

GRIDLINE

The magazine for National Grid grantors

AUTUMN 2013

FLOATING ON AIR

The grantor whose business is really taking off

nationalgrid



Sweet taste of paradise

One man's 50-year crusade to save the honey bee

PLUS: Farming with a special purpose • The pylon that rocked • A trip down memory lane • Full steam ahead

WELCOME TO GRIDLINE

This issue is **packed** with **great grantor stories** and it's all **thanks to you**

Iwould like to start by saying a very big thank you to all the grantors who have contacted us with suggestions for Gridline stories. All the main features in this edition are a result of emails from grantors, so please make sure you get in touch to tell us about your business.

Once again, we've tried to capture the incredible diversity of what our grantors do, from beekeeping to running a hovercraft 'farm'. This time we've also been lifted by a couple who have dedicated their lives to helping others. Using their patience and knowledge, they have built up a workshop and farm, and have improved the lives of countless adults with learning disabilities and special needs.

It's uplifting stories like this, which so many of our grantors are involved in, that we'd love to share with the wider grantor family across the UK.

We're also very keen to hear about any local community initiatives you might be involved with - who knows, there might be a bit of best practice in there that other grantors could easily incorporate into their business plan.



On a lighter note, you'll discover the powerful role National Grid played in providing the springboard to success for some of the world's greatest rock bands, and join us on a stroll down memory lane to take a look at the old advertising

campaign we once used.

Gridline continues to pick up awards and is now in line for the national accolade of being the best Members' Publication in the UK, but we're only as good as the stories you tell us about.

Dawn McCarroll
Editor, Gridline

GOT A STORY?

Please contact Gridline if you have any news or stories that you think would be of interest to other grantors.

Tel: 01926 656 325

Email: gridline@uk.ngrid.com

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

nationalgrid

National Grid's Land and Development Group

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

ELECTRICITY AND GAS

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

WAYLEAVE PAYMENTS

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

CHANGE OF DETAILS

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

ELECTRICITY EMERGENCY

- Emergency calls to report pylon damage to National Grid can be made on 0800 404 090. Note the tower's number - found just below the property plate - to help crews locate it.

ELECTRIC AND MAGNETIC FIELDS

- For information on electric and magnetic fields, call the EMF information line on 08457 023 270 (local call rate). Website: www.emfs.info.

GAS EMERGENCY

- 0800 111 999.

DIAL BEFORE YOU DIG

- Before carrying out any work in the vicinity of gas pipelines, overhead power lines or underground electric cables, you should contact Plant Protection on 0800 688 588 so that searches can be made to determine the exact position of any National Grid assets.

CUSTOMER COMMENTS

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



Gridline is produced by Summersault Communications, 23-25 Waterloo Place, Warwick Street, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 5LA.

CONTENTS



08



14

12



11



18



20

All at sea

This shot of boats at Port Isaac earned one grantor £150 worth of shopping vouchers. Could you win next? Turn to page 20.

Competition winner

Congratulations to Janette Skelton, from Berkswell in Warwickshire, and Mark Knight, from Yeovil in Somerset, who each won a Gourmet Society card in last edition's competition. Mark said: "I've just started entering competitions and have won a couple. I'll certainly enjoy eating out in style."

Regulars

- 04 New copter goes live
- 05 Farm's firefighting hero saves the day
- 07 Going underground to keep the city moving
- 17 Mick Jagger and the Grid's part in rock history



04

Features

- 08 The grantors who ditched the 24-hour grind for work with a special purpose
- 11 The times they are a changing... or are they? We take a look at the Grid's ad campaigns of yesteryear
- 12 How a flying dung dilemma prompted a Scottish hill farmer to float on air
- 14 We take a close (but not too close) look at the grantor who has spent his life protecting honey bees
- 18 If you build it, they will come. The mantra behind a Lincolnshire farmer's narrow gauge wonderland



The new helicopter makes line inspection easier

New to the rotor

A STATE-OF-THE-ART NEW helicopter has started work on inspecting and helping maintain the 7,000km of overhead power lines that make up National Grid's transmission network.

The Bell 429 twin-engined helicopter - the first of its kind to operate in the UK - will share the workload with an existing Eurocopter AS355NP aircraft.

"It meets our requirements for a versatile and reliable aircraft to support our mission of providing power to millions of people in the UK," said Mike Hannon, field support manager at National Grid.

"It has low maintenance costs and can hover in a stationary position above an overhead

power line for longer than our existing aircraft - an important factor in live line operations."

Live line engineers, suspended from a helicopter in a basket, carry out repairs on power lines that are still energised up to 400kV.

More accurate

It all means work can be carried out without taking circuits out of service or disrupting the normal supply of electricity on the line.

The Bell 429 also has improved video and photographic systems, which enable a more accurate assessment of overhead power lines. The data can be used by engineers to decide the optimal timing for refurbishment.

A tall order!

A HELICOPTER WAS CALLED IN by National Grid to complete the delicate final stages of an operation to place new power lines over the river Tees.

The pilot skilfully lifted guide wires into position, which were then used by engineers to pull the heavier conductor cables into place.

"It was a very tricky operation," said National Grid project manager Mark Brennan.

"The towers needed to be tall (425ft high) because of the width of the river at this point and the fact that we needed to make sure there was a safe clearance distance for ships passing below."

A week earlier, the final sections of the new towers were lifted into place by a 1,200-tonne crane, with overhead linesmen scaling the structures to complete the installation.



