



R A B Y

Autumn 2024

Farming | Forestry | Land Management | Buildings | Sustainability | Business Support | Leisure & Tourism

RABY



*Farming*

## Spotlight

# Farming Update

Drilling is well underway. It has been pleasing to see the addition of a stubble rake, which appears to have significantly reduced the slug burden, which in turn has aided our direct drilling of crops while reducing our reliance on synthetic inputs.

The oil seed rape looks well this year, with little sign of the cabbage stem flea beetle pest which caused a lot of issues last year. Companion cropping the oil seed rape is working well for the third year running, the idea being that the berseem clover aids the oil seed rape to root and creates diversity in the soil. We have also established winter wheat with winter beans for the first time this year. The early sown wheat has emerged and is looking well.

Our soil testing contractor is busy at work as part of the ongoing soil monitoring programme at Raby. We are retesting the farm to check our progress with social organic matter and nutrients. It will be interesting to see how this has changed over the last four years. Durham University are looking to support Raby Farms with soil monitoring going forward.

We continue to investigate up and coming technologies. This summer we had a demonstration from AGSEED as to how an automated tractor could fit in at Raby. The smaller units with potentially less soil damage may fit the new Raby system in the future.

The sheep have been doing well at North Pasture. Jane and Gemma have achieved some really good results, evidenced by favourable lamb prices for both the fat and store lambs, which has been pleasing to see after a challenging lambing time.

In September, we welcomed a group of scientists from Fera along with local farmers into the recently restored Riding School, to discuss the links between scientific research with on-farm practice.

The support from the wider Estate during a challenging harvest has been appreciated.



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*Forestry*

# Spotlight

## Forestry & Estate

### Maintenance Update

As the green chlorophyll fades from the leaves and gives way to the red and orange pigments, autumn is well and truly upon us. Despite a relatively cool and unsettled summer, the trees are beginning to show the multitude of colours that make it a pleasure to get outside and enjoy the views across the Estate's parkland and woodlands.

The spring planting season seems a distant memory now, and this year has seen some strong growth of the new oaks planted around the Park at Raby Castle and also the developing crops in the woods and biodiversity areas. This was helped by the tending, weeding and even a little irrigation by the Forestry & Estates Maintenance Team.

The summer provided the opportunity to resume work on the Park and Bath Wood walls, now completing the renovation of the sections affected by earlier winter storms and to push on with planned maintenance that will aid the resilience of the remaining boundaries and infrastructure around the Estate. Drier ground conditions have also assisted timber harvesting works, allowing the thinning of several broadleaf and coniferous plantations, to produce wood for milling and sustainable fuel in the form of woodchip and logs for local suppliers. The summer also saw the enjoyment of fantastic craftsmanship with the Estate benches being used by thousands of visitors at Raby Castle.

In July, it was possible to showcase some of this work when the Estate hosted a visit by the North East division of the Royal Forestry Society. The meeting was well attended by members from across the region and provided an insight into the Estate's woodland management and an opportunity to share knowledge within the forest industry.

This autumn and winter will see a continuation of timber harvesting and woodland regeneration from carefully selected areas under the Estates' long term forest management plans, in Durham and on the lower parts of the Wrekin in Shropshire. Felling work will concentrate on mature crops and will enable an improvement in age structure, species diversity and resilience to changing climatic and environmental conditions that may be faced as the woodlands develop in the future.



# RABY



# Buildings



## Hill End

The Projects team have just completed a full restoration and modernisation of Hill End in Forest-in-Teesdale.

The property benefits from stunning views over the River Tees and picturesque countryside landscapes. Internally, the property has been stripped back to bare stone walls before undergoing a complete restoration including various layout changes to maximise the space in the property. A new multi-fuel stove has been installed in the living room, alongside a new kitchen, utility room and a more spacious bathroom which have been added along with an upgrade to the heating system.

Externally, the property has had new boundary fencing installed, a gravel drive, new doors and windows to remaining outbuildings and the derelict outbuilding demolished. Finally, the property has been whitewashed to match the Raby portfolio and stand out in the rugged Teesdale landscape.

