

nationalgrid

GRIDLINE

The magazine for landowners

Spring 2017



Talk to the **animals**

The charity still making a difference to our furry friends more than a century after its birth

Inside

The punk lord of the manor finding the perfect beat

Salmon fishing on the Tay and the ghillies keeping it alive

The hedgerow factory: a grantor's guide

nationalgrid

Some useful contact numbers

The Land & Business Support team are responsible for acquiring all rights and permissions from statutory authorities and landowners needed to install, operate and maintain National Grid's electricity and gas transmission networks.

The group acts as the main interface for landowners who have gas and electricity equipment installed on their land. Your local contacts are listed below.

ELECTRICITY AND GAS

» Land teams – all regions 0800 389 5113

WAYLEAVE PAYMENTS

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

CHANGE OF DETAILS

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

ELECTRICITY EMERGENCY

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

ELECTRIC AND MAGNETIC FIELDS

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

GAS EMERGENCY

» 0800 111 999

DIAL BEFORE YOU DIG

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

CUSTOMER COMMENTS

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

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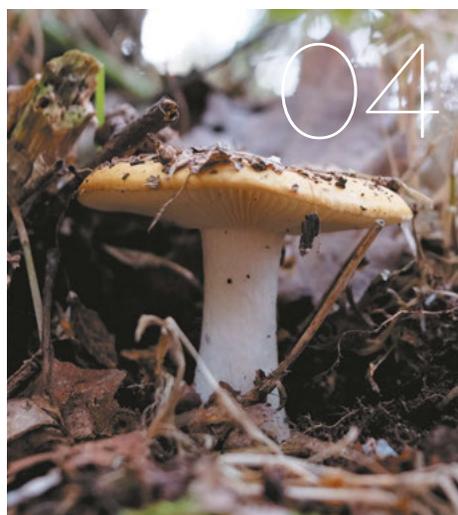
10

Ray Jenkins surveys the tree and hedging plants at his nursery, one of the largest suppliers of native shrubs, trees and hedging plants in the UK

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Welcome



Every time we start to prepare a new edition of Gridline, I'm amazed by how much National Grid touches the lives of people around the UK.

When you work somewhere, it's easy to take the things the business does day in, day out for granted, so it's always worth being reminded.

In this edition, we feature a Dragons' Den exercise, where National Grid graduates all pitched ideas to improve land owned by the business with a series of innovative projects.

We also chat to a grantor whose company is maintaining the look and feel of our countryside by growing native plants that are perfect for grantors' fields.

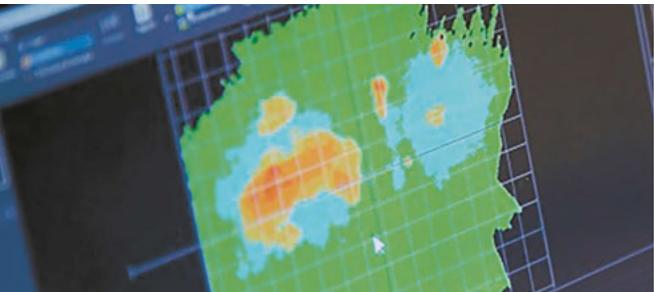
And then there's a taster of just a couple of the community projects that have been given a helping hand wherever National Grid is working.

There's also the usual mix of stories celebrating the diversity and innovative thinking of grantors, from the former punk rocker now looking to revive the fortunes of his family's estate to the century-old charity helping hundreds of animals begin new and fruitful lives.

National Grid grantors are as committed to environmental protection as National Grid is, and a perfect example of that is the work underway on the River Tay near Perth, where a three-pronged development plan is breathing fresh life into a beautiful, but jaded, stretch of the waterway.

As a business, National Grid recognises that it relies on good communications with people like you, so it was great that so many of you responded to the recent questionnaire. The results will help us to help you, but in the meantime, I hope you enjoy the read.

Dawn McCarroll
Editor, Gridline



NEW TECH IN THE PIPELINE

A hand-held 3D laser scanner being tested by National Grid promises improvements in the way pipeline damage is assessed.

Thanks to a breakthrough in 3D scanning technology, funded through the Network Innovation Allowance, it takes just five minutes to complete a 3D laser scan.

Conventional methods used manual tools and could take several hours to complete.

The scanner and its Pipecheck software provide reliable results on the engineer's computer screen in seconds.

The equipment is also easily transportable and highly accurate.

To see the scanner in action go to <http://bit.ly/2miV4cV>

IT'S A FACT!

600 GRID STAFF
RAISED £1.5M OVER
10 YEARS OF
SUPPORTING
SPECIAL OLYMPICS
GREAT BRITAIN



Having fun with fungi

Organised walks or 'fungal forays' in meadows adjoining National Grid's Ambergate Pipelines Maintenance Centre have proved so popular, there is a two-year waiting list.

Crich Chase Meadows, a steeply sloping mosaic of grass and trees, is managed by the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and is a designated

Site of Special Scientific Interest, with a variety of grassland fungi that is of international significance.

The Trust is in year three of a project funded by landowner National Grid to halt the loss of grassland and reverse habitat degradation. Volunteers keep the area clear of bramble and hawthorn, enabling the fungi to survive.

"For wildlife to be protected, people must learn about it," said Oliver Foulds, Trust conservation assistant. "Activities that educate and engage the community are crucial."

Visitors learn from fungi experts and enjoy the challenge of finding and identifying as many species as possible. To date, 150 have been recorded, including the quirkily named pink ballerina and snaketongue truffleclub!

"It's a great example of our approach to managing land as wildlife-rich green spaces that can be enjoyed by local people," said Chris Plester, National Grid sustainability advisor.



