

Gridline

The magazine for
National Grid grantors
Spring 08

nationalgrid

Wildlife winners

Welsh farmers
look to the future

Explained

Electric and
magnetic fields

Horse power

Profile of Yorkshire
grantor and horse
whisperer Sarah Dent

Also in this issue: safety near overhead lines, County show dates, win a weekend break

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LIFE'S A BEACH FOR YORKSHIRE COUPLE

North Yorkshire grantors Gerald and Catherine Kearby are planning a seaside getaway after winning the Britannia Hotels competition in the last issue of Gridline.

After being told of their good fortune, the couple, who own a 113-acre farm devoted to sheep and grassland, are hoping to book a weekend break at a hotel in Bournemouth later this year.

Due to the demands of running a farm, the couple don't get away as often as they would hope to.

Talking of Gridline, Gerald said: "I like the new look of the magazine and the photography is excellent. We will definitely be entering future competitions."

CONTACT US WITH YOUR NEWS

Gridline is your magazine – please get in touch if you have any news you'd like to share with other grantors, if you can think of a good subject for an article, or if you would like to comment on anything you've read in the magazine.

To contact Gridline either phone 01926 654948 or email gridline@uk.ngrid.com. Or write to Gridline, Summersault, 122 Warwick Street, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 4QY.

NATIONAL GRID'S LAND AND DEVELOPMENT GROUP

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. We act as the main interface for landowners who have our gas and electricity equipment installed on their land. Listed below are your local land and development team contacts.

ELECTRICITY AND GAS

- North west and Scotland 0161 776 0706
- South east 01268 642091
- South west 01452 316059
- East 0113 290 8236.

WAYLEAVE PAYMENTS

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

ELECTRICITY EMERGENCY

- Emergency calls to report pylon damage to National Grid can be

made on 0800 404090. Note the tower's number – found just below the property plate – to help crews locate it.

ELECTRIC AND MAGNETIC FIELDS

- For information on electric and magnetic fields, call the EMF information line on 08457 023270 (local call rate).

Website: www.emfs.info.

GAS EMERGENCY

- 0800 111999.



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Welcome to Gridline

Are you taking part in Open Farm Sunday?
Please let Gridline know if you are hosting an event this year. Turn to page 5 for more info.



A very warm welcome to the Spring issue of Gridline. Reaction to the new-look magazine has been very positive and I would like to thank all those who have been in contact.

Last year I was fortunate to be one of the judges at the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group Cymru – National Grid Silver Lapwing Farm Conservation Awards.

As many of you know, in September last year the European Union reduced the amount of set-aside farmland to zero. The objective is to encourage farmers to grow more grain and offset recent poor harvests and soaring food prices. Conservationists fear that the return to production of arable land previously left uncultivated could have a serious effect on wildlife, including farmland birds like the yellowhammer, grey partridge and skylark.

With this in mind, it was encouraging to hear about the measures being taken by farmers in Wales to protect valuable wildlife habitats, often as part of planned agri-environment schemes. National Grid is proud to be associated with these awards and you can read about the achievements of the winners on page 12.

In the current issue of Gridline, we also look at the subject of electric and magnetic fields (EMFs) and provide an insight into the work of the EMF helpline, which is operated by National Grid on behalf of the whole electricity industry. For the facts about EMFs turn to page 6.

Safety is always an all-important consideration for anyone who owns land in the vicinity of power lines – and particularly for those working on the land. National Grid takes its responsibilities to grantors in this area very seriously. Please take a moment to read our guidance about the importance of respecting safe working zones near overhead power lines on page 16.

Once again, National Grid will be attending a number of agricultural shows during 2008. These events are an important opportunity for us to meet grantors and we look forward to offering our hospitality to many of you in the months ahead. See page 14 for details.

And finally, don't forget to turn to the back page for the photo competition and for another chance to win a fantastic weekend away at a top hotel.

Clare Dent

Editor, Gridline



TUNNEL: Project manager Owen Keith

Olympic milestone

Two 6km tunnels – one for National Grid and the other for EDF Energy – have been dug beneath the Olympic Park enabling the power needed for the 2012 Olympic Games to be carried underground.

“Breakthrough of the National Grid tunnel occurred in June last year,” said Owen Keith, National Grid project manager. “Work on installing the two new circuits, comprising a total of 36km of cabling, is now well underway.”

Electrification of the underground cable is on target for completion later this year. The existing 52 pylons (29 owned by National Grid) between Hackney and West Ham will then be dismantled. The overhead line was temporarily diverted in August 2007 to enable work to begin on the Olympic Village.