Neil Judson

Project watch

The Richborough Connection

WHAT? National Grid has completed the first round of public consultation events in Kent for a new 20km 400kV high voltage electricity connection from Richborough, near Sandwich, to Canterbury in Kent.

The new connection is needed to provide access to the national grid for a new 1,000MW High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) subsea interconnector that is being proposed between Zeebrugge in

Belgium and Richborough in Kent.

The new connection will link to a proposed 400kV electricity substation and DC converter station to be built on an 8-hectare site, formerly occupied by Richborough A Power Station, now part of the Richborough Energy Park.

WHY? A quarter of the UK's generating capacity is due to come off stream by 2020 as it will be either too old or unable to meet

tough climate change legislation. We need to join new sources of energy to our network to maintain reliable supplies and ensure electricity continues to be available to us all at the flick of a switch.

WHEN? Consultations with affected communities will continue for two years to help shape the proposals.

For more information...



... on this project go to www.richboroughconnection.co.uk/



Pupils are impressed by an experiment demonstrating how gas is produced

Uncovering the past

NINETY SCHOOLCHILDREN AT St Peter-in-Thanet CofE Junior School were given a fascinating insight into how gas used to be produced in the UK before the advent of natural gas in the 1960s.

National Grid has recently completed a three-month clean-up of a former gas works site in Broadstairs, Kent, which produced town gas from the 1920s to the 1960s.

Inspire

"We were delighted to be invited to talk to the year 5 class," said Samantha Thrupp, a land regeneration advisor at National Grid. "Through our School Power initiative, we can bring what is quite a technical subject to life in the classroom and hopefully inspire some future engineers."

During the day the pupils dressed up in safety gear and took part in an experiment demonstrating the broad principles of how town gas was made when the site was fully operational.

Pictured above (l-r) Nicola Beech, JBP, National Grid's Community Relations team, a teacher, Steve Murdoch, VHE, a National Grid contractor, and Samantha Thrupp, a land regeneration advisor at National Grid



Crisis, what crisis?
Frank Beresford held the fort

Frank's a true holiday hero

WHEN FIRE THREATENED TO devastate his employers' dairy farm, it was only the cool military head of Frank Beresford that saved the day.

The former Royal Corps of Transport Bosnia veteran took control, helping fire crews to douse the burning straw bales that could have risked output from the farm's 150 cows.

Meanwhile his grantor employers, Jackie Nullis and Steve Leveridge, were soaking up

the sun in Gran Canaria, oblivious to the drama back home in Scarrington, Nottingham.

Frank, who is always cheerful and has never been off sick in nine years, dealt with the crisis before getting back to his regular 16-hour day job of arable work, farm maintenance, rearing the weaned calves and training... and only told his bosses on their return from holiday.

That dedication has seen him shortlisted for the Farmers

Weekly Farmworker of the Year, due to be announced soon, after he was nominated by Jackie.

"Frank will turn his hand to almost any job you'd care to name," she said.

"It is so nice to know that we have someone like him in charge if we're not there."

For more information...

... on the Farmers Weekly awards visit <http://awards.fwi.co.uk>

The new T-pylon



"T" time in the south-west

THE INNOVATIVE T-PYLON design is in the frame for a new overhead power line in Somerset, just 20 months after winning an international competition.

The new pylon could help address the concerns of the public about the Hinckley Point C Connection between Bridgwater and Avonmouth.

At 36 metres tall, the pylon is nearly a third shorter than traditional 400kV lattice

designs. Engineers from National Grid are now working with landscape experts to identify sections along the route where it could have the most benefit. It will then be included in the next round of public consultations in September.

Peter Bryant, National Grid's project manager, said: "The T-pylon gives us another option as we look for ways to reduce the visual impact of this vital project."



The key targets in numbers

45%

cut in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020

50

UK sites delivering sustainability action plans by 2020

80%

reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050

Green operational strategy to shape Our Contribution

A NEW STRATEGY TO transform the way National Grid operates to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, better manage consumption of resources, and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems is under way.

“We’re in the middle of a multimillion-pound investment to meet energy needs by modernising the network and connecting clean energy sources,” said Stuart Bailey, head of sustainability and climate change.

Positive thinking

The Our Contribution strategy has three key targets.

1. To be climate positive - reducing greenhouse gas emissions through connecting renewable energy, refurbishing and building infrastructure to deliver tomorrow’s smart sustainable low-carbon energy and reducing the company’s own carbon footprint.
2. To be positive about resources - reducing reliance on finite resources while also reducing

the resources, energy and water used directly and through the supply chain.

3. To enhance ecosystems - protecting and enhancing these essential services that regulate climate, absorb CO₂, purify air and water, pollinate plants and provide flood protection. With nature unable to sustain the current demands upon it, National Grid aims to create biodiversity gains by using its land to create a natural grid of better and bigger habitats.

For more information...



... visit www.nationalgrid.com/corporate/Our+Responsibility/Our+Impacts/Envpol



The subsea site will safeguard expected demand surge

Storage to keep energy costs low

NATIONAL GRID HAS successfully completed a test drilling of a carbon dioxide (CO₂) storage site in the North Sea - a major milestone in delivering a storage solution for carbon capture and storage (CCS).

The undersea site, 65km off the Yorkshire coast, is capable of holding around 200 tonnes of CO₂.

The test drilling is part of National Grid’s Don Valley storage work programme, which

is funded by an EU grant.

