

GRIT

The magazine for National Grid grantors

SUMMER 2014

nationalgrid

Driving forces

Two grantors giving car dealers a great British name

A SITE FOR TOUR EYES

Making the most of the world's greatest cycle race

Bay watcher

The farmer whose land keeps on growing

PLUS: Organic delight • Laying down a safe marker • The family that bought an airport • Win a luxury hotel break

WELCOME TO GRIDLINE

Gridline is a **showcase** for the **vibrant, entrepreneurial spirit** of every grantor

It always amazes me in such economically challenging times just how eager our grantors are to seize the opportunity to diversify and thrive.

Even those I've met who are content to ride out the recession are alert

to making the most of their businesses.

None more so than Lorraine Walters, the grantor preparing for an invasion of sports fans at her temporary campsite on the route of the Tour de France, or the sheep farmer whose grazing land is actually growing!

His is a tale of good fortune, while Morgan car dealer Richard Williams has spotted a gap in the market and exploited it in a way that's hugely



acceptable to both his neighbours and customers.

We're also spotlighting the crucial role that gas marker posts play in keeping your land safe.

Take a glance - it could save you time and money.

Meanwhile, the Gridline

team are keen to hear your story of how you've diversified, achieved a dream, taken a chance, succeeded against the odds or simply grown an established business.

I hope you enjoy the read.

Dawn McCarroll
Editor, Gridline



Kate Beavan, whose Country School featured in the last edition, said: "I'm a cover girl again! Thank you Gridline for the lovely article."

Snowdrop grower Sir Henry Elwes was also delighted. He wrote: "Thank you very much for my copy of Gridline. You have produced a superb article."

Be a part of Gridline

Kate and Sir Henry told us about their businesses and we featured them in the last edition, so get in touch with your story.

Tel: 01926 656 325

Email: gridline@nationalgrid.com

Write to: Gridline,
Summersault Communications,
23-25 Waterloo Place, Warwick Street,
Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 5LA.

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Some useful contact numbers

The Land & Business Support team is 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 who have gas and electricity equipment installed on their land. Your local contacts are listed below.

ELECTRICITY AND GAS

- ➔ North-west and Scotland 0161 776 0706
- ➔ South-east 01268 642 091
- ➔ South-west 01452 316 059
- ➔ East 0113 290 8235

WAYLEAVE PAYMENTS

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

CHANGE OF DETAILS

- ➔ To inform National Grid of changes in ownership or contact details, telephone 0800 389 5113 for electric and 01926 654 844 for gas, or email grantorservices@nationalgrid.com

ELECTRICITY EMERGENCY

- ➔ Emergency calls to report pylon damage to National Grid can be made on 0800 404 090. 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 023 270 (local call rate). Website: www.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 688 588 so that searches can be made to determine the exact position of any National Grid assets

CUSTOMER COMMENTS

- ➔ Write to Land & Development, National Grid House, Warwick Technology Park, Gallows Hill, Warwick, Warwickshire, CV34 6DA. Or email ld.customercomments@nationalgrid.com

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Crocus focus

Neil Pilcher, from Leicester, won £150 of M&S vouchers with this beautifully detailed shot. Turn to page 20 to see how you could be a winner next time.

Competition winner

Congratulations to Gina Campbell, from Boothby Graffoe in Lincolnshire, who won a country house break for stating Sir Henry Elwes grows 250 varieties of snowdrop at his Gloucestershire estate. She said: "What lovely news to win. I'm really looking forward to getting away from it all."

Regulars

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- 18 The Roses are blooming after turning a disused WWII airfield into a growing concern



Enhancing the landscape

A NEW INDEPENDENT GROUP has been appointed by National Grid to identify projects that reduce the visual impact of transmission lines in nationally protected landscapes across England and Wales.

The Stakeholder Advisory Group is being led by leading environmentalist and broadcaster Chris Baines, one of the original presenters of the BBC TV programme *Countryfile*.

The group also includes senior representatives from organisations such as the



Campaign for National Parks, Campaign to Protect Rural England and the National Trust.

Screening

The Visual Impact Provision project was developed in response to a £500-million

allowance from Ofgem to mitigate the visual impact of electricity infrastructure in National Parks and AONBs.

Landscape consultants led by Professor Carys Swanwick are assessing the visual impact of existing transmission lines in beauty spots as part of a report due out in the autumn.

Proposals include screening and landscape works, innovative ways of painting pylons to reduce visual impact and potentially re-routing or undergrounding lines or sections of lines.

Record-breaking teamwork

LAND OFFICERS at National Grid pulled out all the stops for a pylon replacement project in North Wales, that was completed in a record-breaking 54 days from start to finish.

A 50-metre-high pylon standing in the estuary of the river Dwyryd at Penrhyndeudraeth, near Porthmadog, had to be replaced after issues were identified with its foundations.

Wide consultation

The site was in a saltmarsh that enjoys SSSI designation and a wide range of stakeholders were consulted, including the

Snowdonia National Park Authority and Countryside Council for Wales, as well as local councillors.

Speedy completion

"We managed to complete access and scope of works negotiations with grantors and other stakeholders in just weeks, when it would normally have taken months," said land officer James Dean.

Mitigation measures included having an ecologist on site during the whole project, relocating some sharp grass species and using protective mats (pictured



above) in sensitive marsh areas.

James added: "Everybody really pulled together - the construction teams, the lands team, and affected grantors and stakeholders - to get the job done."

To watch the video...



... visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsKcfZf9gf8



New hotel's VIBee guests

PRIMARY SCHOOLCHILDREN have been helped by workmen upgrading a village's National Grid substation to create a bug hotel in the school playground.

Pupils from Old Hutton Primary School in Cumbria used leftover pallets, tubes and bricks from the substation site to provide a safe

haven for insects, including spiders, ladybirds and bees.

Huw Davies, head teacher at Old Hutton Primary School, said: "The children had a great day helping to build the hotel and they're excited to see what kind of guests check in over the next couple of months."



Special clearance

THE LARGEST VESSEL of its type in the world successfully berthed at its destination on the upper reaches of the river Tees after National Grid engineers dismantled two pylons and an overhead line spanning the river, finishing the work earlier than planned.

The 90-metre high Innovation is a 'jack-up' vessel, used to pick up and install wind turbine foundations in the North Sea.

Pylons over the Tees were replaced in a £50-million refurb project, using 145-metre-high structures to allow safe passage beneath.



Grid's good tern

NATIONAL GRID HAS FUNDED improvements to a wildlife reserve affected by the construction of a new substation supplying energy to Nottingham.

Netherfield Lagoons in Stoke Bardolph were once gravel pits and settling lagoons for a former colliery, but are now a 56-hectare local wildlife reserve managed by Gedling Conservation Trust.

Reed bed and wetland areas

make it one of the best places in the county for birdwatching.