NEWSLINE

The latest news from National Grid and its landowner partners

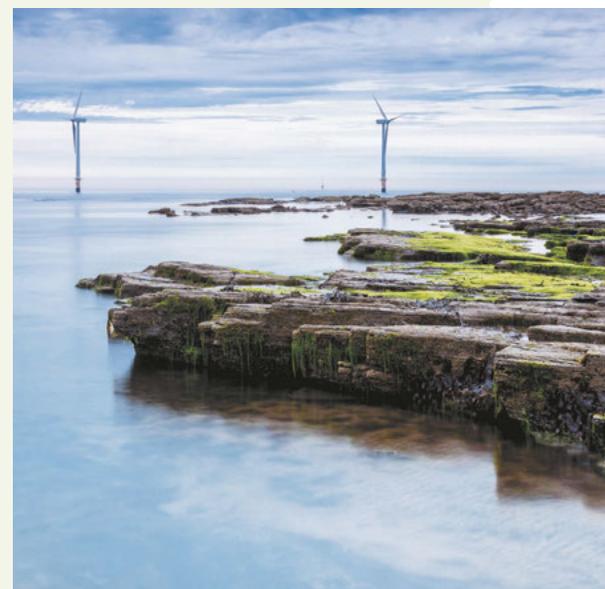
Making renewable energy work

National Grid has been awarded £8 million to study how power generated by renewables via the network could improve management of power grids in ways traditionally provided by bigger generators, such as coal and gas-fired power stations.

The funding comes from Ofgem's Network Innovation Competition (NIC), which supports energy projects that demonstrate environmental benefits, cost reductions and improved security of supply.

National Grid and UK Power Networks (UKPNs) will focus on the south-east region to maximise the network's capacity to connect renewable energy and storage technology, so reducing the need to build additional electricity infrastructure locally.

National Grid and UKPNs will also contribute £750,000 each.





A hive of activity

New wildflower meadows to support a conservation project for a rare bumblebee in Kent have been planted with the help of volunteers from National Grid and contractor Balfour Beatty.

The new meadows have been created at sites managed by the Bumblebee Conservation Society (BCS) on Romney Marsh as part of a campaign to reintroduce the rare short-haired species to the area.

The volunteers raked grass, dug flower beds and sowed seeds, and Balfour Beatty – which is refurbishing the overhead line from Dungeness to Sellindge – also donated equipment, bulbs and seeds for the project.

The BCS is working with 70 farmers and 27 landowners across Dungeness and Romney Marsh, giving advice on seed sowing, and management and maintenance of flower-rich areas. Some 1,200 hectares of meadows on its own land have also been recreated as part of the three-year project.

Walks and talks are held where people can



learn about the bumblebees, and use nets and tubes to catch and view the bumblebees close up.

Alan Mackenzie, head of National Grid at Balfour Beatty, said: “We were delighted to support such an important environmental project in the local area.”



ONE-MINUTE INTERVIEW

Deena Wood, data project coordinator



BACKGROUND

I joined National Grid four years ago after working for Royal Bank of Scotland in customer service and the NHS as a nursing support worker caring for adults with learning difficulties.

CURRENT FOCUS Updating the grantor database and creating new wayleaves to assist land officers working on large schemes. Also being the first point of contact for grantor queries and concerns.

MOST OVERUSED PHRASE

Awesome!

DREAM JOB A theatre costume designer.

GREATEST EXTRAVAGANCE

Karen Millen shoes (half price!).

FAVOURITE HOLIDAY DESTINATION

The USA – so diverse and with all that open space.

IDEAL DINNER GUEST

The late ‘crocodile hunter’ Steve Irwin. His passion would be intoxicating.

TOP OF BUCKET LIST

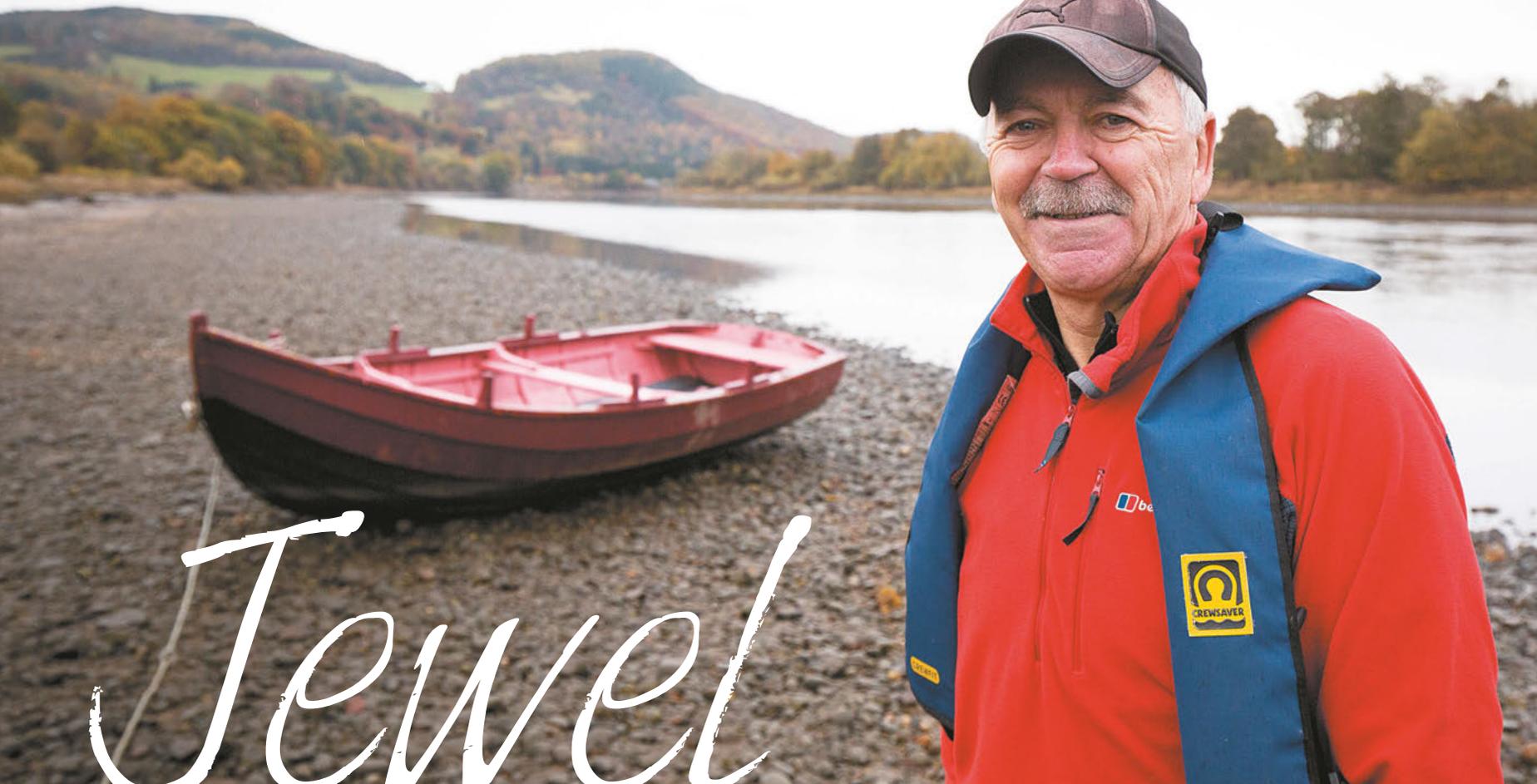
Canada to see bears and eagles in the wild. Or an African safari.