“Global energy demand is likely to double in the next 20 years and CCS is the only technology that can turn high carbon fuels into genuinely low carbon electricity and keep costs low for consumers,” said Peter Boreham, National Grid’s director of European Business Development.

Power stations and industry in the Humber region create about 10 per cent of total UK emissions.

Captured CO₂ from this cluster of emitters could be taken in shared pipelines and stored in the North Sea storage site. National Grid would use its expertise in developing and constructing gas pipelines to create a network to transport CO₂.

For more information...



... on CCS go to www.nationalgrid.com/uk/ccs

Shaping the lie of the land

NATIONAL GRID IS SEEKING views on how it should spend £500m to improve the visual impact of its transmission lines in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The sum was ring-fenced when funding was agreed with energy regulator Ofgem in March 2013, following its latest price control mechanism (RIIO).

National Grid owns 195km of transmission lines in National Parks and a further 385km in AONBs, as well as related infrastructure.

It will now work with an

independently chaired Stakeholder Advisory Group, with representation from interested groups like the Campaign to Protect Rural England, to identify, prioritise and ultimately shape potential projects.

Ways of improving visual impact range from replacing existing overhead lines with underground cables to screening substations or lines from public viewpoints, as well as providing landscape enhancements through tree planting.

Other options include the use of alternative pylon designs, such as

the T-ylon, and re-routing or reducing the number of existing lines.

"We are passionate about playing our part in conserving and enhancing the wildlife and cultural heritage of some of England and Wales' most valued landscapes," said Hector Pearson, planning policy manager at National Grid.

For more information...



... go to: www.talkingnetworkstx.com/visual-impact-provision.aspx



One-minute interview



Jonathan Cooper, land and business support manager

BACKGROUND: I joined Land and Development in May, after working as electricity delivery support manager.

CURRENT FOCUS: Managing the transition of the Lands teams through organisational changes resulting from the RIIO regulatory regime.

LEISURE INTERESTS: Skiing, golf, badminton, running (mostly in mud!) and family (two kids and a dog).

NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW: That I lived and worked for National Grid in Boston, USA, for three years, where I learned how to surf and snowboard.

PET HATE: Reality TV.

MOST IMPORTANT LESSON IN LIFE: Never pick an argument with my wife!

DREAM JOB: A ski instructor – open air, mountains, snow and freedom.

FAVOURITE HOLIDAY: South Island, New Zealand – honeymoon memories, fantastic landscapes, adventure, wildlife and wine.

WHO WOULD PLAY YOU IN THE FILM OF YOUR LIFE? Simon Pegg. Friends rib me that he's my double and, like him, I've started running (badly).

THE LAST BOOK YOU READ: Worm Winds of Zanzibar by Martin Dukes, the second of a light-hearted fantasy trilogy.



Sir Edward visits one of the cable tunnels that will meet the capital's energy needs for decades to come

Going underground

LONDON'S DEPUTY MAYOR, Sir Edward Lister, has visited National Grid's new deep underground tunnels in Wandsworth to find out more about the project to provide a 32km electricity superhighway to help keep the capital plugged into energy supplies.

Tunnel-boring machine Evelyn is carving out the latest section of the tunnel route to Wimbledon, and Sir Edward was able to go down one of the 35m tunnel

shafts to see the progress of the work first-hand.

He said, "It's amazing to think that, as Londoners go about their business, this massive tunnelling machine is at work below the city, helping to make sure that the capital's energy needs are met."

For more information...



... on the project, due to end in 2018, go to www.londonpowertunnels.co.uk

First official charity partner

EMPLOYEES AT NATIONAL Grid are to vote on which organisation becomes its first charity partner. The fantastic charities shortlisted are:

St Basils: works with young people to prevent homelessness by providing accommodation and support

Sue Ryder: whose hospices and care centres provide care for people and families affected by incurable illness

Prostate Cancer UK: supports men and their families affected by prostate cancer, and funds research
Macmillan: improves the lives of people affected by cancer through practical, medical and financial support.

The chosen charity will receive £25,000 in funding a year for two years and benefit from employee fundraising.



FARMING WITH A PURPOSE

The grantor couple who are paid in **smiles, heartfelt appreciation** and the satisfying warm glow of a **rewarding - but not financially - job well done**

“This isn't work,” insisted Jim Parker, as he drained his mug of tea and prepared for another session on the farm, despite temperatures nudging 90 degrees.

Affable and easy-going, he smiled as he recalled arduous days on the building sites as a bricklayer, with little job satisfaction almost 25 years ago.

All that changed for the better when he met now wife Jeanette and the couple grew increasingly aware with

the passing of time that life was not a rehearsal. Both had been brought up by patient and dedicated parents, who shared their homes with adults with special needs on 'adult placements', and found the experience hugely rewarding.

The couple set up their first business, a care home, which they ran for 18 years until the relentless 24-hour demands and associated bureaucracy took their toll.

“We decided we wanted to use our skills to look after



Jim says teamwork and helping clients help themselves are key to the venture's success



"We wanted to use our skills to look after people with learning disabilities... to develop them and build their self-confidence"



Most items built at the workshop are then sold by their makers at the SSP shop

people with learning disabilities, but in a different, more proactive way. One where we could work with them to develop them and build their self-confidence," Jim said.

Diligence and care

Two decades ago, the couple launched Southampton Special Purpose (SSP) Workshop as an alternative to traditional day centres so that service users - Jim bristles at the term - could be active, learn and grow.