With this project complete, the team is now focused on breathing new life into a grade 2 listed property on Front Street in Staindrop with beautiful original features and plenty of character.

Before



After





## Maintenance

The Maintenance Team have been working hard supporting restoration across the Estate.

Recent work includes the reroofing of Bowless Farm, external decoration of Langdon Beck Hotel and the full renovation of the outer buildings at Gainford Hall.

## Trades4Care

The Raby Estate has been working closely with Trades4Care, a community interest company that strives to provide the opportunity for young and disadvantaged people to develop a variety of technical and life skills whilst working with qualified and competent supervision.

In collaboration with the Raby County Durham, Buildings Team, Trades4Care have worked on two cottages in Hilton, Rose Cottage in Teesdale, and two projects in Staindrop. We look forward to this collaboration continuing in the future.





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*Barnard Castle  
Project*



## The Castle at Barnard Castle

Three years ago, Raby acquired the old NatWest Bank building at 28 The Market Place, Barnard Castle, to create a link between the Market Place and the Castle at Barnard Castle, which lies to the rear of the premises. The project aims to bring into use the Outer Ward of the Castle, to enhance the Castle's profile and contribution to the economic life of the town. 28 Market Place offers a potential gateway and resource.

The Castle at Barnard Castle was built soon after 1093 on a dramatic site above the River Tees. The Castle was built to control a river crossing between the Bishop of Durham's territory and the Honour of Richmond. Much of the present Castle was built during the 12th and early 13th centuries by the Balliol family.

From the 14th century onwards, the Castle belonged to the Earls of Warwick, and from 1471 to 1485 to the Duke of Gloucester, later Richard III. After a fierce siege during the Rising of the North in 1569, when the Castle was bombarded by rebels, the Castle went into steep decline and was effectively abandoned by the early 17th century. It has remained an imposing ruin ever since. Ownership of the site is complex but much of the Inner and Outer Wards are owned by Raby with the Inner Ward being occupied by English Heritage Trust under a series of Guardianship Agreements.

Working with partners such as Cultura Trust, Durham County Council, English Heritage Trust, Historic England and Barnard Castle Town Council, we now hope to raise the profile and footfall of the Castle as a tourism asset for visitors and amenity for residents. This should in turn improve the economic, cultural and social connectivity between the Castle and the town.

The project is intended to introduce public access to the Outer Ward of the Castle, an area of about two acres in the heart of the town, which currently has no use and therefore delivers no tangible benefits. We are currently considering and consulting on alternative uses for this area to test and conclude on those most viable, sustainable, and beneficial, recognising it is part of the Castle's scheduled monument. By bringing the Outer Ward into public use we also hope to fill a gap in the historical and archaeological understanding of the Castle in the context of life in the town, and ultimately attract funding for the repair of the curtain walls overlooking the river. This is with the aim of removing the Castle from the Historic England Heritage at Risk register.

We hope to make public engagement an integral part of all activities through consultation and volunteering opportunities, which will help to inform the business case and build capacity for future sustainability. We also believe we should explore options for creating direct access into the Castle and/or a resource for activity in the Outer Ward as well as increasing the cultural, community, economic and tourism value of the Castle for the town. To this end, we are planning to devise and test the viability of a residential 'guildhouse' for traditional skills training and heritage learning in the disciplines required to support the Castle, historic town and associated sites, including showcasing skills demonstrations and providing career and employment support, especially for marginalised and disadvantaged groups.

The project is in its early stages, but we look forward to keeping you updated on progress through this newsletter.

RABY

*Land  
Management*



## Departmental Update

# High Nature Value Farming Best Practice Award

The Tees-Swale: naturally connected programme is led by the North Pennines National Landscape team in partnership with Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund using money raised by National Lottery players.

The programme is working in collaboration with farmers and land managers across 845 km<sup>2</sup> of the northern Pennines to deliver improved connectivity and biodiversity across this unique upland landscape.



The High Nature Value Farming Awards celebrate those farmers in the region who represent a wider field of excellence and are using nature-friendly practices to enhance the area for the future.