IF YOU COULD GO BACK IN TIME The 1930s, for the fashion.

THE FILM YOU COULD WATCH TIME AND TIME AGAIN

Burlesque – a great chick flick and I’d love to be able to sing and dance like that.





Jewel

IN THE CROWN

THE GRANTOR DETERMINED TO KEEP A STRETCH OF HISTORY ON SCOTLAND'S RIVER TAY ALIVE AND WRIGGLING

For hundreds of years, the gravel beds of a Scottish river were a magnet for generations of salmon fishermen who caught and sent the delicacy around the world.

But when the sweep net fishing free-for-all on the Tay and its estuaries was brought to an end 20 years ago, an industry that employed hundreds withered on the vine.

Today, some of the most productive salmon fishing stretches, or beats, are fished on alternate days at Cargill by leisure lovers and tourists wanting to tick traditional fly fishing off their life list, under supervision from trained ghillies.

Grantor The Tay Salmon Fisheries Company, at the vanguard of the salmon industry when it

was established in 1899, is moving with the times to help breathe fresh life back into the once-bustling river that skirts the nearby historic city of Perth.

Overgrown and inaccessible towpaths are being cut back and riverside bothies are scheduled to be revitalised in a project grant-funded by businesses and charities including Tay Salmon Fisheries, Tay and Earn Trust, Perth and Kinross Council and the Coastal Communities Fund.

Slowly, the deer, flora and fauna, ospreys and otters – the best trout catchers in the area – are returning to the water's edge, where wild orchids are starting to flourish once more.

“The aim is clear,” explained Jim Findlay (above), head of development at the Tay and Earn Trust, which is overseeing the programme: “It’s to ensure that people, whether they’re local or visiting, have improved access to the river and can walk or cycle its footpaths to





The Willowgate Activity Centre will feature a water sport activity centre, riverside cafe and fishery, pontoons, footpaths and a park and ride scheme from Perth



The view along the River Tay towards Cargill beat, which attracts experienced and first-time salmon fishermen and women from around the world

explore where the area's past meets its future."

It's all part of the Inner Tay Masterplan to regenerate a once-thriving, but more recently weary, riverside into a beautiful, clean and green part of the city that reconnects its people with the time-honoured traditions that forged it.

IMPROVING FACILITIES

Schools, community groups and organisations from around the area have signed up to be a part of the 'rural meets city' renaissance underway at the Willowgate Activity Centre, either on the river or in the bank-side activity centre, complete with changing rooms, showers, classroom and meeting room.

Jim said: "As part of the outdoor learning programme, we're teaching beekeeping, willow weaving, pond dipping and fly fishing on the training loch, as well as lessons on the life cycle of the salmon. There is also kayaking, archery, raft building and guided river trips."

After the initial investment, the Trust – a not-for-profit registered charity – aims to plough any profit back into improving facilities to grow visitor numbers, create employment and training, and promote conservation projects.

"The whole thing has to be sustainable and it will be because we have a passion and commitment to

bring more people to the river to experience its nature and environment. The end goal is to make it work commercially," said Jim.

"It's a challenge because some of the groups we work with are disadvantaged and don't have a lot of money, so we try to subsidise them when we can."

The Willowgate cafe, next to the fishery, is being



"It would be wonderful to make the River Tay the artery to the heart of Perth and give it that real sense of identity it had when it was at the centre of a massive industry back in the 1800s"

River regeneration

refurbished and opens this summer, while the pontoons will improve access to the river and ferry tourists from Elcho Castle and attractions in Dundee.

Several riverside bothies, where salmon fishermen once lived, will also be refurbished and marketed as 'back to nature' accommodation, while excursions on traditional Tay salmon cobble boats are also planned.

Jim said: "The Tay is the jewel in the crown of Perth, but it needs polishing and we are confident that if we do the work and build it, people will come."