IT'S A FACT
£120 million – National Grid's investment at the Olympic site on overhead line works, tunnel construction and associated electric cabling

Online search tool locates pipelines and cables

National Grid has joined a growing number of companies providing details of pipelines, as well as underground and overhead electric lines, for an online search enquiry system called Linesearch.org.

Developed by Fisher German, the search package provides a single point of contact, making it easier for anyone carrying out work

to find out quickly (and free of charge) whether they might be affected by members' equipment. The inclusion of National Grid's 7,000km of high-pressure gas pipelines, 7,000km of overhead lines and 700km of 275kV/400kV underground electricity cables brings the total length of apparatus covered to 24,000km. Visit www.Linesearch.org or call 08704 036484.



LUCKY DIP: Alison Williams (second from right) with the rest of the group

Visit proves an education

Environmental Education Centre welcomes overhead line project team

A group from National Grid Electricity Alliance East had their pond-dipping skills tested recently at a team-building day at Canterbury Environmental Education Centre in Kent.

National Grid has a network of environmental education centres in the UK located on land it owns near substations. Run in partnership with Kent County Council, the Canterbury centre hosts around 4,500 visits a year from local schools.

“The idea was to get an insight into the activities organised for the children,” said Alison Williams, lands officer south east. “For example, we had a go at pond bingo in which the aim is to be the first person to complete a row of four pond animals on a spotter chart. A site assessment was also carried out to ensure that sufficient safety measures would be in place for the children when refurbishment works on the Canterbury-Kemsley overhead line take place later this year.”

Gearing up for Open Farm Sunday

Lancashire grantors Ian and David Pye are among 500 farmers throwing open their gates to the public on 1 June as part of the Open Farm Sunday programme. National Grid is a sponsor of the event, organised by Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF).

The Pye brothers manage a herd of 100 organic milking cows on 250 acres of land at Old Holly Farm in Garstang. “Many children have little idea about where their food comes from or how it is grown,” said Ian (pictured below). “They leave us with a real sense of being reconnected to the countryside and with an appreciation of the way their food is produced.”

To find out more visit www.farmsunday.org or call 08704 036484.



PERFECT HOST: Old Holly Farm's Ian Pye will be opening his farm



TREE CHEERS: Louise Alabaster and other members of the project team cut logs for the holt

Helping hand for otters

How otters on the Afon Lliw, near Felindre, have a new home – or holt – thanks to National Grid and grantor Louise Alabaster

The opportunity to improve the environment for the local otter population came to light during surveys by National Grid for the 316km natural gas pipeline project between Milford Haven in South Wales and Tirley, Gloucestershire (now completed). The stretch of river frequented by the otters crosses Louise's land and she was only too happy to lend a hand.

“National Grid is committed to safeguarding and enhancing the environment in which it works,” said Jason Appleby, the project ecologist. “There are only limited areas along the river suitable

for natural holts and so by building an artificial holt we are hopefully helping to preserve and increase otter numbers.”

Volunteers from Glyntaf, a housing association for young adults with learning difficulties, helped build the holt using fencing posts, twigs, branches and bracken, and cleared the riverbank of invasive weeds.

“Besides otters, we're very lucky to have a variety of wildlife on our doorstep, including owls, kestrels and buzzards,” said Louise, who runs a 100-acre beef and sheep farm. “Otters are very shy creatures so it's hard to tell if the holt is occupied yet, but we're keeping our fingers crossed.”

It's a fact

EMFs are both naturally produced and man-made

Lines of ENQUIRY

National Grid takes concerns about electric and magnetic fields seriously, which is why it has a dedicated helpline to answer people's questions

Electric and magnetic fields (EMFs) have been a subject of debate ever since studies in the 1970s suggested a link between EMFs and illness. But since it's nearly impossible to prove a negative – that something does not have an adverse effect on health – it's a debate that seems likely to continue to run.

Over the years National Grid has actively supported ongoing and high quality research into the subject. Expert organisations agree that the balance of evidence is against EMFs being a cause of ill health. But as a service to the public National Grid provides information to people who have concerns.

The helpline unit was established more than 10 years ago. It is staffed by National Grid employees although the service operates on behalf of the whole electricity industry in the UK. Chris Haswell, EMF advisor, and colleagues Dr Hayley Tripp, EMF scientist, and Jeremy Lee, team leader, are the first points of contact for members of the public.