A new artificial sand martin bank, providing a safe nesting site away from the flood-prone river, has been created with National Grid funding. New nesting islands for common terns, along with bird and owl nest boxes.

"National Grid reinstated an existing footpath damaged during



equipment movements to connect the substation to the grid, as well as leasing additional land to the Trust for them to create a new wildlife habitat," said land officer Paul Ganley.

Mark Glover, on behalf of the Trust, said: "We're grateful to National Grid for mitigating the temporary impacts through funding to benefit wildlife and the public's enjoyment of the site."



(l to r) Donovan Goshier, Aaron Foreman, Dean Morris, Alan Abrahams, Declan Ryan and Max Whiting



One-minute interview



Richard Biggs, land officer, south west

BACKGROUND: I joined National Grid (CEGB as it was then) in 1989 as an engineer, working in a number of other business streams before moving to Land & Development in 2005. Before that I worked with mentally and physically handicapped children, and had a spell with the Ministry of Defence.

CURRENT FOCUS: Currently on secondment working on projects with a focus on data and information systems.

LEISURE INTERESTS: I have a passion for anything with two wheels. I own a number of motorbikes, which I use on the road and for trials riding.

MOST LIKELY TO SAY: Common sense is not as common as you think.

NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW: I'm about to become a grandparent for the first time, and my wife and I can't wait.

PET HATE: Shop assistants who chew gum as they serve.

THE TEMPTATION YOU CAN'T RESIST: Cheese footballs and being at my mother's at Christmas.

IDEAL DINNER GUEST: If Kylie Minogue came round I'm sure I could lay a place at the table for her.

HOLIDAY: I was born in Dorset, so Swanage holds many happy memories for me.

TREASURED POSSESSION: My family.

A close brush with safety

A TEAM OF PAINTERS working on pylons for National Grid sprang into action to help at the scene of a road traffic accident.

They put their safety training to good use when they rushed to the accident close to the market town of Beverley, near Hull.

Some of the team from Fountains gave first aid, while the rest used their vans and road

cones to protect the scene, as well as putting on high-visibility jackets to warn oncoming traffic.

Sheltered

The painters alerted the emergency services, kept the scene safe and sheltered some of the casualties in their vans. They then assisted the police in blocking the road to allow

an emergency helicopter to land.

"All the risk assessment, first aid and emergency response training required by National Grid was put to really good effect," said Fountains regional operations manager Donovan Goshier.

The men were later presented with an Above the Call of Duty award by OCS, the parent company of Fountains.

The path to village happiness

FAMILIES IN A SMALL VILLAGE are delighted with the brand-new Tarmac drive to their village hall, after National Grid helped out with much-needed repairs.

People in Everingham, a village near York, were thrilled at the spin-off from National Grid contractors who were in the area refurbishing the overhead Creyke Beck to Thornton power line.

"We live in a remote community

with no shop, pub or post office and only one bus a day, so the village hall is a vital resource for the community," said Sally Wilkinson, a National Grid grantor at nearby Common Farm.

The hall is well used by the community, but Sally said: "The drive was pot-holed and prone to flooding, so difficult to negotiate."

The team also built a new gravel car parking area to finish the job.



STANDING OUT FOR SAFETY

Marker posts play a **key role** in the **safety** inspection process to maintain **12,000km** of **high-pressure** pipelines

The distinctive posts are often the only visible clue to the presence of a gas pipeline in the landscape and they play a vitally important role in National Grid's safety checks from the air.

Fortnightly helicopter flights are carried out to spot hazardous activities, such as unauthorised construction work or putting in new drainage using deep excavation methods, in the vicinity of pipelines.

Each year the helicopter teams log up to 2,000 flight hours, surveying 320,000km of pipeline nationwide.

In the cockpit, an observer uses a GPS-linked laptop to track the pipeline route on a scrolling map, while feeding flight direction adjustments to the pilot and inspecting the ground 400ft below for signs of encroachment.

"When you take into account the helicopter is travelling at 120mph - covering a mile every two minutes - you begin to realise the level of concentration required," said Kevin Robertson, National Grid's aerial surveillance coordinator.

"The two-metre-tall posts are highly visible from the air, making it much easier to pinpoint the exact position of the pipeline and accurately assess the risk to it."

Sightings of potential infringements are graded according to the severity of the threat. Urgent cases are investigated immediately by engineers on the ground.

Inevitably, gas marker posts have to stand out in the landscape and that's vital to their effectiveness.

Post note

➤➤ Pipelines don't always run in straight lines across fields or between marker posts, which may be accidentally moved.

➤➤ Notify National Grid prior to any works, as required in your easement agreement, and ensure contractors are aware of this.

➤➤ Don't erect any permanent structure on or near a pipeline.

➤➤ Consult National Grid before cultivating below 0.5 metres.

➤➤ Don't add or reduce the depth of soil above the pipeline without consent from National Grid.



Often at roadsides and hedge boundaries, posts are made of lightweight plastic and cause no damage to equipment if accidentally struck

"Preserving the natural beauty of the countryside is important to us, but keeping our pipelines safe is vital," said Richard Howard, National Grid's Asset Protection team leader.

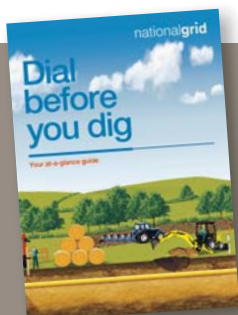
"The posts are also easier for people working near pipelines to spot than the previous concrete markers, which were prone to being damaged by farm machinery."

To ask about proposed work near pipelines call 0800 688 588 or email plantprotection@nationalgrid.com

For more information...



... go to www2.nationalgrid.com/UK/Safety/Pipeline-marker-FAQs/. Also see the United Kingdom Onshore Pipeline Association's safety video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=itacNeMqEXU



Look out for a special delivery

Within the next few weeks every gas grantor should have received a new pin-up-and-keep leaflet, featuring safety messages to consider before starting work near gas pipelines.

Landowners, occupiers and their contractors continue to be responsible for most of the near misses close to pipelines, according to industry statistics.

The National Grid leaflet was created following direct

feedback from our grantor advisory panel on how key safety messages could best be communicated.

A user-friendly graphic illustrates the dos and don'ts of working near pipelines, including actions that are potentially hazardous if safety advice isn't followed. If you haven't had yours, want advice or more information about how National Grid can help, call Plant Protection on 0800 688 588.



A CLASSIC NICHE

Whether it's **blue goats** to deter thieves or woodburner-heated showrooms to help accentuate the **graceful curves** of the best of Britain's cars, the Williams family have always had a happy knack of **delighting their customers**



When Harry Williams started hiring out dyed blue goats to vicars to help them keep their graveyards tidy, he found he'd discovered a niche in the market.

It was 1904 and the 12-year-old entrepreneur, who coloured the animals to deter thieves, soon moved into selling horses and carts.