A dotting team of eight trained staff show the clients, who are referred to Jim by Social Services departments across Hampshire and surrounding areas, how to mend tools, plane wood, strip cars for scrap... you name it, they do it.

The lovingly finished end results are testament to the team's diligence and care, with many items then sold at SSP's own shop to plough profits back into the business.

Five years ago, buoyed by a steady stream of referrals, Jim and Jeanette bought a livery, which is overshadowed by pylons, in a village just inland and turned it into a farm, complete with mammoth and miniature donkeys, chickens, sheep, pygmy goats and alpacas.

Jeanette said: "We were struggling to accommodate clients at the workshop and wanted to do something completely different, so we combined work with pleasure."

The venture has proved so popular with the current 65 service users - whose conditions range from learning





Recycling printers and photocopiers teaches the service users useful skills and helps the environment

disabilities, autism and mental health issues to physical disability and deaf-blind - that one even arrives at 7am to start work, two hours early.

Independence

Repetition is reassuring to many of the clients, who find comfort in the close contact with the animals on the 30-acre site and grow in confidence as a result. But Jim and his team are always close by, offering support and guidance to clients.

He explained: "From day one they have been instrumental in making the farm work, but they see us more as part of their team

rather than care workers, and that's why it works so well.

"Because they have ownership of the farm, are in the open air, active and have a purpose, some with underlying issues find their problems disappear."

The couple, who organise sailing days, curry nights, days out and barn dances suggested by a Users' Meeting, encourage their charges to join in every farm activity, from land management to animal husbandry.

"They have a daily job list and work as a team with us, rather than us simply telling them what to do. It's collaborative rather than instructional, and is geared towards enhancing their skills and independence," explained Jeanette.

The financial rewards are barely tangible, but Jim and former bank cashier Jeanette are always convinced they did the right thing every time they see a breakthrough with one of their clients.

She added: "Because we know their parents, we know their lives and understand their conditions, we also know their capabilities and can work at activities that will bring them benefits.

"We cover our costs, but seeing the faces of people who come here and to the workshop, hearing their parents say how thrilled they are and knowing we're making a difference to people's lives is worth much more than money."



Dedicated team have their say

Ashley D (inset, right) is just back from a trip to the vets to collect some medicine for the goats.

In itself that's not a major milestone, but this young man, who is steadily confronting his autism, has his sights set on running the farm one day in the future.

He's only joking when he tells Jim he's in charge, but it's a measure of his growing confidence that he knows the routine well enough to even suggest it.

"I like looking after the donkeys because the hay baling is quite hard work, but I always

look forward to my time in the workshop or at the farm. There's always something a bit different to do," he said.

"I'm quite hard to please, but Jim always keeps me busy and gets me a lift to the farm. Once he sent someone new to collect me from home and it upset me quite a lot, but I got through that and am challenging myself."

Workmate Mike D is erudite, well-spoken, blind and suffers from learning disabilities.

"I spend quite a lot of time in the workshop, but come to the farm now and then. I love the routine. Jim and Jeanette genuinely care about us, look after us and let us express ourselves," he said.

Spirit

Maggie S (left), who has learning disabilities, used to work at a zoo that once stood on Southampton Common and counts herself as a farm regular.

"I grew up on a farm and love animals, so I feel at home here. I used to look after elephants and rhinos. I reckon I'm a bit of a Dr Doolittle," she said.

"The spirit here is great, and Jim and Jeanette work with us as part of a team, helping us all the way. It doesn't feel like work when you're enjoying yourself."



In numbers

30

the number of acres the team help look after at the farm, where Jim is now building a fishing lake to offer another activity for service users

For more information...



... visit the website at www.sspw.co.uk and Jeanette's site at www.meadowviewminiatures.co.uk

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Fifty years since these ads on the **future of the electricity grid** appeared, it is striking how many of the **key messages** still apply

In 1962, the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB), the state-owned operator of the electricity transmission network, explained why an expansion of the grid was critical if we were to have the light and power we wanted at the flick of a switch.

In the previous decade, 4,000 miles of 275kV power lines had been built for a new super-grid, bringing electricity to almost every home in the land.

The 1960s would see 1,500 new 400kV overhead power lines added to meet increasing demand, while many other lines were upgraded to the new voltage.

The higher capacity 400kV network made it cheaper to transport electricity long distances, enabling power stations to be sited near coalfields rather than urban centres.

Reliable energy

Fast forward to 2013 and, under the direction of the CEGB's successor National Grid, the network is again expanding. New infrastructure is needed to ensure secure, reliable energy supplies for the future, and to connect new low-carbon power sources to meet climate change targets.

"Today - as in the 1960s - there is opposition to building new overland power lines, particularly in environmentally sensitive landscapes," said Wilson Holmes, National Grid's land manager for the east region.

"While the overall aim clearly is to build an awareness and acceptance about the need for new infrastructure, we're also committed to engaging with communities about route options and how we can mitigate the visual impact within economic constraints.

"This may include considering underground sections in areas of great landscape value, for example, or the use of new low-impact pylon designs."



By 1962, wayleave officers (today known as land officers) completed 2,673 agreements with landowners for 430 new routes. As it is today, the duty of care to limit the visual impact of new lines needed to be balanced with affordability for bill-payers. Another clear priority was to build good relationships with grantors, crucial to the smooth operation of the grid.