"EMFs are present wherever electricity is used," said Chris. They are produced naturally – the earth's magnetic field, for example – and as a result of human activities. Overhead lines, substations and underground cables all generate EMFs, and so do wiring and appliances in the home.

In the United Kingdom, the Health Protection Agency (HPA) recommends guidelines for exposure to EMFs. National Grid is committed to following these independent guidelines and all equipment is designed and operated to meet, and often exceed, these requirements.

Callers contact the helpline for many reasons – they may be buying or selling a property or want to know more about the EMF generated by household appliances. "On one occasion, we were even asked about hybrid electric cars, but in that particular instance, we had to admit we didn't know the answer and referred them to the manufacturer," said Chris.

"When people call us, we will typically explain what EMFs are, talk through any concerns they may have, and, if appropriate, offer to carry out further investigations to confirm that levels are within government guidelines," he added.

If an enquiry is about National Grid equipment, the EMF unit will handle it from start to finish, but about half of the calls relate to equipment owned by one of the Distribution Network Operators, such as E.ON or EDF. >>

"EMFs are present wherever electricity is used"

MEASURED RESPONSE:
(l-r) Jeremy Lee and Chris Haswell



MEET THE TEAM

The EMF helpline unit is part of National Grid's Environmental Engineering team. Other members of the team are EMF scientific advisors John Swanson and Dave Renew, audible noise engineer Mark Winter, and Vishaal Puri, who assists on noise concerns as well as electronic compatibility issues (for example, interference to radio or television reception).

Chris and his colleagues let people know which company to contact, and ensure they obtain the information they need for their particular circumstances. They will also go through the findings of a report from a Distribution Network Operator if people need further explanation about some aspect.

"We receive an average of 60-80 calls a month, although the number can be as high as 170 if, for example, there's been a lot of media coverage," said Chris. "Very often we are able to tell people straightaway the typical EMF levels near an overhead line, substation or underground cable. But in about 10 per cent of cases we will offer to carry out an EMF survey to obtain a more definitive answer."

Chris and other members of the unit undertake many of the visits, with the remainder carried out by five EMF liaison officers (usually overhead line engineers) based throughout England and Wales. Where possible, visits are timed to take place at a time of day when EMF levels would be most representative of average readings.

Measurements are taken using two kinds of

equipment. The tripod-mounted electric field meter is operated using a fibre-optic remote control so that the user won't interfere with the reading. Magnetic fields, on the other hand, are measured using a small hand-held device, known as an EMDEX.

"Home appliances can generate much higher magnetic fields in their immediate vicinity than if you were directly underneath an overhead line – up to 800 microteslas (the unit of measurement) in the case of vacuum cleaners, for example," said Chris. "But, of course, these appliances are usually used for only a short time."

After each visit, a report is prepared for the customer on what levels of EMFs were found and where they were found, together with any conclusions.

If requested, a meter can be left with the occupier if they want to monitor levels over a longer period of time. The devices are capable of recording measurements over a 24-hour period, and data can be downloaded for later analysis.

In addition to their work with the

helpline, Chris and his team provide design and development input for new National Grid equipment. They also work on environmental statements associated with new overhead line projects, and are present at public meetings and drop-in sessions to answer EMF enquiries.

Chris believes that the job calls for someone who is both a good listener and has the ability to explain often complex issues. "It's not our job to tell people what to think but we can arm them with the facts so that they are able to make up their own minds," he stressed.

"I feel it's an important role – after all we are part of the public face of National Grid."

To contact the EMF helpline, telephone 0845 702 3270 (from the UK). More information on EMFs can be found at www.emfs.info/. A booklet called EMF the Facts, published by the Energy Networks Association, is available from the ENA website (www.energynetworks.org).

Q&A

EMFs – THE FACTS

John Swanson is National Grid's scientific advisor on electric and magnetic fields, and a member of the Stakeholder Advisory Group on EMFs, which advises the government. He answers some of the frequently asked questions about EMFs.

Q What are EMFs?

A Electric and magnetic fields. They occur wherever electricity is used, and are produced by voltages and currents. Therefore, they are always going to be present around power lines as well as in the home, near appliances, and so on.

Q How do they affect us?

A At high levels, EMFs can affect the body in known ways. For example, high electric fields can cause body hair to vibrate, and even higher fields – way above those produced by power lines – can induce currents in the body that interfere with nerves. At the lower levels you would get from a power line there are no established effects from EMFs. But there is some evidence of a possible link to disease, particularly childhood leukaemia.