FISHING THE TAY

If Jack Kydd passed you in the street, there's a fairly good chance you'd guess he wasn't heading back to the office. The 23-year-old has the rosy cheek and weather-worn demeanour of a man at home on the exposed windswept river, embracing the extremes of the Highlands weather. He's lost in another world, where time matters little, as he mesmerically casts his fly on the nine-acre trout loch, oblivious to the slanting rain and bitter wind.



Jack is the latest in a line of generations of fishermen who have made this stretch of river their second home – first in Jack's case as he lives on the site – and is determined to keep the tradition alive.

One day, he hopes to walk in the same waders as head ghillie David Godfrey, who combines instruction on the one-and-a-quarter-mile Cargill beat slightly upstream with carrying out maintenance along its banks in the close-season.

"That's the dream, but I'm learning my trade now



(left) Jack Kydd, on the training loch, has his sights set on following experienced head ghillie David Godfrey (below left); and (far left) Cargill beat and Jack's stillwater rainbow trout flies

and enjoying working at the activity centre and trout loch. It's not a bad place to work," Jack said, gesturing at the wide-open skies and rust-coloured trees.

"There are a lot of decent-size hard-fighting rainbow trout in here – from 2lb up to 21lb – so visitors who come for lessons stand a good chance of catching something and going home happy."

Jack and boss David show visitors how to use the flies, what difference a nymph or a buzzer fly will make to fish looking up at the surface, and the tactics

of using different baits and locations. They instruct visitors from the UK, Belgium, Germany and even Australia, but salmon fishing on the Tay is about far more than simply catching fish.

David explained: "It's the whole atmosphere of the day. We've had people here who have never fished before and they always come back."

If they return and tell their friends, the work, investment and vision of this ancient company will not have been in vain.



Find out more at taysalmon.co.uk

GROWING NATIVE

GRANTOR RAY JENKINS EXPLAINS HOW FIELD-GROWN TREE AND HEDGING PLANTS ARE CONTRIBUTING TO THE UNIQUE CHARACTER OF THE BRITISH LANDSCAPE AND ADVISES ON THE BEST ONES FOR GRANTORS

Nestling in the shadow of the Malvern Hills, Wyevale Transplants is one of the country's largest suppliers of field-grown native shrubs, trees and hedging plants.

At its 250-acre site in Bromsberrow, Gloucestershire, it grows more than five million bare-rooted plants a year, in 25 miles of seed beds, almost entirely from native-sourced seed.

Customers include smaller nurseries and landscape contractors, as well as developers, foresters, farmers and other landowners.

Wyevale's plants have featured in high-profile projects such as the 2012 Olympic Games opening ceremony and the Heart of England Forest – in which a million new broadleaved trees have been planted, inspired by the late publisher Felix Dennis.

"We're particularly proud of our UK provenance," said Ray Jenkins, production director.

"Everything is grown outdoors in the fields, just as nature intended, with no added peat and without the

use of polytunnels or artificial heat. Native plants have adapted to our soil conditions and weather, are more disease-resistant and support a greater variety of wildlife than imports."

Think of the British countryside and an image of rolling green fields, punctuated by trees and hedges alive with birds and blossom, springs to mind.

"Hedges and trees mark boundaries and keep livestock in, as well as providing shelter and food for mammals, birds and insects. They also act as wildlife corridors connecting fragmented habitats," said Ray.

"They help control soil erosion and pollution, reduce flooding and provide visual screening or shelter for crops and animals too."

Intensive farming contributed to half of Britain's hedgerows disappearing between 1945 and 1993. Fortunately, Countryside Stewardship funding now specifically provides for woodland and hedge creation, as well as restoration.

The best time to plant bare-rooted plants is from November to April when they are dormant (leafless), so the winter period is when Wyevale Transplants is busiest, harvesting its crop.

"Our light sandy soils are ideal for root establishment," said Ray. "We rest the fields one year in four and enrich the ground with locally sourced organic compost, recycled from green waste. Irrigation is from a 10-million gallon onsite reservoir."

After planting in the spring, the seedlings are lifted in the autumn, sorted, size-graded and counted into bundles of bare-rooted plants, and then transplanted into new beds. Here they grow on, developing more fibrous and compact roots for a further year.

These '1+1 transplants' are, for the most part, ready for sale, although some species take up to four years to reach this stage. The nursery's cold store enables it to maintain a reserve of stock at a constant temperature





(above) Nursery crops lifted from the field are graded by size and sorted into bundles of 25 plants before being heeled-in as temporary winter storage prior to their sale

(left) A few varieties, such as willow and poplars, are propagated from hardwood cuttings rather than seed

(below far left) Ray inspects a mature transplant crop of yellow stemmed dogwood

of 1-2°C, extending sales further into the season.

Experts believe that changes in temperature and rainfall from climate change are likely to impact native woodland, altering habitats and, longer term, even making some species extinct.

“Thinning and harvesting woodland and maintaining a range of tree varieties and ages provides a sustainable source of timber and is more beneficial to wildlife than a neglected or overgrown wood,” said Ray. “Actively managed in this way, woodland is more resistant to new diseases like Ash Dieback and the impacts of climate change.”

Last autumn, the government earmarked nearly £20 million for agri-environment agreements to help farmers and land managers protect wildlife, create new habitats and reduce flood risk.

“Top soil is a valuable asset and no farmer wants to see his or her profits being washed away by water run-off. We can advise on the best plants for every situation; whether, for example, it’s planting up a wetland as a sediment trap or lining a stream with coppiced willow and hazel to slow floodwater speed.”



