of our grantors and contractors took the bait and escaped to the tranquillity of rural Hampshire for National Grid Transco's first angling event.

We organised a day's fishing at the Avington Trout Fishery, near Winchester, one of the oldest stillwater trout fisheries in the country, famous for its clear water stalking and the big fish it produces.

"It was another opportunity to get together with grantors in an informal social environment," said Brian Mead, who hosted the day along with fellow wayleave officers Martin Bretherton, Wilson Holmes and Richard Evans. Our guests were also joined by Hector Pearson, who heads NGT's Land and Development Group.

"Despite poor weather, it was a fantastic day — everyone said they wouldn't have missed it for anything," said Brian. "Some of our guests brought their partners and two of the wives, Jane Eastall and Peggy Grant, made excellent gillies throughout the day."

NGT is considering making this an annual competitive event. If any grantors are interested then please contact your local wayleave officer or wayleave warden — details on the back page.



Avington Trout Fishery, Hampshire, where our grantors caught some fine fish

And here's our guests' verdict...

It was a great day out and it mattered not that it was chucking it down most of the time! I hardly noticed. My fish is due to make its entrance at lunchtime next weekend and I am looking forward to that very much! Thank you for a very enjoyable and memorable day.

Jonathan Tennant, Postling, Near Hythe, Kent

I did so enjoy myself and it was all down to you. Like everyone else I had great fun and I

think the fish tales to wives and husbands were all in excess! But that's the great advantage of fishing tales!

Guy Anderson, Salisbury, Wiltshire

My thanks for a wonderful day's fishing. As an experienced coarse fisherman, yet a fly fishing novice, I found that it was one of the most educational and enjoyable days fishing I have encountered.

Paul West, contract engineer, Balfour Beatty Power Networks

RESULTS

- Heaviest fish (13 lb) caught by Stuart Brown from Thorpe, Surrey.
- Heaviest bag (28.5 lb) caught by Ray Beeles of Durham.
- Lady novice — Dawn Webb from Chelmsford in Essex, (wife of Roger Webb) who caught two four pounders.

Both Stuart and Ray were presented with smart new fishing bags.

THE Farm Energy Centre is the UK's leading source of information on the application of energy-based techniques in farming and horticulture. It works with farmers, utilities — including National Grid Transco — research institutes and manufacturers, providing expertise on energy applications and energy efficiency. It covers a wide range of activities — from energy auditing and energy brokering to energy efficiency planning and product testing and evaluation. The FEC also works with other organisations in the energy business such as the Energy Savings Trust, Action Energy and agricultural/horticultural organisations including the National Farmers Union, the Milk Development Council, Horticultural Development Council and the Health and Safety Executive.



Its database of energy techniques and equipment is a unique resource which allows farmers to track down equipment suppliers offering specific equipment, and the FEC Trade Membership scheme helps to bring manufacturers and farmer clients together. For more detailed information about the FEC, visit www.farmenergy.com

If you would like more information about any of the issues highlighted on these pages, contact the FEC at NAC, Stoneleigh, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2LS. Tel: 024 7669 6512 or e-mail: info@farmenergy.com

Use the same numbers to obtain a list of FEC publications, including technical guides, and technical notes.

Big boost for biomass

FORMER farmers' leader Sir Ben Gill will head a Government-appointed task force to stimulate biomass supply and demand in a bid to meet renewable energy targets and boost farming, forestry and the rural economy.

Food and Farming Minister Lord Whitty has also unveiled a £3.5 million UK-wide bio-energy infrastructure scheme aimed at farmers, foresters and businesses interested in setting up producer groups for harvesting, storing, processing and supplying energy crops and woodfuel.

Grants are available for set-up costs such as office rental, certain types of capital cost and training — but not the actual growing of crops, which

is covered by a current Defra scheme.

Biomass can be used to produce heat and electricity, using crops such as willow, miscanthus — a tall, woody grass — and woodfuel from forests.

The Government's Energy White Paper includes an aim that renewable energy sources should supply 10 per cent of UK electricity by 2010, doubling to 20 per cent by 2020.