Q How strong is that evidence?

A It is statistical evidence only and there is no good evidence of effects from experiments in the laboratory. It is strong enough for the official classification to be possibly a cause of disease, but not strong enough for probably or definitely. So we don't think EMFs pose a risk – in fact the balance of evidence is against – but we take even a small possibility seriously.



“At the lower levels you would get from a power line there are no established effects from EMFs”

Q How safe are power lines?

A We measure magnetic fields in a unit called the microtesla (μT). A power line might rarely produce up to about 20 μT . All fields below 100 microtesla are automatically compliant with the government's exposure limits. The average directly under a power line is 4 μT , and the field falls quite rapidly away to the sides to an average of 0.4 μT at about 60 metres.

Q What level has been linked with childhood illness?

A Exposure to an average of 0.4 μT across the day is the value where there seems to be a statistical association with childhood leukaemia. Fewer than 0.5% of homes in the UK have fields that high, and of those, slightly less than half come from power lines, with more coming from low-voltage wiring.

Q What is National Grid doing about it?

A I hope we do all the things you'd want a responsible company to do. We support high-quality research. We provide open and honest information. But importantly, we commit ourselves to following the EMF limits set by the independent experts. We don't decide ourselves what a safe level is; the Health Protection Agency and the World Health Organization decide that, and we

then ensure every power line in the country complies.

Q Why stop there – why not reduce exposure further just in case?

A All the easy things to reduce exposure we already do. We could do more but it would start to have an impact on society in other ways. For example, as a precautionary measure, you could introduce strict planning controls on corridors of land around power lines. But that would devalue other people's land and the cost of it could run into billions of pounds.

It wouldn't be right for us to make decisions like that unilaterally. That's why we created the stakeholder group called SAGE (the Stakeholder Advisory Group on EMFs) so that we, in industry, environmental and citizen groups and professional bodies, can all work together to get the best outcome for society overall.

Q What is the very latest advice issued by SAGE?

A SAGE has produced a report to the government recommending some simple changes to wiring in the home but not any major changes regarding electricity transmission and distribution lines. The government is currently considering these recommendations.

Meeting tomorrow's needs today

Connecting new sources of energy, as well as reinforcing the gas and electricity networks, are among National Grid's key challenges



OCKER HILL TO KITWELL

» **When:** Completed between June and October 2007.

» **Why:** Refurbishment was carried out on 275kV overhead lines between the Ocker Hill, Oldbury and Kitwell substations in the West Midlands.

» **What:** A total of 47 pylons over 13km were involved. The overhead line runs parallel to the M5 motorway for a considerable distance, and passes over railway lines and industrial units. Due to the angle at which the line crosses the six-lane motorway, scaffolding was impractical. Working in trolleys, the engineers had to pull themselves along the lines to remove the spacer bars. Once completed the old lines were removed and new ones winched into place.

» **Lie of the land:** "As part of the project, we placed bird flight diverters (highly visible orange plastic spirals) on a span of the line crossing Sheepwash Park in Tipton," said Stan Roach, project engineer, Electricity Alliance East. "They help prevent the resident swans from colliding with the conductors."

50%
the amount of gas consumed in the UK that may have to be imported by 2010

ISLE OF GRAIN TO SHORNE GAS PIPELINE PROJECT

» **When:** Work has recently started and is scheduled to finish in 2008.

» **Why:** The 900mm diameter pipeline will transport natural gas from the LNG importation terminal at Grain, in north-west Kent, to the existing Above Ground Installations at Shorne and Gravesend. The project will help to ensure sufficient quantities of gas are available for the needs of London and the south east of England.

» **What:** Most of the 21km route passes through agricultural land. Around 4km crosses the environmentally sensitive Stoke Marshes and Shorne Marshes. Horizontal directional drilling will be used to avoid disturbing the habitat of breeding birds, as well as great crested newts and small mammals such as water voles.

» **Lie of the land:** "At one point, the pipeline will pass underneath the Thames and Medway Canal, a highway and railway line," said agricultural liaison officer Peter Roberts.

EASINGTON TO GANSTEAD PIPELINE/ASSELBY TO PANNAL PIPELINE

» **When:** Started March 2008 and due to complete this year.

» **Why:** A new 759km sub-sea pipeline was completed in late 2006 between the Norwegian-owned Ormen-Lange North Sea gas field and a new gas import terminal at Easington, north of the Humber. At full capacity, it will be able to supply up to 20 per cent of the UK's future requirements. To accommodate this, four new sections of 1,220mm high-pressure pipeline are being constructed by National Grid across Yorkshire

and Lancashire to link pipelines running north to south along the east and west coasts.