He told friends he thought automobiles 'might catch on', but they laughed. Then in 1911 he sold a Belsize for a handsome profit and the rest is history.

Fast-forward more than a century and his grandson Richard is still a step ahead of the field, this time spreading the last word in classic British sports cars around the world.

But suggest that former dairy farmer Richard and his 30-year-old son Henry are car salesmen and they'll disabuse you of the notion.

After moving into his 16th-century cottage in a small village near Chipping Sodbury in the south Cotswolds in the 1980s, the electricity grantor helped run the dairy farm for seven years until he decided being up to his neck in muck 'wasn't worth the aggro'.

Relaxed and eco-friendly

With cars in the blood, he managed a seven-franchise Saab dealership in his native Bristol, which at its peak employed 100 people, until the car maker was liquidated in 2011.

"The overheads at the sites were growing and I wanted to slow down into retirement a bit, so we looked at our options," said Richard.

"We sold the franchises and kept the Morgan and Lotus elements, but we needed a new location. It was under our noses - we'd been using the old barns as stables for livery and then thought 'hang on, they'd convert to make great car showrooms'."

The only problem was the location. Who would come to a rural site in the middle of nowhere to look at a modern classic car that starts at £28,000 rising to £120,000 for a Supersport model?

The answer, of course, is in the question. Father-of-two Richard added: "We felt that if we created a relaxed, out-of-town, eco-friendly dealership where customer service was everything, then - as the film says - they will come.

"People come here from all over the world because they can come in, relax, have a chat and a coffee. We don't have any prices on the cars - we think they sell themselves."

When they started the new venture, Richard and Henry's wish list included offering employment for graduates struggling to find work, having some fun and hopefully making a profit.

The 11-strong team of technicians, trim workers and admin staff have achieved all three and Richard, who initially wanted to take a back seat, now can't keep away from the showrooms, which are a 20-second walk, but 'another world', away from the family home. ➔➔

For the petrolheads...

➤➤ The 4-4 Morgan's 1600cc injection engine goes from 0-60mph in 8 seconds and costs £28,000.

➤➤ The Plus 4's 2.0-litre, 165 horsepower engine will do it in 7.5 seconds, and will set you back £43,000.

➤➤ The Roadster boasts 295 horsepower from its 3.7-litre cyclone V6 engine and will hit just over 60mph in 5.5 seconds. The price is around £60,000.



"It's a tale of total diversification. We've ripped up the model of car dealerships and people like it. Everyone gets the same customer service whether they come for a new car or a new bulb," said Richard.

"We are unobtrusive to the extent that people in the village didn't even know we were here, but we still have people turning up from all over the world."

Last year, Williams Automobiles sold 107 cars, with 22 per cent of them ending up in Kuwait, Thailand, China, New Zealand and the main continental markets. Car part firms in the local area, who have never considered export, have also piggy-backed on the success.

Some French and German buyers have even been happy to buy a car on description, safe in the knowledge that Richard and his team will handle the paperwork and meet them at Dover.



We do a bit of racing too, so we'll stick a video on our Facebook page, or if Morgan is in the news, we'll give that a mention. It's all about raising awareness of the brand."

The father and son team might have gone back to their forebears' country roots, but both are confident that if the product and service is good, then success will follow.

Richard added: "We took a leap of faith when we set up in such a remote place, but we knew there was a niche and the product was excellent. I suppose I'm no different from my grandad in that respect."

Sumptuous quality

Most customers fall into the 'successful business people' bracket, but the rolling lines and sumptuous hand-built quality of the Malvern-built Morgans are guaranteed to melt even the most ardent anti-car activists' hearts.

"I drove one of the Morgans down to the south of France and people were jumping out in front of us taking pictures," said Richard. "Next day, we went out in a different car and we couldn't understand why no one seemed bothered."

Richard's easy-going style clearly chimes with visitors. The business has been named Morgan Dealer of the Year for the past three years in a row and Green Dealer of the Year in 2013. Tellingly, it also picked up a highly commended in the used car website category, which is where Henry comes into his own.

Henry said: "Grantors who run a business like us can easily increase their profile by using social media such as Twitter and Facebook. A quick crash course is all it takes and the benefits are huge.

"If someone comes in for a service, we might take a picture of their car, with their permission, and put it online.



Richard is proud of the family firm's green credentials since their move into the countryside.

Both showrooms feature wood-burning stoves, which Richard says are great for sales, with all waste air channelled into underfloor heating via a heat exchanger.

He said: "We recycle water, have

fitted solar panels and are conscious of the local environment. From being wary, the people in the village are now proud to have a company selling something so British in their midst.

"I've also planted trees to offset our small carbon usage and am always looking at ways to ensure we retain our Green Dealer of the Year title."

THE ONLY WAY IS UP

The Tour de France is **coming to Yorkshire**, and for grantor Lorraine Walters it's an opportunity **too good to miss**



One of the world's greatest sporting events gets under way in God's Own County in a few weeks' time, when Yorkshire hosts the Grand Départ of the Tour de France.

The eagerly anticipated event starts in Leeds on Saturday 5 July, with the first two stages in Yorkshire, before moving south for the Cambridge to London third stage.

Permanent campsites, hotels and B&Bs on the route have long been booked up, but there are still numerous temporary 'pop-up' campsites ready to cater for the thousands of spectators who will line the roadside. Among them is Jawbone Hill Camping, established by National Grid grantor Lorraine Walters, who runs a smallholding at Stoney Bank Farm, Oughtibridge, on the hilly outskirts of Sheffield.

Jawbone Hill is six miles from the Stage 2 finish and is one of the top 10 places to watch the Grand Départ, according to Sky Sports. That's handy for Lorraine's campers, who are guaranteed a private roadside view of the race from an elevated position in a field, as well as dedicated



Former top pro cyclist **Malcolm Elliott**, brought up in nearby Sheffield, tackles Jawbone Hill on a recent training ride. A noted sprint finisher, he rode in the Tour de France twice and won the Tour of Britain in 1988

car parking and bike storage areas, toilets, hot water washing facilities and drinking water.

Lorraine, who keeps sheep and chickens on her small hobby farm, said: "The council is keen that the legacy of the Tour is that race followers from home and abroad will have a superb visitor experience and hopefully come back to Yorkshire in the future as tourists."