The high nature value farming category aims to highlight farms which have consistently shown best practices. Often the people rewarded are those that have made significant changes, but this award celebrates those who have always farmed less intensively and who have a long track record of farming with nature. The winners of the high nature value farming best practice award, for the constant attention to detail, thoughtful approach and continuing enhancement of the farm and its habitats, are Raby Tenants of Herdship, Upper Teesdale, Paul and Jen Johnson.

Paul and Jen run cattle and sheep at land that runs up to 1,750ft on their tenanted farm, which is in extended Higher Level Stewardship with the whole plot classified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). They have created habitat for ground-nesting birds, such as curlew, lapwing, redshank, oyster catcher, snipe, and black grouse.



Congratulations to all of the winners; Julia Carr of Marrick Park, Swaledale | Stuart and Marie Collinson, of Harker Springs, Lunedale | Catherine Calvert from Hazel Brow Farm, Low Row, Swaledale and Karen Scott from Low Way Farm.

## Spotlight

# Supper with Roaring Stags

This memorable evening at Raby Castle, Park and Gardens allowed guests to embark on an exclusive guided tour around the Deer Park at twilight.

With views of the castle's shadow stretching over the hills, this event showcases the beauty of the Estate during autumn.

On the tour, visitors experienced the powerful roars of the stags during the rut, a striking natural event that echoes throughout the ancient woodlands.

The evening was paired with a seasonal three-course supper, prepared with local ingredients from the Estate, offering a unique blend of a natural spectacle and delicious dining.

The event was a 'roaring' success and garnered coverage across numerous national media channels including The Guardian and The Times newspaper.

“I just had to write to tell you about our evening with you at "roaring stags", it was truly magical. Your staff are so passionate, caring, knowledgeable and friendly - absolute stars all of them. The food your chefs produced was of the highest standard ... all cooked to perfection. Then our adventure into the night, the stags were amazing, Raby Castle in the moonlight was stunning.”



Image credit: Ian Forsyth (The Times Newspaper)



Image credit: Ian Forsyth (The Guardian Newspaper)



RABY

*Sustainability*

## Hedgerow Survey

For the past 8 months, brilliant teams comprising both Raby volunteers and employees have been surveying the hedgerows across the Raby Estate.

Using Adams Hedgerow Management Scale, and the DEFRA hedgerow survey protocol, the teams measured typical hedge width, height and shape, as well as the presence of banks, ditches, fences, hedgerow trees and the character of adjoining field margins. Although many more hedges are left to do, the surveys have already identified two main issues 'legginess' – caused by historic stock grazing up to the hedge line and 'gappiness', where parts of the hedge have died or been removed, leaving gaps in the boundary.



We are now using the results to update our hedgerow management plans, with a new hedgerow trimming rotation being implemented this autumn.

The Estate maintenance team has also identified potential hedges to coppice and lay around Raby Home Farm and Keverstone, as well as priorities for 'gapping up' and refencing. In order to ensure there are sufficient berries, for winter food for wildlife and to support good flowering next spring, no more than 5% of our hedges in any one area will be laid or coppiced this year (except roadside hedges where safety is paramount) and only one side and the top of hedges from the Castle to Langton Farm will be cut, leaving the other side to fruit as normal. Hedges from Gainford to Summerhouse will be addressed next year.

The hedgerow condition surveys are part of the Estate's commitment to Enhance Biodiversity – one of the three core aims of our Sustainability Strategy – detailed further on our new Sustainability staff intranet pages.

As part of the same initiative, the Estate's Green Team has been launched which is voluntary and open to all. The focus is on action; on bringing fresh ideas and working across all the departments of the Estate to implement them. The initiatives will cover the full spectrum of our Sustainability commitments, including looking at ways to Reduce Our Impacts, Enhance Biodiversity and Support Local Communities. There will also be opportunities to get involved in further ecological monitoring and citizen science; possibly being involved with the scientists we are working with.



If you are interested in hearing more and supporting the Estate with our Sustainability ambitions, you can also email the Estate's Sustainability Manager, Victoria Cadman, on [Victoria.cadman@raby.co.uk](mailto:Victoria.cadman@raby.co.uk)





RABY

*Business Support*



## Spotlight Departmental Update

Led by Business Support Manager, Lesley Renteurs and assisted by Steph Bell - Business Support Executive, Rosie Riches – Business Support Apprentice, Chris Armstrong – IT Technical Support and Victoria Cadman – Sustainability Manager, the Business Support team based in the Staindrop Office look after the Estates’ HR, Health and Safety, IT support and sustainability requirements.