» **What:** Two sections have been completed to date – the trans-Pennine route from Pannal to Nether Kellet (94km) and the Ganstead to Asselby (53km) stretch. In the latest phase, the Easington to Ganstead (32km) and Asselby to Pannal sections (62km) are underway.

» **Lie of the land:** For the Pannal to Nether Kellet pipeline, National Grid installed 500km of post-construction drainage, replaced 2.4 million square metres of topsoil and rebuilt 362 stone walls. "The current sections of pipeline pass through mainly low-lying land devoted to mixed arable and livestock," said agricultural liaison officer John Price.

and reduce reliance on power from south Wales and the Midlands. A 3km pipeline will connect the power station to the gas pipeline extension at Choakford. The substation is necessary to step-down the power supply from 400kV to the 132kV local distribution network.

» **What:** Although more costly, substations utilising Gas Insulated Switchgear can be up to a fifth of the size of conventional air insulated switchgear (AIS) substations. Consequently, they are preferable in locations where space is at a premium.

» **Lie of the land:** Around 80 acres of adjoining land have been developed as a business park. Just getting to construction of the substation was a significant achievement given the very tight planning regulations because the site is on the edge of Dartmoor. Businesses locating to the Langan Energy Park also benefit from a lower electricity price than prevailing tariffs.

LANGAGE SUBSTATION

» **When:** Construction started in 2006 and will complete this year.

» **Why:** The 400kV Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) substation is part of a project by Centrica to build a new £400 million combined cycle gas turbine power station at Langan, near Plymouth, Dorset. The 885-megawatt plant is due to begin operations in late 2008. It will serve one million homes in the south west



Habitat heroes

Why three farmers in Wales have received prestigious conservation awards for going the extra mile in sustainable farming methods

Successful commercial farming practice and measures to protect and enhance the environment go hand in hand. That was the message at the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) Cymru – National Grid Silver Lapwing Farm Conservation Awards.

The overall winner and runners-up were announced at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society's Winter Fair at Llanellwedd. It was the first time that FWAG Cymru had staged its own competition.

"National Grid is delighted to be involved with the competition, highlighting environmental management and agricultural production working in tandem," said Clare White, National Grid's land and development policy manager, who was one of the judges.

She was joined on the panel by Rod Williams of the Countryside Commission for Wales and dairy farmer Terry Clarke, last year's winner.

THE OVERALL WINNER: SLADE FARM, VALE OF GLAMORGAN

Peter Davies has been a tenant farmer at Slade Farm, Southerndown, in the Vale of Glamorgan, for 30 years. He runs a mixed beef, sheep, outdoor pig and arable enterprise on 800 acres of land bordering the South Wales coastline.

"As well as supplying supermarkets we've just started a mail order and farm shop business to market the farm's organic meat, so to be recognised in this way is a valuable benchmark of

our environmental credentials," said Peter.

About 80 per cent of the farm's pasture is environmentally managed within the Tir Gofal whole-farm agri-environment scheme – including 200 acres given over to spring cereals. The winter stubble provides a valuable source of food for birds, as well as nesting sites in spring. A variety of grassland is managed, including coastal cliff grassland, which provides a habitat for butterflies and flowers.

Blocks of woodland on the farm have been connected by wildlife corridors sown with wild bird cover crops, while insect diversity is encouraged by sensitive management of semi-natural grassland. This in turn has encouraged the breeding success of birds such as choughs and lapwings.

Slade Farm also provides educational opportunities for children from more than 30 local schools. New footpaths have been created on the farm to link up existing rights of way and these

WINNER: Peter Davies of Slade Farm who won the prestigious overall award



WINNERS: (l-r) David Vaughan, Peter and Rosamund Davies, and Bini Jones

grazing. "There's a growing realisation that land should be used in the way it is best suited," she said.

Bini also gives regular talks to local schoolchildren about hill farming and conservation and has replaced hedges, renewed stone walls and planted 3,500 native hardwood trees locally.

RUNNER-UP AND MID-WALES WINNER: THE CNEWR ESTATE, POWYS

Manager David Vaughan and his team of workers on the Cnewr Estate in the Brecon Beacons National Park are making an important contribution to the regeneration of the area's valuable heather moorland habitat.