"Landowners like us are being encouraged to be entrepreneurial and make a bit of money from the event, while also helping to cater for the influx of visitors to the region. It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

Lorraine is organising the campsite with the help of her daughter Sophie and her son-in-law James, a graphic artist who has designed a website to promote it. ➔

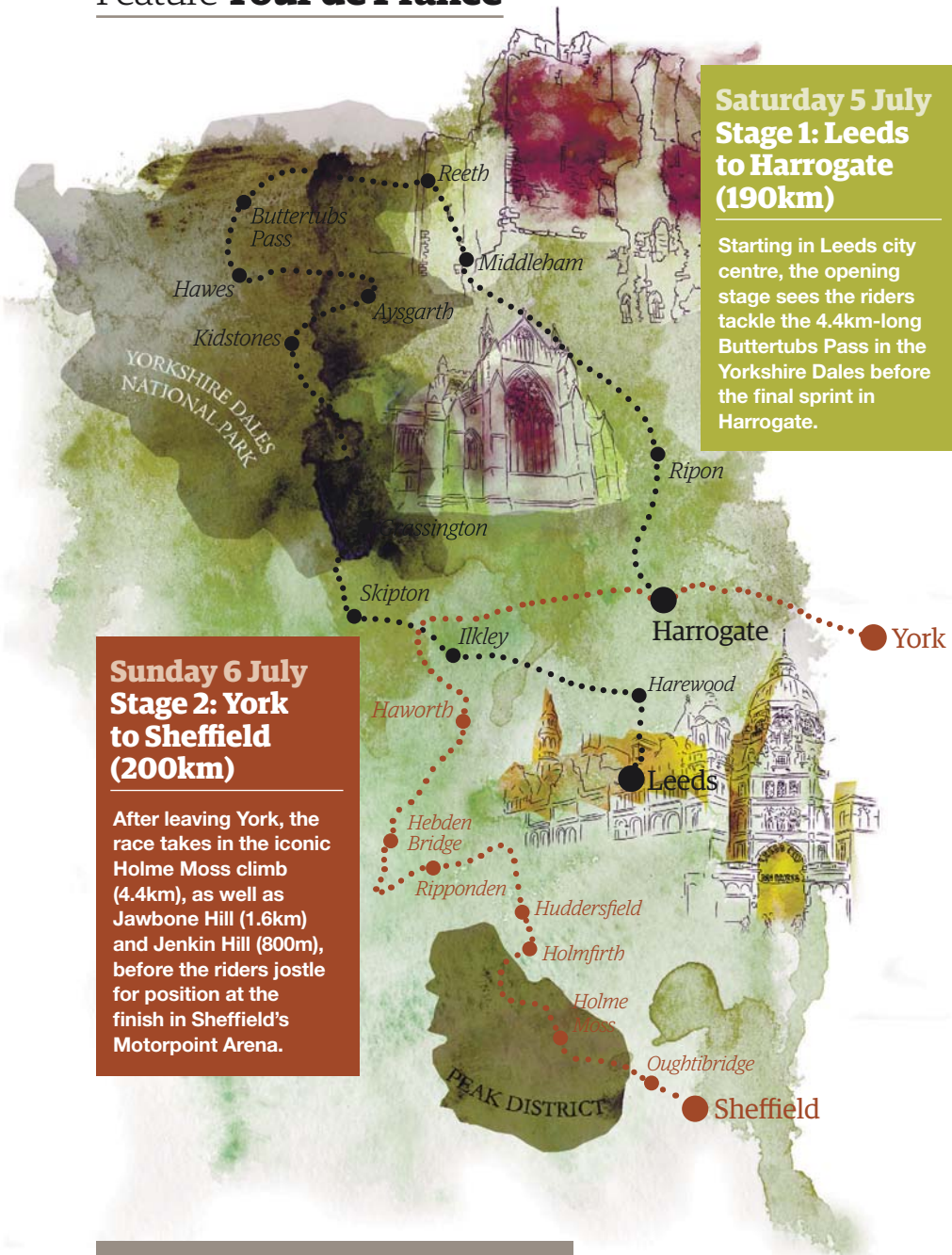
The 101st Tour de France in numbers

188 countries to broadcast the event

2,174 miles in 21 days' racing



3.5 billion global TV audience



**Saturday 5 July
Stage 1: Leeds to Harrogate (190km)**

Starting in Leeds city centre, the opening stage sees the riders tackle the 4.4km-long Buttertubs Pass in the Yorkshire Dales before the final sprint in Harrogate.

**Sunday 6 July
Stage 2: York to Sheffield (200km)**

After leaving York, the race takes in the iconic Holme Moss climb (4.4km), as well as Jawbone Hill (1.6km) and Jenkin Hill (800m), before the riders jostle for position at the finish in Sheffield's Motorpoint Arena.

Over the weekend there will be tasty buffalo burgers available for sale, courtesy of Catherine Battye of nearby Tenter House Farm, and campers can also attend a beer festival organised by a local brewery in Bradfield.

"I'm told the race is a spectacular sight," said Lorraine. "It's not just the 189 riders and their support cars. The race is preceded by a publicity caravan of up to 200 elaborate floats and vehicles that can take 45 minutes to pass, and there are helicopters overhead and motorcycle outriders from the French gendarmerie."

Fans can then hotfoot it down to Oughtibridge's Coronation Park, just five minutes away, to catch the finish on a big screen - one of 17 official viewing hubs.

Strict requirements

Pop-up campsites don't require planning permission for fewer than 28 days, but landowners need adequate public liability insurance, and there are strict requirements relating to access for emergency vehicles, water quality, waste disposal, fire safety and noise control.

"We're reminding people not to fly kites near the power lines that cross the site, and that dogs must be kept on a lead because of the sheep in nearby fields," said Lorraine.

She is expecting any remaining camping plots to go quickly in the final days that precede the Tour. "Cycling fans have told me that you get a lot of Dutch spectators who come over at the last minute and look for spaces."

"The excitement is definitely building," said Lorraine, as on the road outside, another posse of Lycra-clad riders pedal past, testing themselves on the same hill that will confront their cycling heroes in just a few short weeks.

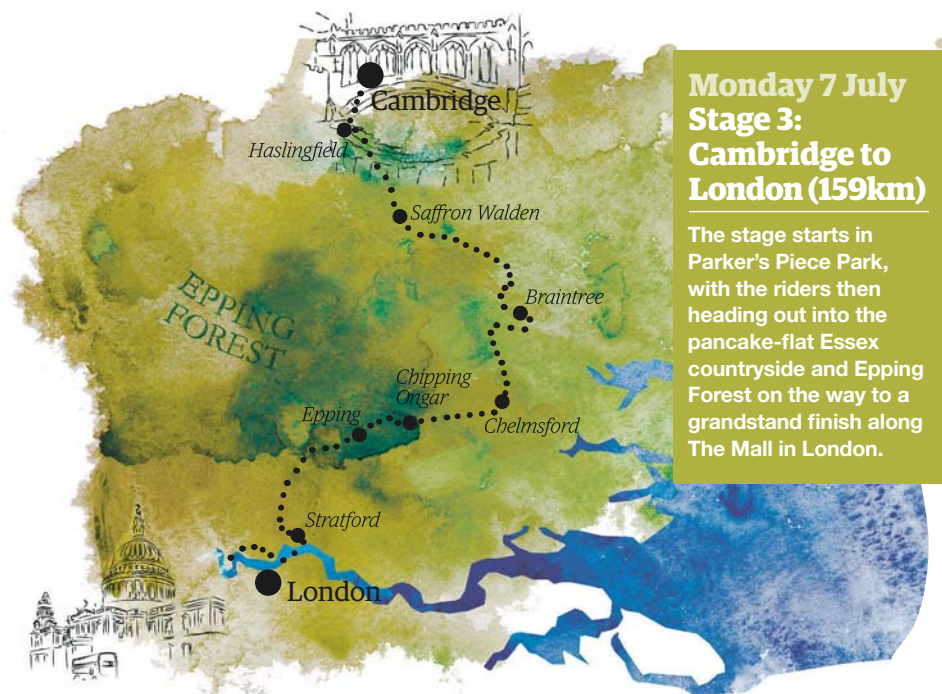
For more information...



