

ENGLEFIELD ECHO

MAKING A LANDSCAPE-SCALE DIFFERENCE

How can a rural estate make a difference in reducing the rate of climate change?

ALSO INSIDE

- ✦ BOOSTING BIODIVERSITY
- ✦ HELPING THE LAND ALONG
- ✦ BACK IN THE SPOTLIGHT
- ✦ TRAINING FUTURE LEADERS

2021/22

The Echo is made possible with the kind help of all staff, family, tenants and friends of the Englefield Estate. We would like to thank everyone for their contributions.



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CONTENTS

- 4 MAKING A LANDSCAPE-SCALE DIFFERENCE
- 8 BEE-ING PART OF NATURE RECOVERY
- 10 HEDGEROWS FOR HABITAT
- 11 BIODIVERSITY IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT
- 12 HELPING THE LAND ALONG
- 15 A PRESCRIPTION FOR FRESH AIR AND EXERCISE
- 16 EASING ISOLATION AND LONELINESS
- 18 THRIVING RURAL COMMUNITIES
- 20 OUT OF THE BLOCKS!
- 22 BACK IN THE SPOTLIGHT
- 24 FROM FASHION TO FILM
- 25 EVENTS 2022
- 26 INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION
- 30 TRAINING FUTURE LEADERS
- 32 A FLOURISHING CAREER
- 33 REMEMBERING HRH THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH
- 34 ESTATE NEWS

✂ Cover image: Head Keeper Murray Wilson at the Glenmazeran Estate.



ENGLEFIELD ESTATE



People and our planet

The estates are so much more than countryside or buildings. They are, at their heart, human organisations. Very little about the land we manage is entirely natural with even the wildest landscapes created by people working on the land for millennia. So, at Christmas it's good to think of the people, past and present, who made and sustain the places where we live and work.

It is also about looking forward. You will read much in here about our commitment to the environment and how we want to continue to enhance it. This is not some whim or fashionable response to these matters becoming higher up the national agenda. We have always sought to be good stewards of these estates, but we also need to be part of a local and national desire to address the impact of climate change and the crisis of species decline.

Across our three estates, we are making landscape scale improvements, not only to reduce carbon emissions, but to promote carbon capture,

ensure clean air and water, reduce soil erosion, improve soil quality, implement natural flood management and address the decline in biodiversity.

For our communities, emerging from the global pandemic, we're focusing on what we can do to help make them as healthy, vibrant, safe and prosperous as possible. We're also working with the next generation to teach them as much as we can about countryside management and sustainable food and timber production, which respects the environment whilst providing what society needs.

Zoe and I and all the team at the Englefield Estate, wish you a happy Christmas and a healthy and successful new year.

Richard Benyon.

Making a landscape-scale difference

We all know we need to do our bit to reduce the rate of climate change, but how can a rural estate make a landscape-scale difference?

The need to reduce carbon emissions and to look after our planet presents one of the biggest challenges facing us all, and farmers and land managers are playing a key role in the fight against climate change.

By improving water, air and soil quality, and enhancing flood prevention while providing high-quality food and boosting biodiversity, farmers can make a real difference.

These ‘public goods’ are all objectives which will reward farmers and land managers using public money under the Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme. Farmers now have six years to adapt to the ELM format, which will replace current funding streams.

The Estate’s Home Farm in Berkshire is using digital tools such as Agrecalc – a carbon footprint calculator – and the UK Habitat Classification System to benchmark its agricultural operations ahead of the changeover.

As Dr Liz Mattison, Community and Education Officer, explains: “Mapping the habitats on the Home Farm and calculating our carbon footprint are crucial steps in the process of improving our biodiversity and ensuring the Estate moves towards net zero as quickly as possible.

“The information gathered will allow us to maintain the already high-quality natural features at Englefield, whilst we target the creation of new habitats such as hedges, ponds, scrub and woodland to increase carbon sequestration as well as biodiversity.

“We can also identify any gaps in our knowledge so we can focus and manage collaboration with outside experts in the future.”

Planting cover crops and minimising the amount of tillage (ploughing and cultivating) helps agricultural soils to store more carbon. At the Home Farm, minimising tillage wherever possible is now common practice and this year we have started trialling cover crops like mustard and legumes, such as beans and clovers.

We hope the presence of these cover crops will improve soil structure, increase soil carbon and also reduce water run-off from the fields into watercourses. The potential positive results of this are fourfold: sequestering carbon from the atmosphere to help combat climate change, increasing the ability of soils to hold water from rainfall so it is available to growing crops in summertime, reducing the likelihood of causing flooding during the winter, and preventing silt and nutrients from the soil washing into ditches, rivers and streams so that water is cleaner and better for wildlife.