For more information...



... on the electricity grid, including an interactive timeline and photos, visit www.nationalgrid75.com/

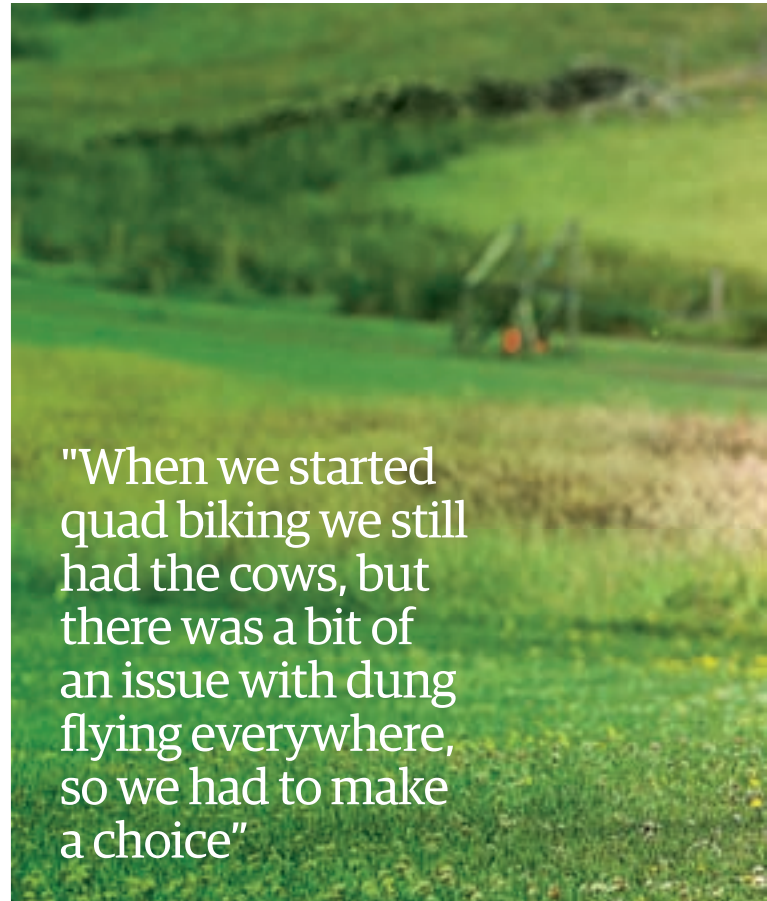


While this ad may appear old-fashioned in its views, in the context of the 1960s, the flood of new household appliances was seen as liberating housewives. While just 3 per cent of households had washing machines in 1945, the figure rose to 58 per cent by 1965.



The role of the CEGB in balancing supply and demand on a minute-by-minute basis was a new concept for the public in the 1960s. This included the challenge of meeting spikes in demand, called TV pick-ups, when millions of people put their kettles on at the end of popular programmes.

NAE BOTHER WITH A HOVER



"When we started quad biking we still had the cows, but there was a bit of an issue with dung flying everywhere, so we had to make a choice"

If you had told teenage farmer John Graham in 1968 that one day he'd be hosting hovercraft parties on his land, you might have been accused of overdoing the local Sheepdip whisky.

Almost half a century ago, he started out as a fresh-faced farmer on a hill farm just to the north-east of Edinburgh, with thoughts only of growing the cattle business.

But now, after years of sheep, lamb and cow breeding, he's on the brink of making a career-defining change in the running of the farm.

He has already changed the business name to Craigluscar Activities, in a nod to the diversification that has - literally - taken off in the last decade.

Fields that once held cows are now the domain of quad bikes and the two, John insists, don't mix.

"When we started quad biking we still had the cows, but there was a bit of an issue with dung flying everywhere, so we had to make a choice," he said.

Since then, he has ploughed full throttle ahead with the alternative side of the business, which now offers a guaranteed source of income.

He still looks after 360 Derbyshire Gritstone ewes on the 360 acres, selling lambs mainly to the store market. A further 270 acres of forest land provide financial flexibility from the Sitka spruce and larch timber.

But it's the clay pigeon shooting, stable of quad bikes and the headline-grabbing hovercraft that may be the catalyst to John's big decision to move away from sheep altogether.

John's unusual offering is moving ahead **full throttle** after his wife began taking the **growing number of calls** full-time

He said: "We started off with clay pigeon shoots for local hotels and a couple of quad bikes to get around the sheep.

"Everyone wanted a go, so we looked into the insurance and safety, bought some more and haven't looked back."

Small enterprise

John now has 17 of the 125cc quad bikes, which regularly snake their way through the forest to the highest point of the Dunfermline farm, which affords breathtaking views of the capital and Stirling Castle along the Forth Valley.

The small enterprise gathered pace when John's wife Margaret retired from her lecturing job at a local college to man the phones. "I guess we must have been missing calls," he admitted, "because the activities side is now 40% of where we spend our time, and growing."

Parties from as far afield as Australia and the States flock to the farm, which has a rare 100% rating on the Trip Advisor attraction website.

John, whose son John helps run the business, said: "We have a lot of stag and hen parties that come to us before



they go out in Edinburgh. People always want to try the hovercraft because there aren't too many places that do it, and it's unlike anything you've tried before."

Drivers battle to get to grips with the 500cc fibre glass machines, which float around a time trial course nine inches from the ground at speeds of 25mph.