... on the campsite, and for bookings, go to www.jawbonehillcamping.co.uk

It's a fact

- The Tour last visited the UK in 2007, with the first stage from London to Kent.
- In 2012, Bradley Wiggins became the first British rider to win the Tour de France, with Chris Froome then winning the following year.
- Riders burn between 6,000 and 9,000 calories a day.
- The peloton will go through 792 tyres, on average, during the entire race.
- Cycling has overtaken football as the third most popular participation sport in Britain, with more than two million adults riding regularly.
- Stage 5 starts from Ypres in Belgium and will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Great War.



**Monday 7 July
Stage 3: Cambridge to London (159km)**

The stage starts in Parker's Piece Park, with the riders then heading out into the pancake-flat Essex countryside and Epping Forest on the way to a grandstand finish along The Mall in London.

SALT OF THE EARTH



Sheep farmer Harry Wilson hasn't looked back since a **quirk of nature** in Morecambe Bay presented him with an **unusual business opportunity**



"A cousin once told me I was the only farmer he knew around here who could grow land," smiled tenant farmer Harry Wilson.

Gazing out over the marshes off the Lancashire coastline, he mused: "In the 1980s this was all just sea, mudflats and sand, but today it's 840 acres of valuable pasture."

A tenant farmer on Lord Cavendish's 17,000-acre Holker Estate on the Cartmel peninsula in Cumbria, across the Kent Channel from Morecambe, Harry is the grateful beneficiary of a natural evolution.

Harry, who has lived at Wyke Farm for 40 years, has produced saltmarsh lamb for the estate since 2002, grazing his flock of cross-bred Mule sheep on the marshes between Humphrey Head and Kents Bank.

And all because some 20 years ago, the Kent Channel, which runs through Morecambe Bay, switched to the Grange side, depositing silt on mudflats that were later colonised by pioneer grasses to become inter-tidal ➔

marshland. Harry said: "Without the extra land, it's unlikely the farm could have supported both my sons Stuart and Peter, who help me and my wife Kate."

Sweet taste

Harry's sheep graze on a range of salt-resistant wild grasses and herbs, such as samphire, sea lavender, thrift and spartina grass (common cord-grass), that grow on the margins of the sea and which contribute to the distinctive taste of the lamb.

"The meat is marginally darker, has a tender texture and tastes sweeter - not salty at all," said Harry. "Because of the terrain, the lambs are also leaner and carry less fat."

It really is as natural a system as you can get - the grazing is completely unmanaged, with no pesticides, herbicides or fertiliser added, while the salt means that ticks and many other common health afflictions are not an issue.

The lambs receive no supplementary feed at all, although ewes are fed before lambing when they are off the marsh.

Meanwhile, the short sward of grass left after grazing is essential for the many species of wintering birds, for which Morecambe Bay is renowned.

The Wilsons were originally dairy farmers, and only started raising sheep for saltmarsh lamb after foot-and-mouth, when restrictions on the movement of animals meant they couldn't sell sheep for breeding purposes.

A concerned Lord Cavendish opened a food hall on his estate to provide his tenant farmers with an opportunity to sell produce to a broader market. He also realised that there was a market for selling saltmarsh lamb at a premium.

A better price

Currently, Harry has about 400 ewes producing 600 lambs each year, in addition to a herd of 90 dairy cows.

The sheep are lambed inland in January and February, and go on to the marshes in mid-March. "I don't get much sleep during lambing and I can lose a stone in weight," said Harry. The first lambs are slaughtered in time for the Holker Garden Festival in late May and the season goes right through to November.

To qualify as saltmarsh lamb, the sheep must graze the marshes for 60 days before being sold. Typically, each animal fetches £5 more than conventionally raised lamb.

Slaughtered locally, the lamb is sold at Holker Estate's food hall or by butchers such as Higginson's in Grange, or Booths, a family-run supermarket chain in the north-west.

The lamb may command a premium, but farming near the sea has its challenges. High tides occur every fortnight in winter and once a month in summer, and Harry has to be vigilant to keep the sheep safe and prevent them from being trapped by rising water.



Harry's tide book is the bible that helps ensure his sweet-tasting lamb reaches Higginson's butchers in nearby Grange-over-Sands

His tide book is kept on the kitchen table and consulted religiously every morning.

"Usually, the tide just fills the gullies and creeks, but if you get a high tide of 30ft or more, it will cover the marshes and we need to get the sheep off into inland pastures," he said. "It's also very weather dependent - a south-westerly gale is always bad news. In a high tide the water comes right up to the drystone wall in front of the house, but at least the marshes tend to act as a buffer and we don't get spray hitting the upstairs windows anymore."

Sandy bottoms

Harry can spend up to an hour and a half each day walking the marshes with his sheepdog, checking gullies and creeks for sheep stuck in the mud. "The gullies have cut back in recent years and are deeper, with treacherous sandy bottoms. We've lost 20 sheep in the past two years," he said.