For more details about the scheme, visit www.defra.gov.uk/farm/acu/energy/infrastructure.htm. For details about the Biomass Study Task Force, see www.defra.gov.uk/farm/acu/energy/biomass-taskforce/index.htm



Storing water in a reservoir or, inset, an irrigation tank, can help

Water licence – how to secure your supply

WATER, along with electricity and gas, is an essential utility for operating a farming business.

Arable farmers and horticulturists are big water users with irrigation, and livestock farmers use lots for stock drinking and cleaning systems.

Such is the demand that many farmers have private water supplies, using pumps to abstract water from boreholes, streams or lakes.

But resources have become stretched in the UK, and it's no

longer as easy to get permission from the Environment Agency to take a private supply. New UK and European Legislation is making greater demand on farmers to prove their need for water and demonstrate they are using it wisely. Even farmers with existing licences are being asked to reapply for them.

So to help farmers secure their supplies for the future, here are National Grid Transco's tips to comply and work with the water legislation:

- Record your water use month by month so you can show how much you use and where you use it.
- Write down how you use water and what difference it makes to your business. This will help in arguing your case on how essential an adequate supply is to you.
- Do an audit — this will help spot areas where you



Hello neighbour as NFU moves closer

THE Farm Energy Centre at Stoneleigh is looking forward to having a new neighbour by the end of 2005 — the National Farmers' Union (NFU).

The NFU is moving its national HQ from London and

its new home, a purpose-built office block at Stoneleigh, is already under construction.

The move, says the FEC, is set to encourage greater co-operation between the NFU and many other organisations working from the site.

"We are widely involved with the NFU at the moment on Climate Change Levy issues and the promotion of energy efficiency," said Andrew Kneeshaw, managing director of FEC.

"Their move to Stoneleigh

will help ease the work we do with NFU and aid a broader service to their members."

The move will also bring NFU closer to NGT with our head office being sited only six miles away in nearby Warwick.

Who's in control?

IT'S time to take control, says the FEC.

Farmers are always looking for ways to reduce energy costs but so many options involve a significant amount of investment in capital equipment. And where the cost are high, paybacks are often too long to be justified.

However, after on-farm energy audits carried out by the FEC, one option in particular is put at the top of the action priority list. It involves some type of control.

There's a good reason why control heads the cost-effectiveness league and that is a controller — whatever it is — is usually a fraction of the price of the item it is controlling. Whether it's a timeswitch, a thermostat or some sort of sensor, chances are that even the most sophisticated model is not that expensive compared with the rest of the system.

In many cases, simple control devices can pay back quickly. Time switches on office drinks machines and thermostats on heaters may not be exciting purchases but they are important in controlling costs.

Recently in an office heating system, FEC engineers found that, although the office was occupied only 40 hours a week, the heating system was operating night and day, at full power for the remaining 128 hours.

Increasingly, more sophisticated controls can be used to get even greater savings. For example, switches that can sense if a room is being occupied and turn off lights if no-one has been around for 15 minutes, or sensors that will turn down the temperature settings in an office a few degrees if no-one is in. These save energy every day, which can contribute to substantial cost savings in the long term.

So look closely at control and select one of the many devices that can help.



Beating the price pinch

MANY farmers are feeling the effect of increased gas and electricity prices in new contracts.

There was a steady reduction in prices after privatisation in the early nineties — but the past few months have seen an uncharacteristic change.

"Pressures on gas supplies and international uncertainty in the wider energy market set prices on a steep increase with some customers facing increases of as much as 50 per cent," said FEC managing director Andrew Kneeshaw. "National Grid Transco shipping prices have not contributed to this because our prices are pegged by regulation and are only marginally influenced by the 'raw' cost of energy."

By following these simple recommendations you can increase your chances of convincing the Environment Agency that your water use is controlled, productive and can be sustained into the future.

some slackening of prices was seen in November and December, farmers should still expect to see a real increase in rolling 12-month energy prices.

In terms of the need to be more energy efficient, price increases have, in fact, been more influential than the Climate Change Levy which lifted prices by only about 10 per cent. In the face of rising prices, energy efficiency measures will pay back more quickly than before.

"Schemes dismissed previously as taking too long to pay back will start to look more attractive," said Andrew.

"The Farm Energy Centre recommends that farmers take a second look at efficiency measures in the light of new prices as they may now decide that it's the right time to make an efficiency investment."



It pays to think before you dig

IT'S always a good idea to check if there are cables or pipes in the ground before digging new drains or foundations.