For more information go to wyevalenurseries.co.uk

IN NUMBERS



2%

is all that survives of the ancient woodland that cloaked the country after the last Ice Age



130

UK BAP (Biodiversity Action Plan) priority species are associated with hedgerows

PLANTING A HEDGE

► Rural hedges are typically based on 50% quick-growing hawthorn together with a mix of small native trees or large shrubs such as blackthorn (sloe), dogwood, field maple, Guelder rose, hazel, spindle, holly, wayfaring tree and wild rose.

► Match plants to local soil conditions, using species that are distinctive of the area.

► Plant young shrubs 30-40cm apart in a double row, spaced 50cm apart.

► If possible, cut back every three years or more to allow the hedge to produce flowers and berries and achieve a better structure. Annual flailing impacts species like butterfly and moth that over-winter.

► Trim in late winter after any berries have been eaten by birds, prior to the nesting season from early March to the end of August.

► Cut back hard and re-lay hedges every 20 years or so to shock overgrown plants back into vibrant growth.



PLANTING NEAR NATIONAL GRID UNDERGROUND PIPELINES AND ELECTRIC CABLES

► Gain written approval before planting any tree or hedge on a gas pipeline permanent easement strip, or near underground cables. National Grid will advise what and where you can plant.

► Only plant directly across a pipeline if a screen or field boundary is required, using hedge plants like hawthorn or ornamental shrubs.

► Poplar and willow should not be planted within 10m.

► Oak, beech and other large-growing hardwood trees should not be planted within 6m of the pipeline, and only as individual specimens or in a single row.

► Remember, tree roots can disturb and prevent access to electric cables.



For more details go to www2.nationalgrid.com/UK/Safety/Trees-and-vegetation-near-gas-pipelines/

POWER LINES

► Only low-height, slow-growing shrubs should be planted beneath wires or towers.

► National Grid employs specialist contractors to remove vegetation growth that infringes minimum safety clearances.

► Planting must not impede safe vehicle access around the base of towers for essential maintenance.



For more details go to www2.nationalgrid.com/UK/Safety/Trees-and-vegetation-near-overhead-power-lines/

Animal MAGIC

THE CHARITY MAKING A DIFFERENCE BY
STANDING ON ITS OWN FOUR FEET

At a time when family pets are discarded on the basis that they ‘don’t make good selfies’, it’s a relief to find a century-old rescue charity that’s moving with the times.

It’s had to. Every penny of the £700,000 a year needed to run the 61-acre site perched above the Eden Valley near Carlisle comes from donors and grant aid.

Oak Tree Animals’ Charity’s forebear was the National Equine Defence League, established in 1909 by Francis Cox and supported by then MP Winston Churchill and authors Jerome K. Jerome and Jack London to ensure the welfare of pit ponies who spent 51 of 52 weeks below ground.

All were cared for into their retirement, and the welfare ethos remained the same for The Carlisle Animals Friends’ Society that merged with the League shortly before the outbreak of World War II, and moved from London to the centre of Carlisle.

When the last of 71,000 ponies left the pits in 1977, the charity was forging a path as defined as the route of the famous Settle to Carlisle railway line, which cuts through the valley below its new, more rural, home since 1981.



MIGHTY OAKS AND LITTLE ACORNS

- ▶ Last year, the charity found new homes for 106 dogs, 186 cats, 23 equines, 6 farm animals and 15 other species.
- ▶ The original 2.4-hectare Blackburn Wood was opened in 1989 by David Bellamy.
- ▶ Work has just started on reopening the wood to the public to enjoy the great spotted woodpeckers, bats, kestrels, dragonflies, badgers and hedgehogs that thrive there.
- ▶ The charity spends an average of £800 on each small animal to cover care, veterinary treatment and rehabilitation.
- ▶ Without its army of volunteers, who help onsite and at shows around the area, the charity could not survive.

These days, the charity is home to dogs, cats, ponies and horses, all cared for by a devoted team of 22 staff and 60 ‘priceless’ volunteers.

Last year, they helped more than 900 animals and found new homes for 106 dogs, 186 cats and 23 equines. That’s an awful lot of feed, bedding and love, much of which comes in donations from well-wishers, schools and businesses in the area.

The charity is forming increasingly strong bonds with its community because – aside from grant aid – the people of Cumbria are guardians of its future. Rehoming the animals, working in the community and education are critical to both its survival and the chances of its four-legged visitors.

UTOPIAN DREAM

General manager Caroline Johnson’s vision for the charity is altruistic and sums up the mentality of everyone who works in the exercise paddock, kennels, cattery and fields: “In an ideal world, I’d love it for everyone at animal welfare organisations to be out of a job, but that is a utopian dream.

“That would mean all our work in educating children and adults about the right type of pet to own, how to care for them, and awareness of spaying and neutering had been a success.”

But, in a society where the charity can predict which dogs will be reaching them six months down the line as owners buy a breed after seeing it with a celebrity without realising the commitment, there will always be a place for Caroline’s team.

“We also deal with cases of people buying animals from the internet – incredibly, a recent survey showed that 24% of people would consider getting a pet from the internet without actually meeting them or knowing if they have any behavioural issues. Within a few weeks, they have second thoughts,” she said. >>>



(clockwise from top)
Equine supervisor
Vicki Dobbin with
Pie, Snowy the
husky and the
exercise paddock



Animal rescue

"We are all assigned our own animals to ensure cohesive care, so you do become very attached to them"

"Animal hoarding is another issue we work with where people, for many reasons, including because they love animals and think they can help them, keep taking them in and before long the situation is out of control."

Recent cases where the rehoming team have worked closely with the pet owners included a house with 72 cats and a dog-lover with 21 of man's best friend living around them.

Caroline said: "Every case is different, so we work with the owners, Social Services and housing authorities to help, whether that's offering support through neutering and veterinary care, rehoming using our Home2Home programme or taking them in to find new homes."