Since joining Raby in 2020, Lesley has been involved in developing internal systems to enhance the HR management and support of all Raby staff as well as continually enhancing the benefits package we are able to offer. She also works closely with other managers to ensure a positive health and safety culture at Raby. With a growing business, IT infrastructure is a crucial part of development and Lesley has managed, with our IT providers, the implementation of many new systems across the Estate.

Steph joined the team in 2022, taking on recruitment- no small task, as with the Rising developments we have recruited more than 50 new staff this year alone. She now also manages the day-to-day HR needs of the Estate. Both Lesley and Steph are mental health first aiders and promote health and wellbeing to all staff, something they are both passionate about.

This year has seen the team take on Rosie as our first apprentice, who works closely with and is mentored by Steph.

Victoria joined Raby in 2023 and is working with Heads of Departments to develop our Sustainability Strategy for the business.

Our newest team member Chris has only been with us a few weeks but has taken on the mantle of IT Technical Support and, with a growing workforce, expanding infrastructure and systems. Having someone dedicated in this role will ensure any IT issues are swiftly dealt with. With over 210 staff now, the team are kept busy, but if you see any of us around do say hello.

Raby Estates

## Warm Welcome and Fond Farewells

Here at Raby, we have had the privilege to work with a variety of talented individuals, each of whom have brought something unique to the fold. We offer our team the opportunity to work in remarkable locations, from the rugged landscape of Upper Teesdale to the parklands at Raby Castle.

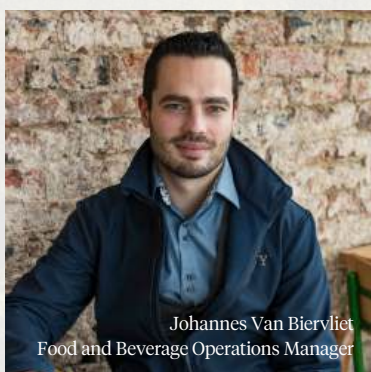
As the Estate continues to expand, we are taking on new employees to strengthen our team. Our commitment to delivering excellence and innovation in every aspect of our work is reflected in our growing and dynamic workforce, and we look forward to the bright future that lies ahead.



Wendy Watts,  
Assistant Retail Manager

We have already welcomed a host of new members to the Raby Estates Team throughout the summer months and into autumn.

Lucy Branch, Marketing Executive | Christopher Armstrong, IT Technical Support | Dickon Harding, Gardens and Landscape Manager | Johannes Van Biervliet, Food and Beverage Operations Manager | Tim Dodgson, Public Engagement and Learning Officer | Wendy Watts, Assistant Retail Manager.



Johannes Van Biervliet  
Food and Beverage Operations Manager

Suzanne Gembler, Retail Assistant | Amanda Reed, Kitchen Porter | Sonia McCabe-Baxter, Team Leader | Jill Addison, Housekeeper | Jake McFarlane, Trainee Beat Keeper | Connor Mills, Chef De Partie | Duncan Coates, Finance Administrator | John Barker, Working Foreman/Joiner | Joseph Reed, Archivist | Nicholas Wamarema, Senior Sous Chef | Rachel Page, Accounts Administrator | Tony Borthwick, Sous Chef | Jino Thankachan, Sous Chef | Liam Wheelhouse, Pastry Chef | Nathan Day, Food & Beverage Supervisor | Mandy Welland-Taylor, Retail Assistant | Naomi Grey and Rachel Page, Accounts Administrator.

Sadly, we say our farewells to staff who are moving on to pastures new. We would like to say a big thank you to Joy Casson, Accounts Administrator who has been with the team since 2006. Gabriel Damaszk, Archivist | Tim Marshall, Head Gardener | Max Pearson, Pantsperson | Karl Hankey, Projects Manager | Janet Hall, High Force General Assistant | Brendan Kindleyside, High Force General Assistant | Sue Blacker, Property Administrator | Chloe Wright, Events Executive. Alongside apprentices Isabella Plews and Connor Ames starting the next steps in their careers.