John said: "You kneel down and use your body weight to steer, so your thigh muscles are agony. There are no brakes, just a throttle, which boosts or lets the air escape.

"Drivers find it challenging because there is a slide effect, but it's great fun and totally different."

John has modified the £6,000 hovercraft so that it can't

The £6,000-a-piece hovercrafts are a major crowd-puller because they are a completely different experience for car drivers

do the 50mph top speed, but visitors still love the slalom course, with a winner's prize of the Sheepdip hard stuff.

The father-of-three and grandad-to-four grantor, who also offers rides in an Arctic Hagglund Snowcat, a 16-people all-terrain vehicle, plans to open a 25-metre rifle range soon to ensure the business keeps moving forward.

He said: "The activities let you meet some interesting people and give you a good idea of your income, whatever the weather. One chap booked in and was 80. I rang his family to say the weather wasn't great, but they told me 'he's already on his way'. Proof that you really are only as old as you feel."

In numbers

270 acres of forest ensure an income from timber, giving John flexibility during the winter, when demand for outdoor activities is not so great

For more information...



... quad bikes, clay pigeon shooting or hovercraft riding? Take a look at the activities on offer at www.craigluscar.co.uk

SWEET SAVIOUR

After **half a century of beekeeping**, there's little Malcolm Creed-Castle doesn't know about safeguarding one of **Britain's finest traditions**

Beekeeper Malcolm Creed-Castle reckons he has led a charmed life. "I was born to farming and beekeeping," said the 77-year-old one-time horseman and dairy farmer, whose vice-like handshake testifies to a lifetime spent working the land.

"My father kept bees, my aunt kept them and my grandfather before them, so it's in my blood."

Malcolm and his wife Sylvia work Crabbs Bluntshay Farm just outside Whitchurch Canonorum, near Bridport, in the patchwork quilt of water meadows, farms and hills that form Dorset's stunning Marshwood Vale.

Sylvia's family has farmed the 65 acres of land since 1914. "I thought it was paradise when I first came here," admitted Malcolm. "I still work seven days a week and I hope to do so until I drop."

Mixed farming

The couple maintain a small mixed farming enterprise of a kind that has been carried on in the vale for centuries past, raising beef cattle, geese, sheep and turkeys. Traditionally, having a range of livestock spreads the risk of any one product failing.

Besides keeping bees for honey, they produce home-made cider using a vintage antique cider mill and press, which they sell at local markets along with flowers, and chutney and preserves made from fruit and vegetables grown in the cottage garden.

The duo also run a campsite at the farm and guests can walk a conservation trail taking in several archeological features of interest, including a 12th century sheep wash. At one point, visitors cross the River Char on a 36ft bridge that Malcolm constructed using steel from a redundant pylon that once stood on the land.

In addition to those at the farm, the couple also have

hives at other sites in the surrounding countryside. Most weekends Malcolm sells the honey and other produce at the local markets in the vicinity of Bridport and Dorchester.

Honey varies

In the farm's rich meadows and orchards, the bees flit from flower to flower collecting nectar - later converted into honey in the hive - and pollen, a high-protein food for their young.

Malcolm says that the exact composition of honey, and its taste, varies throughout the season according to the succession of flowering plants that the bees forage on.

"At the start of the year, the bees will collect nectar from snowdrops and crocuses, later moving on to oil rapeseed and wild white clover, culminating in October when they turn to ivy nectar," he said. ➤➤

Plight of the honey bee

A combination of factors are thought to be behind the declining number of honey bees in this country.

➤➤ Parasites: the blood-sucking varroa mite lives on bees, weakening or killing the colony, and introducing viral infections.

➤➤ The widespread use of pesticides: in particular, a group of insecticides called neonicotinoids are suspected of damaging bee colonies by introducing the chemicals with

nectar and pollen.

➤➤ Adverse weather: in 2012, the wettest summer in 100 years prevented bees from foraging and gathering pollen, and reduced the amount of nectar (which is temperature driven). Inadequate nutrition in the late summer meant more than a third of colonies failed to make it through the winter.

➤➤ Intensive farming and urbanisation have resulted in a lack of forage for honey bees and other pollinators.





"I thought it was paradise when I first came here. I still work seven days a week and I hope to do so until I drop."



A little smoke masks an alarm pheromone distributed by guard bees and calms the hive

"We move some of the hives to the heather moors in late July. Heather honey is dark and aromatic and a lot of people like it, but I prefer the early season clover honey."

In the farm's honey house, the beeswax coverings on the honeycombs are removed before the frames are spun to extract every last drop of honey. The honey is then double-strained, bottled and labelled ready for sale.



Like other beekeepers, Malcolm has real concerns about what has been called a 'perfect storm' of threats facing honey bees, including habitat loss, harmful pesticides, pests and diseases.



That's a major problem because

the bees pollinate up to a third of everything we eat. Plants that are not pollinated won't set fruit or produce seeds. Around 70 crops in the UK benefit from bees, without them it would cost farmers £1.8 billion a year to pollinate crops.

"I lost two hives myself over the winter," said Malcolm. "Pollination also helps feed many other animals in the food chain, so bees are a vital part of the diversity of nature."

The days when beekeepers could leave a colony to look after itself are long gone.

"It's critical to watch over the bees, treating them for parasites in the autumn and feeding them sugar syrup in winter. The future of the honey bee depends on nurturing the remaining colonies and everybody can do their bit by planting nectar-rich plants and buying local honey."