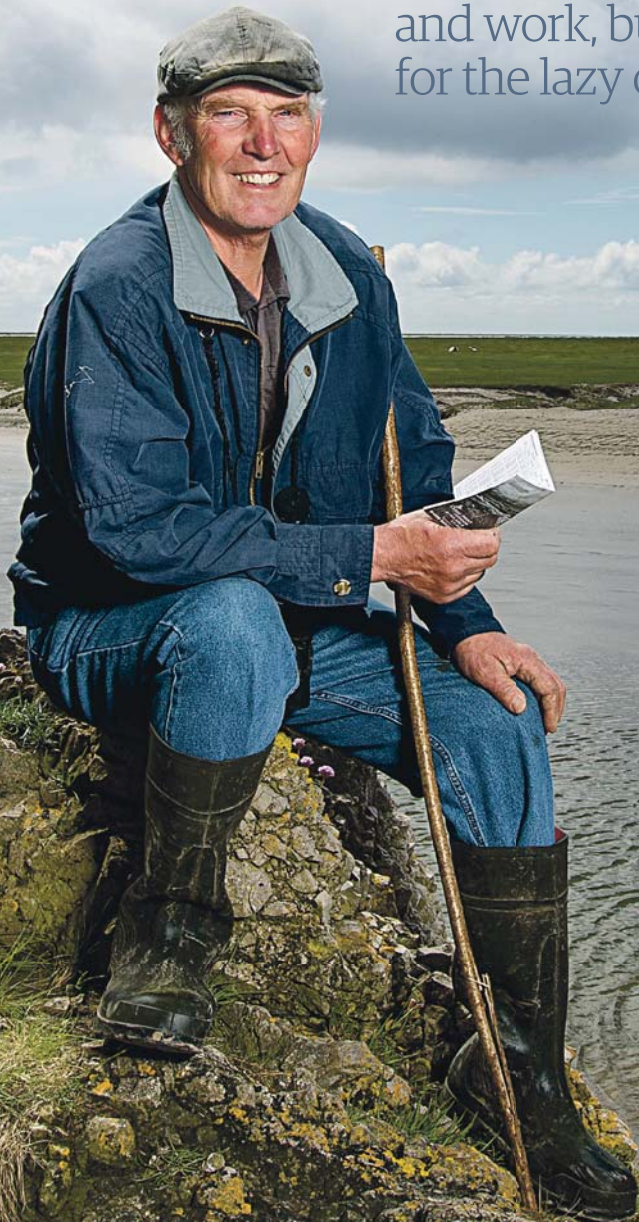
When the sheep get stuck, Harry and his sons move quickly to beat the racing tides. "We use plywood or a pallet to spread our weight on the mud and then dig out each leg, using a small hand pump to displace the sand," he said.

"We drag the sheep on to the pallet and douse it with water again to remove the sand, which weighs it down."

Sometimes Harry will scan the horizon from an upstairs bedroom using a telescope: "You can pick up on tell-tale signs like a lamb loitering, which could indicate the mother is stuck. The marshes are a wonderful place to live and work, but it's not a job for the lazy or faint-hearted."

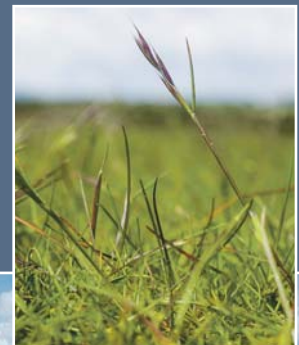


“The marshes are a wonderful place to live and work, but it’s not a job for the lazy or faint-hearted”



Why is saltmarsh important?

- It’s a nationally important habitat for migrating birds and wildfowl, as well as specialised plants, invertebrates, molluscs and fish.
- It absorbs carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and locks it up in the soil, helping to limit the impact of carbon emissions on the climate.
- Micro-organisms detoxify wastes brought in by the tides on a daily basis, neutralising pollutants found in water.
- The marshes also act as natural coastal defences, dissipating wave energy and allowing the coast to respond more naturally to sea-level changes.



IT'S ONLY NATURAL

Grantor Jonnie Watson is **passionate** about **growing organic** vegetables and **delivering them fresh** to his customers' doorsteps

Just over a decade ago, Jonnie and Fanny Watson started selling organic vegetables from a static caravan. Now, after weathering the recession, the Yorkshire couple's vegetable box scheme is well placed to take advantage of a revival in the organic food market.

According to the Soil Association, organic sales enjoyed a 2.8 per cent increase in 2013, with food scares making people more willing to pay a premium for food produced to higher farming standards.

"The organic sector will never be a massive part of the market because a lot of people always shop on price," said Jonnie (main picture), whose family have farmed in the village of Newton Kyme near Tadcaster for four generations.

"But more and more people are concerned about how their food is produced, and buying organic gives them a guarantee about where their food comes from and that it is grown to a set of strict rules and regulations.

"What appealed to us as organic farmers was taking a bag of seed and producing fresh, organic produce that is taken straight to the doorstep with no food miles."

Around 250 vegetable boxes are delivered to customers in the north of England each week, with another 1,000 boxes packed for other schemes. Produce is also sold direct to restaurants, schools, farm shops and outlets.

Up to 85 per cent of the vegetable box contents are home-grown in mid-season. In addition to organic cereals and potatoes, the farm grows more than 50 varieties of organic vegetable, including cauliflowers, purple sprouting broccoli, leeks, courgettes, squashes and cabbages.

Its storage and packing house are certified to rigorous organic standards and there's a farm shop selling organic vegetables, fruit and eco-friendly household products. Jonnie and Fanny attend up to 12 local farmers' markets a month too, an excellent showcase for the box scheme.

At any given moment they have about 50 acres of vegetables under cultivation within a six-year crop rotation system, involving a total land bank of 300 acres of arable land. Nitrogen-fixing legumes are grown in intervening years, with some crops sown with a grass or clover ley, which can be mowed and mulched back in to provide green manure.



It's a fact

➤ Farmers need to undergo at least a two-year monitored conversion period before their land gains organic status.

➤ Organic growers work in harmony with nature, nurturing and replenishing the soil, not depleting it.

➤ No artificial fertilisers, pesticides (often manufactured using non-renewable fossil-fuel sources) or GM seeds are permitted.

➤ Crop rotation improves soil fertility, acts as a brake on pest build-up and rests the soil.

Most nutritious

All crops at St Helens Farm are propagated from seed, with plants transferred to the fields at five weeks to give them a head start against weeds. Organic vegetables are planted out every week from mid-April and the team aim to pick every day of the year.