The 12,500-acre estate supports 5,000 ewes and 300 Galloway suckler cows. But as part of its commitment to the Tir Gofal scheme, stock levels have been reduced to prevent over-grazing on the estate's 800 acres of heathland.

"Selective burning encourages regeneration by creating a patchwork of established and new growth," explained David. "Taller growth provides ground cover for grouse and other birds like merlin, while shorter growth is better for grazing."

Estate workers have also restored hedgerows and erected fencing using timber from shelter belts of Sitka spruce planted in the 1960s, which is now being replaced by native hardwoods such as ash and oak. Double-fencing between fields has created wildlife corridors for small mammals including voles.

are used regularly by the Heritage Coast Outreach Programme for Schools.

RUNNER-UP AND NORTH WALES WINNER: BINI ORGANICS, GWYNEDD

Protecting the countryside is a passion for Bini Jones, who runs a thriving organic meat box delivery business in Ffestiniog, Snowdonia.

Bini follows traditional upland agriculture methods – driving her organic Welsh black cows to upland areas for summer grazing and returning them to the farm in Tŷ Isaf in autumn, where they are fed haylage from conserved meadows.

She supplies organic beef and Welsh lamb to a network of customers around the country, delivering the meat in boxes packed with wool to keep the cuts chilled.

With the rise in feed and oil prices, Bini believes there is a renewed appreciation for native breeds of hardy cattle which thrive on rough mountain



Coming to a venue near you!

From Exeter to Edinburgh, National Grid is travelling hundreds of miles in 2008 to build on the relationships it has established with rural grantors

Gas and electricity grantors visiting eight major agricultural shows in England and Wales during 2008 can look forward to a very warm welcome from National Grid.

The company has been asking grantors to meet its representatives at agricultural shows since the Partnership on the Land initiative

was launched in 1996.

Despite the sometimes atrocious weather, which caused the cancellation of a number of events last year, around 2,000 people joined us for complimentary lunch in 2007, and many more of you visited us for free refreshments in the marquee.

This year's programme kicks off in May with the Devon County Show

and includes seven other shows.

"Our presence at these events is an opportunity to thank grantors for their valued support during the essential work that we need to do to maintain the gas and electricity networks," said Clare White, land and development policy manager.

"As well as, hopefully, being an enjoyable occasion, joining us for lunch enables you to talk to your

local lands officer in an informal setting, and meet other grantors. It's also an opportunity to find out more about projects in your area and to raise any concerns you may have.

"For us, it's an opportunity to meet as many of you as possible. And the valuable feedback we receive helps us to build on the excellent relationships we have established with grantors."

On each day of a show, between 100 and 150 grantors will receive a free show pass and an invite to join us for lunch.

"The number of lunch guests we can accommodate in the marquee is inevitably restricted," said Clare. "Over time, we hope to invite those affected directly by major works in the area at least once."

However, outside the busy lunch period, all National Grid grantors are welcome to enjoy free refreshments in the marquee.

HOW DID WE DO?

Grantors at last year's National Ploughing Championships give their verdict.

» Gordon Holmes, Burn

"I often go to ploughing matches so it was a pleasant surprise to receive a free show pass. I was impressed by how informative and friendly the lands officer was."

» John Waterworth, Walkington

"Excellent service, wonderful food and we were looked after very well. It was great to have a day off from the farm, see my friends and talk with other grantors."

» Simon Everatt, Barmby-on-the-Marsh

"We enjoyed our day at the show and very much appreciated the hospitality of National Grid. The staff were friendly and nothing was too much trouble."

SEE YOU AT THE...

15-17 May
Devon County Show (Exeter)

17-18 June
Cheshire County Show (Knutsford)

18-19 June
Lincolnshire Show (Lincoln)

19-22 June
Royal Highland Show (Edinburgh)

8-10 July
Great Yorkshire Show (Harrogate)

18-20 July
Royal Lancashire Agricultural Show (Chorley)

21-24 July
Royal Welsh Show (Builth Wells)

29-31 July
New Forest & Hampshire County Show (Brockenhurst)

Mind the gap

Minimum clearances for working near overhead power lines are there for a good reason – so keep your distance

Every year, on average, two people are killed as a result of coming into contact with overhead electric power lines, and many more are injured.

“Safety is a way of life at National Grid and we urge all grantors to adopt a similar approach,” said Alan Naylor, regional delivery manager, north west and Scotland.

“Contractors are particularly at risk because they often operate on unfamiliar ground. Remind them and delivery drivers of the route of overhead electricity lines every time they come on your land.