The Home2Home programme means that dogs and cats facing homelessness can find loving new owners with only a few days' rehab and assessment onsite at Oak Tree, reducing the stress they could face.

For others though, it can take a lot longer. Take eight-year-old black lurcher Kiera, who has been looked after at the centre by rehomer Gina Antonacci and the team for half her life – black cats and dogs take longer to move on because of the selfie issue and superstition – but, as Gridline visited, a family were being approved to give her a new start.

Gina said: "There will be tears when she goes because we are all assigned our own animals to ensure cohesive care, so you do become very attached to them. They will be tears of joy though."

SPLENDIDLY NAMED

The charity, adopting a more business-like stance thanks to a newly formed fundraising team, has an education centre for visiting schools, a living room to help with dog socialisation and a central stable.

That's where you'll find the splendidly named equine supervisor Vicki Dobbin preparing to let Pie, a four-year-old piebald cob, into the field for the day.

An equine trainer of repute, she's responsible for the equine team, including day-to-day upkeep and the retraining programme, which has started to reap dividends in terms of rehoming during the last year.

"We are a team of four looking after around 27



(above) Community engagement officer Becky Lewis with Home2Home dog Penny; and (left) Charlotte Pinder makes sure the cats are comfy



There will be tears: Gina takes Kiera for an emotional farewell walk

horses. Some have long-term medical issues and may never leave, but others need schooling, breaking and training before they can begin new lives," Vicki said.

Typically, the charity has around 20 dogs, 20 cats and 30 horses onsite at any one time – the average wait for the smaller animals to find a new owner is around 45 days. The charity's decision to embed itself in the community means awareness of what it does is growing all the time, along with donations ranging from schoolchildren's pocket money to larger legacies.

"Every penny is wonderful and it proves we are in people's thoughts, allowing us to make a difference to animal lives," said Caroline. "We also get great support from local businesses who have helped with our signage and clearing a path in our woodland, which we're turning into a conservation area for our community and schools, and a memorial garden for pets."

Ambitious plans are underway to increase the revenue streams to enable even more animals to be helped, including a two-year blueprint to develop rentable retail units in an onsite craft village.

The tearoom has been redeveloped at the free-to-visit centre and a £32,000 sand school for horse training is next on the list. Despite the more business-like approach of the past year, Caroline insists the care and welfare of otherwise defenceless animals will always come first: "We have to think about our revenue because that's what allows us to help, but we'll always have the same values as they did back in 1909."



Find out more at oaktreanimals.org.uk

HABITAT HEROES!

GRADUATES ARE TRANSFORMING THREE SITES FOR THE BENEFIT OF NATURE AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The participants on National Grid's graduate training programme were challenged to develop a sustainable management plan for a company site, as part of their ongoing personal development.

The teams were awarded £31,000 of funding by senior managers after successfully pitching their project ideas in a Dragons' Den-style presentation.

National Grid is creating Sustainability Action Plans at 50 sites, building a natural grid of biodiversity-rich habitats and accessible green spaces for communities.

National Grid's funding, and the policy of working with conservation partners, unlocks long-term cost savings by reducing site risk and maintenance needs.

Embedding sustainability in the training ensures the environment is prioritised by future decisionmakers. The graduates also gain valuable project management skills in areas such as preparing business cases and working with external stakeholders.

CREATING A LIFELINE FOR CRUCIAN CARP

LOCATION EAKRING TRAINING CENTRE, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
SPOKESPERSON DEBORAH SEHINDEMI



"Working with the Environment Agency and the Angling Trust, we're turning a neglected pond at Eakring into a nursery for a threatened fish species.

"Native to the UK, crucian carp is in decline due to hybridisation with other fish, the loss of farm ponds and intensive river management.

"The Environment Agency, which is a lead partner on the Crucian Carp Conservation Project, is making savings by restoring the pond, re-oxygenating the water and removing algae, and then restocking it with a breeding population. Fish bred at the site will be transferred to rivers and ponds throughout the UK, including a number of local fisheries.

"Another aim is to encourage staff training at Eakring to utilise the pond for angling, and wildflower meadows will be planted around the pond to increase the food and habitat for wild pollinators."

RISING FROM THE ASHES

LOCATION KIRKSTALL SUBSTATION, LEEDS
SPOKESPERSON ALEX MARSH



"Over the past 16 years, National Grid and the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) have transformed a landfill site at a former power station into a nature reserve, with flower meadows and wetland areas (above).

"We're now improving land adjoining our substation; overhauling a pond dipping area and removing invasive crassula weed, and creating a new sensory garden and orchard for community groups and schools.

"We are also installing new information boards, fitting more robust anti-vandalism features, and encouraging community engagement by inviting local volunteers to join staff in working parties, for example, removing invasive plants from scrub and woodland areas.

"We estimate our improvements, together with future management plans involving the YWT, will save £7,000 a year in ongoing grounds maintenance costs."