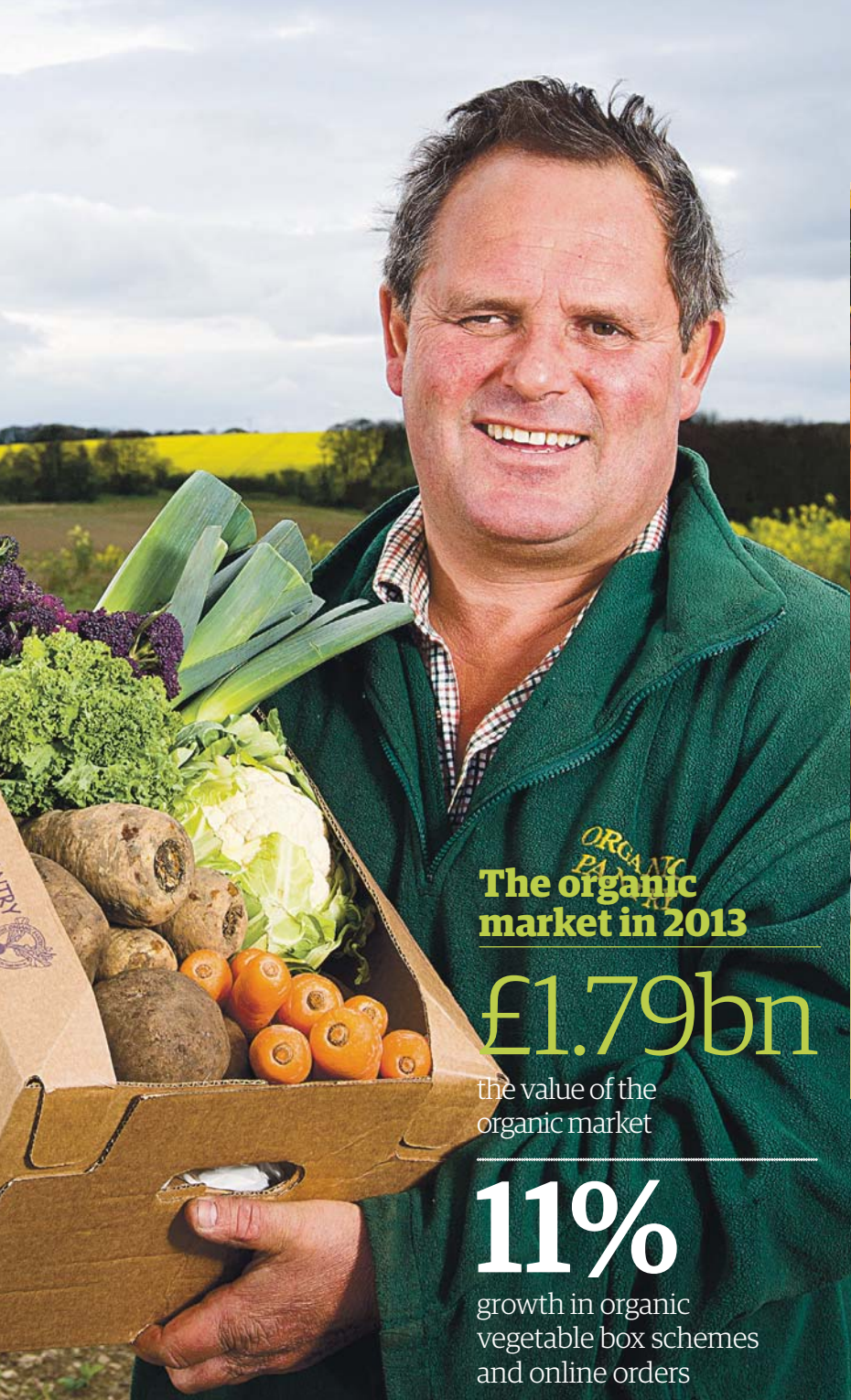
"We specialise in perishable produce - vegetables that benefit from being picked one day and sold the next while at their tastiest and most nutritious," said Jonnie.

The constant planting and the sheer variety of vegetables grown provides a measure of insurance against crop failure.

"One year you can have a fantastic squash crop, but the year after lose the lot because of slugs," said Jonnie. "A conventional farmer can wait until he sees a problem and deal with it overnight, but once we've got a problem it's often too late."

Controlling weed growth without recourse to herbicides is a challenge. "We harrow the





The organic market in 2013

£1.79bn

the value of the organic market

11%

growth in organic vegetable box schemes and online orders



Farming with nature

Researchers from Oxford University say organic farms that don't use pesticides, fertilisers or intensive farming methods typically have 34 per cent more species than conventional farms.

"A butterfly survey we did found the range of species here is significantly higher than on a neighbouring farm that is conventionally managed," said Jonnie, whose farm is managed within a Higher Level Stewardship Scheme.

"There's more food available year round because of the weed seed and areas we've set aside for bird cover. With more bug life you get more birds, as well as predators such as kites and buzzards. We also get more predator insects that control aphids and other bugs."



crops to knock back weeds and stop them germinating and potentially depriving the plants of light," said Jonnie.

A variety of indoor crops are grown in polytunnels from March onwards, including tomatoes, cucumbers, and sufficient herbs and leaves to fill 3,000 salad bags a week.

The Watsons don't view themselves as eco-warriors. "We believe it is the right way to produce food, but we wouldn't dream of preaching to people that they should farm organically," said Jonnie. "Actually, in many ways things have gone full circle. My father and great-uncle managed the land in a similar way to us before the advent of intensive farming. So you could say we are the 'conventional' farmers.

"We'd like to think we will be leaving the farm in a better shape than when we started."

For more information...



... go to www.theorganicpantry.co.uk

IT'S A **Three generations** of the Rose family have transformed a **former military airbase** into a hive of **modern-day industry**

RUNWAY

SUCCESS

On a bright summer's day it's easy to forget that the fields of rapeseed stretching into the distance were once part of RAF Bottesford in the Second World War.

The landscape no longer reverberates to the throb of Lancaster bomber engines, but there are still plenty of reminders about the location's wartime past on this 700-acre site on the border between Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and Leicestershire.

Normanton airfield, as it is now known, is home to Roseland Business Park, which has been owned and operated by the Rose family for 50 years.

The nine original aircraft hangars are now modern warehouses and workshops, reclad and extended in many cases, and the original control tower survives as office space. The former runways today provide hardstanding storage for several thousand cars and ex-military vehicles.