“Avoid using tall equipment or lifting gear beneath an overhead line and don’t encroach on the safety zone of live conductors. Always check with the power company before using any gear of this or similar type near to overhead power lines,” advised Alan.

“Particular care needs to be taken when moving ladders, elevators, irrigation pipes and other long objects. Only move them

when horizontal or in their lowest position. Remember that jets of water or slurry that come into contact with overhead lines will conduct electricity.”

High-voltage overhead electricity lines are normally uninsulated and if an object gets too close a flashover can occur, which is where electricity jumps over a small distance. To prevent this happening, it’s vital to maintain minimum safe distances.

Reducing the safety clearance under an overhead line by creating temporary structures, like manure heaps, stacks of potato boxes and haystacks, is another accident waiting to happen.

“It’s fact that most accidents could be avoided if people were more aware of potential dangers and were less prone to risk taking,” said Alan. “Short cuts might seem attractive at the time – particularly if they save time and money – but they can be expensive in the longer term.”

DANGER:
Don’t reduce minimum safety clearances



TEAM EFFORT KEEPS WATER PARK SAFE FOR VISITORS

The reckless actions of a minority of anglers who left fishing lines draped across overhead power lines came close to ensuring a permanent ban on fishing at Sale Water Park, located near the M60 motorway in Cheshire.

Repeated outages were necessary for National Grid engineers to remove the lines from the 275kV conductors, which cross a portion of the 45-acre lake. The lives of people taking part in a range of activities, including sailing and canoeing, on the lake were put at risk.

“In just six months we had to close the lake on eight occasions while the lines were removed,” said Kristy Walden, Trafford Water Sports Centre manager for Deckers, the company which runs the park on behalf of Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council. “In the end we had to apply for a bye-law imposing a total ban on fishing in the affected part of the lake.”

Bob Tute, lands officer north west, said: “National Grid has a duty of care to protect visitors to the lake and we were keen to do everything we could to work with the grantors to resolve the problems.

“We met with Deckers and the local authorities, and a number of actions were agreed, including the appointment of a full-time bailiff to patrol the area round the clock, planting vegetation on the bank near the power lines to act as a physical barrier to anglers and erecting new warning signs.”



CALM RESTORED: Measures have been taken to reduce the risk of fishing lines coming into contact with overhead power lines at Sale Water Park

The measures paid off. “The lake is open again for fishing and, apart from one isolated incident, there have been no further problems,” said Kristy.

“National Grid was very supportive during the whole process and by working together we have achieved a very positive outcome.”

REMEMBER

- Take care when carrying carbon fibre fishing rods or poles near overhead lines – carbon fibre is a good conductor of electricity
- Be aware, and Look Up and Look Out
- Pay attention to notices that may say it is unsafe to fish in a particular place
- Fish at least 30 metres away from all overhead lines
- Don’t mistake electricity cables mounted on wooden poles for telephone lines.



STRETCHING CREDIBILITY

Darren Gibbons, National Grid field technician, could hardly believe his eyes when he investigated a safety concern reported by a helicopter line patrol. “A bungee jump platform on a lorry was placed within 30 metres of a 400kV overhead line. If the lorry had tipped over for any reason it would have come into direct contact with the conductors. The council’s safety officer, who came with me on the visit, closed it down immediately.”

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

To report damage to National Grid overhead lines, pylons or conductors call 0800 404 090. If you smell gas or are worried about gas safety, call 0800 111 999. Further information on working safely near electricity lines is available from the Health & Safety Executive (www.hse.gov.uk/) and the Energy Networks Association (www.energynetworks.org/).

Straight from the horse's mouth

Dr Doolittle liked to talk to his animals but horse psychologist Sarah Dent says that the key to training horses is to listen to them



NAME: Sarah Dent
LOCATION: Marton-cum-Grafton, Boroughbridge, North Yorkshire
LAND USE: 60-acre farm
GRANTOR TYPE: Gas

Watching a demonstration by Monty Roberts – the original horse whisperer – proved truly inspirational for Yorkshire grantor Sarah Dent.

The description horse whisperer is often used for Sarah's chosen profession, but it's not a term she thinks is particularly accurate. "Actually, there's no talking involved in what we do, and I prefer to call myself a horse psychologist," she said.

Sarah qualified as a Recommended Associate six years ago with Intelligent Horsemanship, a training organisation run by former champion jockey Kelly Marks. Acting as the agents for Monty Roberts in the UK, it has representatives covering every county in the country. Sarah's area includes North and West Yorkshire and County Durham.