For more information...



... about the farm and campsite, visit www.crabbsbluntshayfarm.co.uk/ and for more on the British Beekeepers Association, visit www.bbka.org.uk/

8 things you can do for bees

1 Plant nectar-rich plants and trees that flower from spring to autumn when bees are active.

2 Choose single flower varieties with pollen that bees can get at easily.

3 Keep a beehive yourself. See the BBKA website for your nearest association.

4 Provide nest sites for solitary bees and bumblebees.

5 Buy local honey, which supports British beekeepers and helps meet the costs of pollinating local crops.

6 Report a bee swarm so that a local beekeeper can collect it. Left alone they are unlikely to survive.

7 Make use of the BBKA Pollination Dating service if you have spare land that could be used by a beekeeper (www.pollinationdating.com).

8 Join Friends Bee for free seeds and to help fund research www.friendsofthehoneybee.com



GP and beekeeper Francis Campbell, a member of the Leamington & Warwick branch of BBKA, is managing a hive at National Grid's Warwick HQ

Buzzing to an office near you

National Grid is working with the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) in an imaginative scheme to help combat the decline in honey bees by providing secure areas of its land to host beehives. So far, hives have been placed at a number of sites, including office locations, unmanned sites and in non-operational areas of facilities such as substations. The bee colonies are managed by local members of the BBKA.

"The scheme will be particularly effective where we can provide the BBKA with safe and secure sites in areas affected by theft or vandalism, or where access to nectar sources is limited," said Chris Plester, of the Sustainability and Climate Change team.

In recent years, habitats and landscapes have become increasingly fragmented and unable to respond effectively to new pressures from climate change and demographic factors.

"The wider aim is that National Grid-owned land can become part of a natural grid of wildlife sites, corridors and biodiversity stepping stones," said Chris. "With 7,000km of power line corridors and 600 sites across the UK, we're in a unique position to make a landscape-scale contribution to the preservation and restoration of habitats and biodiversity."



THE POWER OF HEAVY METAL

The Stones had a pint there, **Dire Straits** played there, so what's the secret of the **pub that rocked?**

The pylon became part of the pub's logo

A high-voltage pylon in London's East End is the unlikely talisman for some of the world's greatest rock bands.

During the 1970s, the Bridge House rocked to the sounds of up-and-coming bands, some of whom hit the big time, thanks to the power of the tower.

The venue was overshadowed by a Grid pylon, and an image of the structure was incorporated in the venue's logo.

"The idea was that the energy from the electricity pylon was embodied in the vibrancy of the music," said former landlord Terry Murphy, who now runs a website dedicated to the Bridge House's pioneering exploits.



(l-r) Terry's son Darren, a founder member of Wasted Youth (who sadly passed away last year), Mick Geguss of Cockney Rejects, Terry, and Lee Drury, Erazerhead, at a reunion beneath the pylon at Bridgehouse2



The legendary music venue in Canning Town helped launch the careers of artists including Iron Maiden, who played 35 gigs there, Depeche Mode and Dire Straits.

Between '75 and '82, under the direction of Terry, it was THE place to hear live music, as well as being the first pub in the world to have its own record label.

Rolling Stones Mick Jagger and Keith Richards drank there when they watched Charlie Watt's band Rocket 88.

The venue was demolished in 2002 to make way for a flyover, leaving only the pylon to mark where it stood. Bridgehouse2 (a National Grid grantor) launched in 2008, and has become a Mecca for live music in its own right.

For more information...



... on the Bridge House, go to www.thebridgehousee16.com. Live recordings are still available for sale.

Noam Wind/Shutterstock.com, Featureflash/Shutterstock.com

FULL STEAM AHEAD

Many men dream of having a **shed in the back garden**, but **one grantor's plans** have always been on a far **bigger scale**

A fifth of the size of full-sized versions, the steam locos still weigh up to a tonne. Stuart is pictured with (l-r) Vanguard, Valliant and Victory



A decade of work and no little financial outlay and Stuart Ravell's vision is now departing platform 1. It's the realisation of a dream for the farmer turned stationmaster, whose 10.25-inch narrow gauge railway meanders across eight acres of his Lincolnshire land.

While many rail enthusiasts can only dream of such a project, Stuart had not only the technical know-how, but also the financial means - having sold his animal feed milling business in 1990.

When the opportunity arose to move to Watermill Farm near Sleaford 10 years later, he and his wife Helen jumped at the chance. Not only did the farm come with 200 acres of land, but it also offered an extended garden in which he could expand his existing track layout.

Hidden gem

The couple set about restoring the 16th-century watermill, which produced bread flour until just after the Second World War but had since become dilapidated. "I thought it would cost £20,000 and take me about six months, but I was out by at least a factor of 10 on both," laughed Stuart.

Today, with its idyllic millpond setting, the property is a stunning family home and two of the outbuildings have been converted into fully equipped holiday cottages.

Itching to get the railway off the ground, Stuart and a dozen enthusiastic volunteers started laying the first tracks even before a staircase had been installed in the main house - "Much to Helen's disgust," he quipped.

An outer circuit around the perimeter of the garden and adjoining fields was completed in 2005. (Some of the rail had originally been used for munition trains in the First World War.)

Over the following years, two inner loops were added to



The 1.5-mile-long railway, complete with three platforms and a signal box, is very much Stuart's private hobby



increase the track to 1.5 miles, complete with a three-platform station, water cranes and an 18-lever signal box, which uses a mixture of cable and compressed air hydraulic connections to control the points.