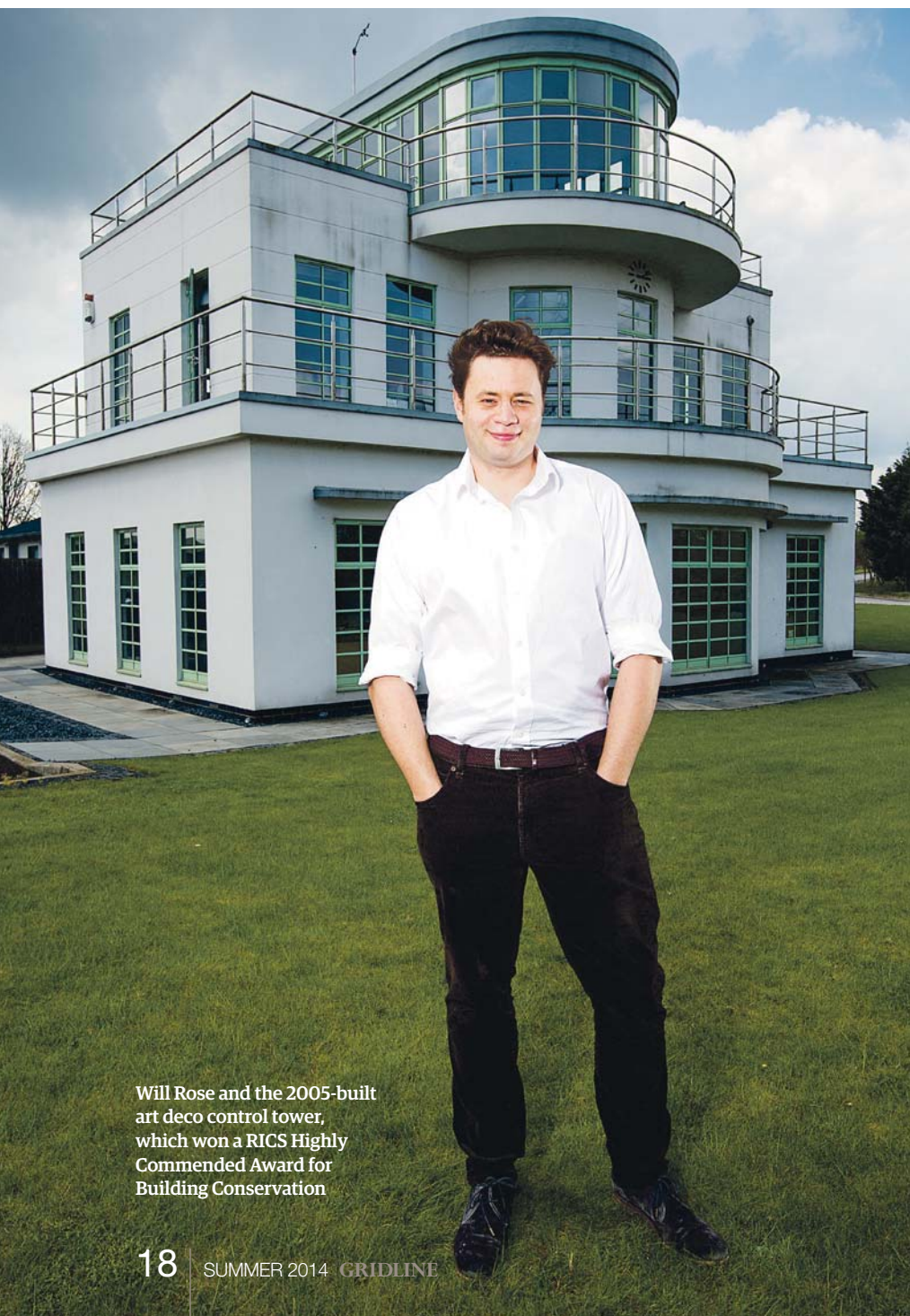
Construction of the airfield began in 1941, after the fall of France, when it became clear that the only way to hit back at Nazi Germany was through long-range bombing raids. Some 60,000 men nationwide were detailed to carry out a massive airfield construction programme using the best materials and engineering expertise available.

"Even today we still use the original land drains and electrical ducting," said John Rose, who has handed over much of the day-to-day running of the company to the next generation - John (junior), Rebecca and Will.

Foresight

In 2005, to provide a new HQ presence at the main entrance, an eye-catching art deco control tower extension was added to an existing building that once served as the squadron base for the Royal Australian Air Force.

"The building pays tribute to 467 Squadron, which flew Lancasters from the base between 1942 and 1943," said Will,



Will Rose and the 2005-built art deco control tower, which won a RICS Highly Commended Award for Building Conservation



who is company secretary. "In 1995 we hosted a visit from ex-servicemen, who planted a tree in memory of their fallen comrades.

"The design was inspired by a photo of a Second World War control tower in Archerfield that we found on the internet. I did a quick sketch, which was used as the basis for the architectural drawings."

It was John's father, with remarkable foresight, who first realised that the hangars and other buildings had a potential use for storage far beyond their scrap value, and started to acquire the parcels of land that had been offered back to the original landowners at the end of the war.

Space to grow

Fast forward to today, and the business park has 16 tenants ranging from blue-chip multinational companies to family-owned local concerns, between them employing nearly 700 people.

The occupiers benefit from a 24/7 manned security entrance, landscape screening for added privacy and a location at the heart of the East Midlands, as well as a direct road link with the A1 trunk road just over a kilometre away.

In the post-war years, the hangars were used for agricultural storage, and later by companies such as British Sugar and British Gypsum.

However, reflecting industry trends in favour of just-in-time replenishment over stockpiling, most of the premises are now used for production or operational roles.

"One of our greatest assets is space - unlike many traditional industrial estates, which are constrained by nearby residential developments," said Will.

Will with his father John, who greatly expanded the business during his 40 years in charge

"We can offer potential clients a design and build capability to meet their specific requirements."

Meanwhile, about 400 acres of land are contract farmed for arable crops within an Entry Level Stewardship Scheme in which large areas have been sown with wild bird seed and nectar mixes.

The whole site had been levelled during the airfield construction in 1941, with most of the topographical features and top soil removed.

But over the past 40 years, the Rose family has carefully restored the landscape, planting more than 150,000 mixed-species trees, reinstating miles of hedgerow and creating new lakes.

Whatever direction the business park takes in the future, the site's heritage will continue to feature prominently.

"At 73, I'm exactly the same age as the airfield," said John. "The family has grown up with the place, and we're very proud of our role as its custodians."

For more information...



... go to www.roselandgroup.com and to find out about the aircrews who served at RAF Bottesford, an online version of Vincent Holyoak's book, *On the Wings of the Morning*, is available at www.bottesfordhistory.org.uk

Wartime RAF Bottesford

➤ Nearly 2,500 personnel served on the airfield, with living quarters dispersed across 15 sites for safety reasons.

➤ Lancaster bombers from the base joined raids on Peenemünde, the V weapons research station, as well as night missions over Germany.

➤ RAF Bottesford was a base for the USAAF Troop Carrier Command, which mounted glider operations in the D-Day landings.

➤ The airfield ceased operations in June 1947, although millions of tonnes of wartime ammunition were stored there until 1960.

➤ 58 planes and their crews from RAF Bottesford were lost in action.

➤ The airfield was one of the last places in the UK to be bombed by German bombers returning home in March 1945.



Lastword

Your chance to enter two great competitions

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To be in with a chance of winning, all you have to do is answer this simple question.



Q What breed of sheep does farmer Harry Wilson graze on the saltmarshes of Holker Estate in Lancashire?

Send your answer, name and contact details to Gridline Sheep Competition, 23-25 Waterloo Place, Warwick Street, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 5LA or email them to gridline@summersault.co.uk
Closing date is 25 July 2014.



Photo competition

Winner Neil Pilcher said: "I saw this crocus one morning and liked the colours, shapes and shadows. It was a pleasant and unexpected surprise to win."



SPLASH OUT FOR SUMMER

Say hello to summer with a timely £150 to spend in M&S.

Just enter Gridline's photo competition by sending us a shot based on the theme 'sensational summer'.

Send in your photo to Gridline Photo Competition, 23-25 Waterloo Place, Warwick Street, Leamington Spa CV32 5LA, or email it to gridline@summersault.co.uk including your name, address and phone number.

The closing date for entries is 25 July 2014.

COMPETITION TERMS AND CONDITIONS

GOURMET BREAK: The winner will be the first entrant selected at random who correctly identifies the answer (to be featured in the next edition) 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. The closing date is 25 July 2014.

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 25 July 2014. Prints cannot be returned.

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