At her 60-acre farm in Marton-cum-Grafton, near Boroughbridge, she has secure ring-fenced arenas and turn-out paddocks, where she can work with horses with behavioural issues. She also trains young horses or starters to become accustomed to wearing a saddle, a process which conventionally is called breaking in – another term she dislikes.

"Monty's Join-Up technique rejects the use of intimidation and violence, and is instead based on building a relationship of trust with the horse and recognising that its behaviour relates to herd instincts," she explained.

"It's all about understanding things from the horse's point of view and reading its body language. We're supposed to be the clever species, so why not learn their language, rather than expect them to learn ours?"

Sarah sees horses with a variety of behavioural issues. Some horses don't like being ridden or are prone to bolting, while some have a fear of being

"It's all about understanding... the horse's point of view and reading its body language"

clipped, shod or loaded on to trailers. "Unfortunately, all too often people come to me as a last resort, and I have to do a lot of work with the horse unravelling other people's attempts at training," she said.

Sarah is now also applying the Monty Roberts training approach to four young racehorses under her care. She plans to present the horses at this spring's Doncaster Blood Stock Breeze-Up Sales, where promising two-year-olds are put through their paces to potential owners.

Racehorses traditionally spend most of their time in stables when not training on the gallops, but Sarah believes that providing a more natural environment produces more rounded, well-balanced horses, who will perform better on the racetrack.

She also thinks this alternative approach will avoid some of the behavioural problems encountered when racehorses retire. For example, many are reluctant to exercise solo because they have been conditioned to train in a group or string.

So do Sarah's training techniques always work?

"Training the horse is the easy part, and the techniques will only continue to work if the handling by the owner is consistent and follows the correct methods," she said.

"But usually we get a positive result. In the nicest possible way, I always tell people when they leave that I hope I never see them again."

Find out more at www.gallabarfarm.com.



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📍 122 Warwick Street, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 4QY.

Winter wonderland wins top marks

Congratulations to Dr Simon Parson, the winner of the last photo competition

Simon's photo of a snow-covered bridleway (right) was singled out by Gridline's judges from a bulging postbag of entries as the most evocative image of winter, the theme for the competition.

The photograph was taken two years ago, close to where Simon was living at the time in Guisley, Yorkshire. The picture was shot with an Olympus digital camera.

"As gas grantors it was the first issue of Gridline we received and it was a really good read," said Simon, whose prize was 12 bottles of wine from Camel Valley Wines.

"It's the first competition I've won since being presented with a book on nature photography at school," added Simon, who teaches medical students at Edinburgh University.

WILL YOU BE GRIDLINE'S NEXT PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION WINNER?

The theme of this issue's photo competition is movement.

Simply send in a favourite photograph for the chance to win a voucher from National Grid grantor Camel Valley Wines, entitling you to 12 bottles of wine (up to a maximum value of £130). Send images* to Gridline photo competition, 122 Warwick Street, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 4QY. Or email your images to gridline@uk.ngrid.com. Closing date Friday 23 May 2008.

* Regrettably, submitted prints cannot be returned.

Visit camelvalley.com for more details on its wine.



WIN
A RELAXING
TWO-NIGHT
BREAK



STUNNING: The Best Western Valley Hotel in Telford

YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A WEEKEND AWAY AT A LUXURY HOTEL

Gridline is offering one lucky reader the opportunity to win a break for two at one of three hotels, courtesy of Best Western Hotels, plus £200 spending money.

COASTAL

The Best Western Royal Clifton Hotel & Spa, Southport, has outstanding views across the northwest coastline, and the health club and beauty salon make this haven a special treat.

COUNTRY

The Best Western Valley Hotel, Telford, is a beautifully refurbished

Georgian listed building situated in the World Heritage Site of Ironbridge in the stunning setting of the Severn Gorge.

CITY

Best Western The Cromwell, London, is a recently refurbished hotel offering 57 air-conditioned en suite bedrooms. Ideally located for central London. Perfect for a city centre break.

To be in with a chance of winning, answer the question below and send your answer to Gridline Best Western

competition, 122 Warwick Street, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 4QY. Entries must be in by 23 May 2008.

Q. How many hotels does Best Western have in the UK?

If you do not win this time, why not book a break at one of Best Western's 280 hotels across Great Britain. Two-night packages, including dinner on the first night, start from just £109.

To book your break with Best Western contact 0845 33 00 120 or go to www.bestwestern.co.uk.