In addition to skirting the millpond and going through the farmyard, the Kirkby Green Light Railway crosses a number of bridges over a stream, and negotiates a 120ft tunnel and a shady four-acre wood planted by Stuart.

This hidden gem of a railway is unnoticed by most passers-by and that's very much the way Stuart prefers it.

"First and foremost it's my hobby," he said. "It's a private railway, apart from four or five days in the year when we open to the public in return for a donation to local charities.

"Because it's our home I make the rules, and that means no dogs, no picnics and no smoking. It can get quite hectic - particularly the parking - and I couldn't do without a lot of help from our volunteers."

Stuart started his model train collection back in 1985 when he obtained what he thought were remnants of three



(Above) Stuart regularly takes an outing across the viaduct on one of the coal-fired steam locos, which also include his

Pacific class William Bell and Texas and Pacific locos. The American-style Santa Fe (right) has enclosed carriages.

narrow gauge steam locomotives in a large potato box.

Built by Southern Miniature Railways, Victory, Valliant and Vanguard had originally operated on the south coast, near Poole, as a tourist attraction in the 1940s.

Handsome profit

As it turned out, there were only enough parts to assemble two locos - Victory entering service in 1991 and Valliant following eventually, in 2006. But fortunately he also managed to acquire Vanguard in 2007 to complete the trio.

Stuart has a total of five steam locomotives, two diesels and a petrol-driven replica of an American Santa Fe loco.

He has always had a love of all things mechanical. "The railway has taken over, but as a lad I was always tinkering with cars. When I was 12 I remember phoning dad and telling him to bring mum because I'd just bought a car. It was a 1926 Dodge and I sold it for a handsome profit."

There is always something to do on the railway, whether it's regular maintenance or major overhauls.

"At different times, it requires the skills of a surveyor, bricklayer, labourer, carriage-builder, tunnel engineer, bridge-builder and an electrician," said Stuart.

He is happiest in the workshop fabricating parts for his latest project, to build a luxury Pullman dining car from scratch. Fully heated and lit, it will have authentic trim and tables, with seating for four.

"The idea is to invite friends for a meal on the rails in the evening," said Stuart. "One loco is fitted with a headlight and we want to put lights on the signal arms. Our volunteer drivers are enthusiastic about the idea, but will be under strict orders to slow down during the soup course!"

For more information...



... about the Kirkby Green Light Railway and for opening times, contact Stuart at s.ravell@talktalk.net

It's a fact

➤ At their peak, narrow gauge railways were the driving force of Britain's mines, quarries, factories and docks, with more than 1,000 lines in operation.

➤ They bore witness to the first use of steam locos, the first public railway and the first preserved 'heritage' railway (the Talyllyn railway in Wales).

➤ The gauge of track typically ranges from 4 inch up to 20 inch.

➤ Above 7.25 inch, railways normally have carriages you can sit inside.

➤ In garden railways (2.5-4 inch), track is raised off the ground so passengers can sit on carriages.

Lastword

Your chance to enter two great competitions

Contact Gridline



Tel: 01926 656 325
email: gridline@uk.ngrid.com

If you do something different on your land, have diversified or have a story to tell, let Gridline know and your success will be shared with 35,000 other grantors. Think of it as free PR! Email gridline@uk.ngrid.com or call Gridline on 01926 656 325.

WIN! A two-night getaway for two

A CHANGE OF SCENE AND A touch of luxury, with a two-night minibreak for two people from Buyagift - that's what awaits the lucky winner of Gridline's competition prize.

Will you go for two nights on the town, a seaside break or an idyllic escape to the country? The decision is yours, as you choose from more than a hundred hotels and country guest houses across the UK. From Cornwall to the Scottish Highlands, from Wales to Norfolk, there's sure to be somewhere you'd love to stay.

The prize includes two nights' bed and breakfast for two people, but evening meals are not included in the prize.

For your chance to win the two-night getaway, all you have to do is answer this simple question.



Q What percentage of Hovercraft farmer John Graham's business consists of land-based activities?

Send your answer to Gridline Getaway Competition, 23-25 Waterloo Place, Warwick Street, Leamington Spa,

Warwickshire CV32 5LA. Please note you must be a grantor to enter. **The closing date for entries is 8 November 2013.**



Photo competition

Grantor's daughter Emma Crust from Alford, Lincolnshire, snapped summer in Cornwall to win £150 of John Lewis vouchers. "She'll be thrilled," said mum Kathy.



A SHOPPING SPREE AT M&S

What would you buy with £150 to spend in M&S?

If that has got you thinking, then why not enter Gridline's photo competition on the theme of 'season of mists and mellow fruitfulness', to make your daydreams a reality?

Send in your photo to Gridline Photo Competition, 23-25 Waterloo Place, Warwick Street, Leamington Spa CV32 5LA, or you can email it to gridline@uk.ngrid.com.

The closing date is 8 November 2013.

COMPETITION TERMS AND CONDITIONS

TWO-NIGHT GETAWAY: The winner will be the first entrant selected at random who correctly identifies the answer (to be featured in the next edition) and who is a National Grid grantor at the time of the draw. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Gridline reserves the right to change the prize without prior notice. The prize is not transferable and cannot be exchanged for cash. The closing date is 8 November 2013.

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 8 November 2013. Prints cannot be returned.

nationalgrid