STOPPING FLYING VISITS

LOCATION ELSTREE SUBSTATION, WATFORD
SPOKESPERSON IAN STEWART



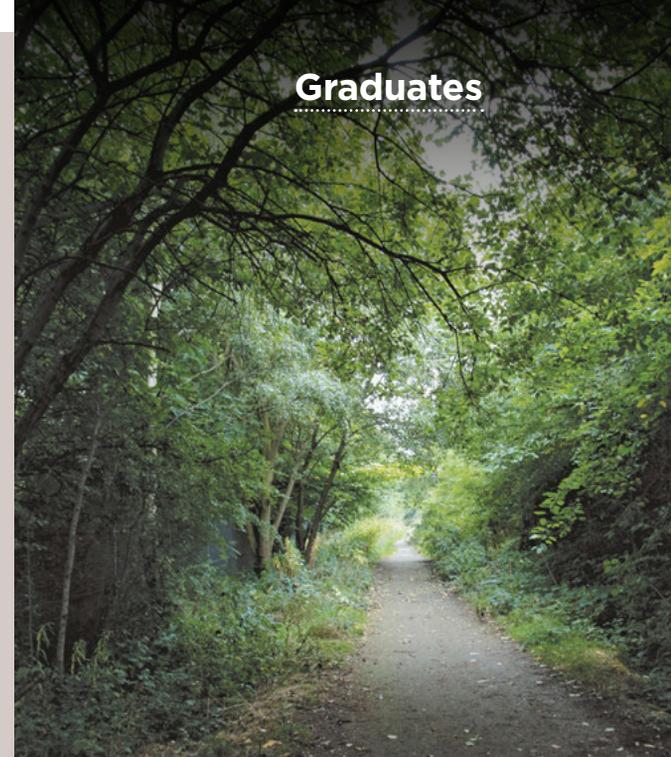
"Working with The Conservation Volunteers organisation, we are tackling antisocial behaviours such as fly-tipping and illegal grazing on land near our substation,

enhancing the value of the area for local people and the environment.

"Currently, every time National Grid has to

find a new home for an old or sick horse abandoned by their owner, it costs around £5,000. Areas will be ploughed up to create new bee-friendly wildflower meadows that will help deter illegal grazing, along with new perimeter fencing, and 1,500 trees to combat pollution and provide a visual screen.

"We are also installing new signage about the project on the footpath through the site to help foster community engagement and ownership. There will be an opportunity for local volunteers to learn new skills and benefit from contact with nature too."



AND THE *beat goes on...*

HE'S BEEN A PUNK ROCKER, CHEESEMAKER AND NEURO LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING TRAINER, BUT NOW GRANTOR HUGH INGE-INNES-LILLINGSTON HAS A MISSION MUCH CLOSER TO HOME

The wall of sound resonating through the high-ceilinged, elegant interior of Thorpe Hall suggests Hugh Inge-Innes-Lillingston has lost none of his prowess on the drums.

"I only play occasionally and for fun these days," said the former drummer in the punk rock band Rikki and the Last Days of Earth, who enjoyed modest success in the late 1970s with two albums and five singles.

"I was into English rock really, but at the time you had to be punk to get a record deal," smiled Eton-educated Hugh, who admits he never got used to being spat at or showered with beer.

More than 30 years on, his focus is firmly on running his family's country estate; the Georgian-style Grade 2 listed country mansion in Thorpe Constantine, near Tamworth, Staffordshire, along with 3,000 acres of farmland, extensive stables and a walled garden.

Hidden to the public for three centuries, the estate was revealed at a summer fair held there in July last year, followed by a market at Christmas. "We wanted a proper country fair feel with craft stalls, farm animals, falconry, steam engines and vintage cars, a tug of war, with lots of kids' activities, as well as a brass band from Rugeley Power Station," he said.

"Both events were a great success, and it was gratifying to discover that there are more than 3,000 people within an hour of here who want a nice day out in the country and are respectful of what you want to do."

MOZART AND MONTEVERDI

After Hugh's mother Elizabeth inherited the estate in 1953, she married George Inge-Innes-Lillingston, who transformed the farming side of the estate, putting in modern buildings and technology, doubling the land holding and establishing a dairy herd.

"Unfortunately, after BSE ravaged the industry in the late 1980s, he rather lost heart," said Hugh. "And because the economics of dairy farming at the time meant you had to double the size of the herd or get out – he got out."

Hugh, meanwhile, was back living on the estate, having abandoned a rock career and marrying his wife Catherine. In 1987 he launched a new revenue stream, with a farm-based business growing organic herbs, salads and fruit, and producing the Innes brand of unpasteurised goat's cheese.

"I learnt the art of cheesemaking in France. We had 200 goats and I discovered that playing them Mozart and Monteverdi increased productivity," said Hugh. "They repaid us with two Supreme Champion accolades at the British Cheese Awards.

"We anticipated the whole artisan food movement. Our

ultimate vision was to add value to wheat grown on the estate by turning it into sourdough bread. Initially, we did very well, opening a factory in London but, unfortunately, we expanded too fast, customers were late paying and it all went horribly wrong."

The cheese, however, is still produced on the estate by the Bennett family and is still winning awards.

SELF-SUFFICIENT

Today, the home farm is tenanted out to award-winning potato farmer James Daw, who has reintroduced cattle and sheep, and planted a significant number of specimen trees, along with new hedges and wildflower meadows, under the terms of a Countryside Stewardship scheme.

Hugh and his family have lived in the main hall since 1997. Over the past 15 years, he has also been a life coach and neuro-linguistic trainer, equipping people with an understanding of how they can adopt tools and techniques to change their outlook on life for the better.

He has recently redoubled efforts to make the estate self-sufficient and reinvent it for the modern age, creating a new use for the extensive red brick farm buildings dating from the 1850s.

An initial project to convert old stables into office space in 2005 enjoyed mixed success because it coincided with the economic downturn, but Hugh has more ambitious plans. He is transforming the former granary and bull pens into a complex of meeting rooms and a restaurant, >>



Hugh with his wife Catherine

"It was gratifying to discover that there were more than 3,000 people within an hour of here who want a nice day out in the country"

The punk 'lord'

offering corporate 'delegate packages'.

"The concept is that we provide the delegates with breakfast and lunch, they hold meetings in the morning and engage in team-building activities in the afternoon, whether, for example, fishing, wild swimming or foraging; all of which is available here."