Most electricity and gas transmission and distribution companies have a free service from which you can get route information on pipes and lines across your land.

By referring to these you can get a quick idea where you might encounter a buried cable or pipe.

If you suspect services to be present, look for telltale signs nearby, like the presence of gas or electric meter cabinets or street lights. If you suspect that a service is near, carefully dig trial holes by hand.

Larger cables or pipes are often marked at road crossings.

You may also come across concrete, polythene or earthenware tiles or ducts which are a good indication of the existence of a service below.

Another sign is the presence of a marker tape laid slightly above the service.

Most electricity cables are black but some high voltage cables are coloured red. Gas mains laid before the 1970s are usually black.

More recent pipes are yellow or very occasionally orange.

If in doubt always stop work and consult your local utility company.

Contacts

For further information contact your local wayleave teams on:

North: 0113 2908224/8235

South: 01245 592028

Your wayleave teams and their contact mobile phone numbers

North East

Wilson Holmes

07836 543539

Scott Stephenson

07836 543541

North West

Mark Thomas

07887 825073

Martin Bretherton

07786 021086

North East (South)

Mike Rockett

07836 364634

Janet Clarke

07770 645599

North West (South)

Alan Whitmore

07836 629530

Bob Tute

07836 668504

East Midlands

Robin O'Brien

07836 293137

Simon Booth

07786 021088

West Midlands

Richard Evans

07776 225888

Paul Ganley

07836 549748

East Anglia

Barry Cullimore

07836 217478

Sue Dunham

07766 785684

South East (North London)

Brian Mead

07836 217520

Phil Burgess

07836 222051

South East (South London)

Paul Sage

07836 638823

Alison Williams

07788 568678

South Wales

Simon Gronow

07836 207262

South West

Richard Biggs

07785 716961

Jane Bishop

07771 864528

Wayleave payments

▼ For information on wayleave payments telephone the payments helpline on **0800 389 5113**.

Emergencies

▼ Emergency calls to report pylon damage to National Grid Transco can be made on **0800 404090**. Make a note of 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, ring the EMF information line **08457 023270** (local call rate).



Fred King, who was born the same year that the old hall was built, opens the new village hall with National Grid Transco wayleave officer Richard Biggs, second right, MP Annette Brooke, third left, and Mary Mathers, fifth left, the secretary of the new hall steering committee

Power funding lights up hall

NATIONAL Grid Transco has brought power to the people.

The company came up with £4,000 funding to provide electricity for a new and much-needed village hall at Morden in Dorset.

The hall's opening was the culmination of six years of hard work through the planning, design, fundraising and building stages of the project.

Thanks to the commitment and enthusiasm of the management committee members and their supporters, the local community now has purpose-built facilities to meet their varied needs.

National Grid Transco wayleave officer Richard Biggs was at the opening ceremony. "It's magnificent," he said. "The main hall has so much space and there are facilities for meetings, snooker and changing rooms as well as a fully-fitted kitchen.

"We are delighted to be able to support this excellent initiative as a consequence of

our Mannington to Chickerell 400kV overhead line refurbishment project, and hope to use the hall for some of our meetings.

"Village halls play a very important role in the community and credit must go to everyone involved in making this project a reality."

The new hall replaces a 77-year-old dilapidated wood

and corrugated iron hut. It has been sympathetically designed to blend into its surroundings and incorporates disabled access.

It will be used for a wide variety of activities from keep-fit sessions and wedding receptions to educational activities and group meetings for people of all ages.

Walk on the wild side

A £5,000 donation from National Grid Transco is helping the Forestry Commission to raise the profile of its Butterfly Walk at Haldon Reserve near Exeter.

The money is being used for new interpretation boards for the area along with a new bench commissioned from a local craftsman depicting the lifecycle of a butterfly.

The company has had a long-time association with the butterfly haven, which is home to a number of rare species.

The walk's potential was identified in 1978 when the Forestry Commission won permission to manage the site under the 400kV overhead line that runs from Exeter to Indian Queens.

Back in 1993, the then National Grid Company launched a booklet to tie in with the walk and also supplied display boards for the forest classroom and information notices along the walk.

"We are delighted to continue our support," said South West wayleave warden Jane Bishop.