Jino Thankachan  
Sous Chef at High Force

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

# RABY

*Leisure & Tourism*



## The Glittering North

The Glittering North is set to be the attraction of autumn at Raby Estates, with a never seen before spectacle of live music, dance and captivating puppetry which all comes alive after dark.

An unforgettable experience has come to life with the help of Wild Rumpus, a creative company who enable families and friends alike to step out of their day to day lives and into a wonderful world of enchanting puppetry and illuminating light art.

Raby Castle's remodelled 18th century Walled Garden is home to the 'Glittering Trail' full of illuminated photo opportunities, a glittering immersive space dripping with gold, giant illuminated fish in a new watery world, and a spectacular recreation of the northern lights.

Alongside the 'Glittering Trail', the Dutch Barn is adorned with lights, flags, bunting and barrels. Whooping and whirling folk musicians play fiddles and brass whilst captivating fire performers dazzle the crowds.

The Riding School has also become a transformed space in this mythical new world, surrounded by warm lighting where visitors can hunker down and listen to tales of Norse gods and shapeshifting beasts.

The Glittering North is a truly spectacular event that is not to be missed. Remaining dates 30th, 31st October and 1st, 2nd and 3rd November.



R A B Y

# Estate Adventures

The most unique Gift



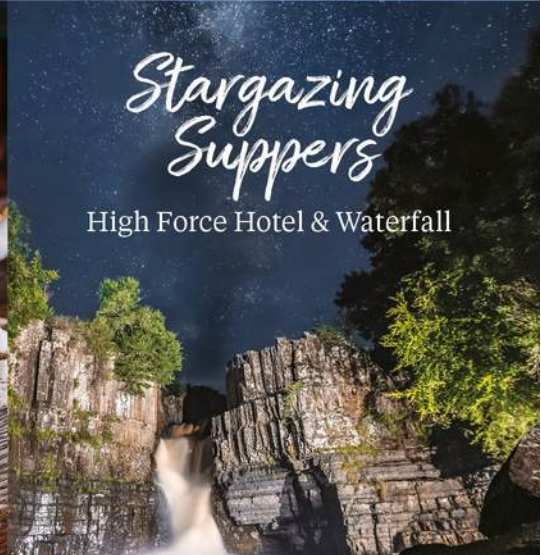
Deer  
Safaris

Raby Castle



Fireside  
Afternoon Tea

and Waterfall Walk  
High Force Hotel



Stargazing  
Suppers

High Force Hotel & Waterfall



Moorland  
Experience

Raby Estates



Cookery  
Masterclass

Raby Castle



Behind the  
Scenes Tour

Raby Castle



And so many more...

[www.raby.co.uk/gift-vouchers](http://www.raby.co.uk/gift-vouchers)



RABY

*What's*  
coming up

It's time to open the doors on a packed Autumn and Winter programme across the Raby Estate

# Leisure & Tourism

## Upcoming Events



### Deer Park Safari

Raby Castle

6th November, 5th December



### The Glittering North

Raby Castle

October 26th, 27th, 30th, 31st

November 1st, 2nd, 3rd



### The Plotters' Forest

#### Enchanted Christmas Trail

Raby Castle

Selected dates 16th November - 24th December



### Stargazing Suppers

High Force Hotel & Waterfall

Selected dates from October 2024 - March 2025



### Meet Mr and Mrs Claus in the Yuletide Yurt

Raby Castle

Selected dates in December 2024



### Raby Christmas Trees

Raby Castle

From 28th November



# Leisure & Tourism

## Upcoming Events



### Christmas in the Barn

Raby Castle  
Thursday 19th December



### Festive Wreath Workshop

Raby Castle  
23rd & 24th November



### Christmas Market

Raby Castle  
30th November, 1st December



### Creative Christmas Evening

Raby Castle  
Wednesday 4th December



### Christmas Afternoon Tea

High Force Hotel  
8th, 15th & 22nd December



### Christmas in the Entrance Hall

Raby Castle  
Selected dates in December



## Enquires

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