Hugh has formed a new company to develop and manage the site, Thorpe Constantine Events Ltd, a partnership with his tenant James and Claire Menzies of the Blue Flint Group.

Work is now underway to turn the walled garden into a wedding and retreat venue, complete with a honeymoon cottage and a yurt made from steam-bent mountain ash. The catering facilities and a teaching kitchen, using fresh produce from the gardens, will be run by Matthew and Ian Pennington, who already operate a successful walled garden restaurant in Somerset called The Ethicurean.

Longer term, the aim is to convert the stable office space into a gym and spa, which will also be open to the public.

Hugh is excited about opening the estate to everyone, and also working with future partners to bring back crafts and activities that would once have been typical of a country estate.

"I found a newspaper clipping from my punk rock days recently in which I said that if I was ever in a position to take on the estate, I would open it up to more people.

"Finally, we're in a position to make that happen."



Bookings for the wedding venue are being taken from September 2017 onwards. For more details go to thorpeconstantine.com. The next Summer Fair is on 24 June (thorpeestate.com)



MIND OVER MATTER

Since 2000, Hugh has been a life coach and practitioner of neuro linguistic programming, through his agency Reality Engineering.

It's based on the idea that everything you experience in life is created twice - firstly in your mind and secondly in reality.

Changing how you think can change what you think about, and in changing how and what you think, you can transform the results you achieve in life.

In 2007, Hugh co-founded and acted as lead therapist on the Warrior Programme, a charity using NLP techniques with homeless people. It also worked with army veterans, including many suffering post-traumatic stress, helping them delete unwanted memories and create positive new ones.

Hugh subscribes to the notion

of Sacred Geometry; that there is a spiritual dimension to the fundamental mathematical laws and principles which govern nature.

He agrees with those who believe that advanced prehistoric civilizations existed thousands of years before recorded history but that they were destroyed around 9000BC by a meteor strike. The evidence was then submerged under sea levels that rose 300ft.

"The ancient stone structures that have survived - complete with their encoded data - were left like Post-it notes for future generations to discover," he said.

Hugh now leads small groups on what he calls 'spiritual mini-breaks' to sites in Egypt, Mexico and other destinations to study the symbolic and spiritual meaning of these structures.



Built in 1651, the Georgian-style, three-storey country mansion has been owned by the same family ever since

Team get a taste of life on the farm

National Grid land officers in the north-west and Scotland team went 'back to college' to further their understanding of farming issues.

The event, at Reaseheath College near Crewe, was organised by Dalcour Maclaren, land agents who work on projects on National Grid's behalf.

The training included modules on animal and crop production, and how they impact utility projects. Among the topics covered were legislation and regulations affecting livestock movements and pesticide use, animal management

systems, crop rotation and disease, harvesting methods and the subsidies available to farmers.

The delegates were also given a tour of the college farm, including part of the 300-cow dairy operation, the pig unit and the anaerobic digester.

Regional senior surveyor James Dean said the event was a huge success: "It provided a valuable reminder of the unique issues faced by the agricultural industry and how we, as a company, need to be mindful of these when we're dealing with farmers."



Land officers get the low-down on preserving maize silage from lecturer James Bickerton (left)

HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

National Grid – making a difference



Energy boosters

Thousands of people have benefited from National Grid grants handed to 34 community projects around the UK.

The Community Grant Programme – formerly called Bringing Energy to Life – has supported groups to the tune of £380,000 in its first year.

The programme operates in areas where there are impacts on communities as a result of essential

operations and site activities.

The community or charity projects helped to date include a new minibus for a Scout Group in Anglesey (left), a programme to reduce energy costs for households in areas affected by fuel poverty in Oldham and Rochdale, and the refurbishment of a community centre in Walsall.

For more information go to <http://betl.nationalgrid.com>

LASTWORD



What's your story?

We love to celebrate National Grid grantors' diversity in Gridline, so if you'd like to feature, email gridline@nationalgrid.com

Your chance to enter two great competitions

WIN A STRESS-BUSTING TWO-NIGHT MINIBREAK

Whether glamping, a quaint B&B or putting your feet up in a luxury hotel is your thing, Gridline is offering one lucky reader and companion a two-night stay at one of 200 incredible venues around the UK.

Peter Holt, from Salisbury in Wiltshire and the winner of last edition's Amazon Echo competition, said: "I'd been chatting to a chap about new tech and then spotted the Gridline competition, so thought I'd give it a go. I'm thrilled. You've just made my day."

He correctly answered that sprout farming grantor John Clappison grows 12 different varieties.

Q How many animals did the Oak Tree Animals' Charity help last year?

Email your answer, name and contact details to gridline@madebysonder.com or send to **Sonder Minibreak competition, Victoria Court, 8 Dormer Place, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 5AE. Closing date is 12 May 2017.**



WIN £150 M&S VOUCHERS IN OUR PHOTO COMPETITION

This mean and moody shot of Carrington Power Station's towers taken by 14-year-old photography student Raphe Barber has earned his dad, Ralph, a cool £150 worth of shopping vouchers.

Grantor Ralph said: "We were out walking and he took it as the snowflakes fell. Raphe calls them 'the Red Devil towers' as Manchester United have their training complex next door."

Fancy a chance of winning? Simply send us a 'summer's coming' shot in high resolution to gridline@madebysonder.com to be in with a chance.

Closing date is 12 May 2017.



JUST FOR FUN: SUDOKU

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

			4	7			1	3
	7			9	1	8		
		4	8	6	2			
8		1	7				2	4
9	5	7		4				
	4	2				5		
	1				6			
6			5				9	1
7			1				8	6

COMPETITION TERMS AND CONDITIONS MINIBREAK 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. Closing date is 12 May 2017. 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 12 May 2017.

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