With the changeover to ELM in mind, Englefield Estate has become the first private estate to pay for its tenants to take part in the Prince’s Farm Resilience Programme. 14 business owners signed up for the workshops – independently coordinated by the Prince’s Countryside Fund – which offer them a chance to take advantage of expert business advice.

Estates Director Edward Crookes said: “We are committed to ensuring our tenants have every chance to run thriving, sustainable farm businesses in the future and that they are in position to adapt to the challenges presented by the ELM transition.

“By ensuring our own farm is ready for the impending changeover to ELM, while also helping our tenants prepare for the transition, we can also make a landscape-scale difference towards slowing the rate of climate change.” ✦



✦ Ben Kolosowski, Chitty Farm

CASE STUDY

Ben's story



Chitty Farm is an Englefield Estate let farm near Silchester in Hampshire and has been organic since 2001. Farmer Ben Kolosowski has a closed flock of 440 ewes from which he rears organic lamb, alongside a prime organic Aberdeen Angus beef herd and free-range Christmas turkeys. The farm also has a thriving DIY livery yard with stables for 25 horses and ponies, a tack room, sand school and grazing.

Ben is currently considering the changes he may need to make in preparation for Environmental Land Management schemes (ELMs) and has taken-up the opportunity to participate in the Prince's Countryside Fund's Farm Resilience Programme which is being funded by the Englefield Estate for the benefit of farming families across the Estate.

Ben explains: "Our environmental land management activities are currently supported by Defra's Higher-Level Stewardship Scheme and Organic Entry Level Scheme, which will continue up until 2024.

"I was six years old when my family arrived at Chitty Farm in 1985 and by 1999 my father had decided to convert to organic status, a two-year process, which is certified and monitored by the Soil Association.

“
Our hedgerows
are like nature
highways.
”

"Our sheep and cows graze on a wide variety of natural grass types – as opposed to perennial rye grass – including cocksfoot, Timothy, red fescue, flowering clover and yellow rattle. They eat it and spread the seeds around, ready fertilized!

"The farm is buzzing with wildlife and although I don't currently keep a formal record of what I see, the list includes the silver studded blue butterfly, one of the rarest British butterflies, which lives in the hayfields

at Little London. We also have lizards, slow worms, grass snakes and adders, although they're not so easy to spot.

"Our hedgerows are like nature highways. We have had grants to lay hedges and we've also planted around two kilometres of new ones about 10 years ago. These are a mix of hawthorn, blackthorn, dog rose, field maple and other native species. The first wave of fieldfares have just arrived and they love to eat the hawthorn and rosehip berries which provide a tasty winter larder for them.

"We also have a thriving colony of bats which love the insects attracted by our old fashioned muckheap. Every year, on or around April 20th we'll see the swallows return to feast on the insects they find here.

"Chitty Farm is criss-crossed with footpaths which means that the general public can enjoy the countryside and nature too.

"With so many changes in farming and land management coming forward to benefit the environment, these are challenging times for farmers and there's certainly a sense of nervousness about the future." ❄️



CASE STUDY

Right tree, right place

Tree planting is widely seen as a good way to lock up atmospheric carbon. Although trees planted today will not mature for many years, managing them now will safeguard them for future generations.

At Englefield Estate, 7,000 trees have been planted across two sites this year as part of the extension of existing wildlife habitats. These included native hawthorn, blackthorn, cherry and hazel species.

As Richard Edwards, Forestry Manager explains, how you manage them is as important as the number planted.

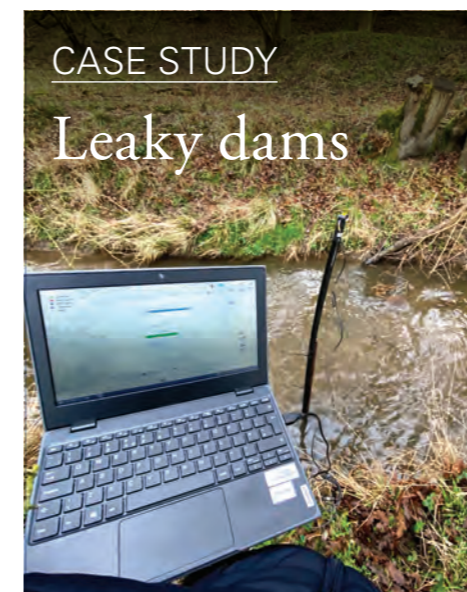
"Establishing a tree on its own, as part of a woodland or hedge is about giving it the environment it needs so it can grow," said Richard.

"Once you've planted a woodland, you have to nurture those trees by weeding them until year two or three, ensure that they are

protected from herbivore browsing and then pretty much step away until years 15 to 20.

"Then you should start thinning them out as the retained trees need space to grow, going in every five to eight years to carry out similar operations.

"This type of management allows the woodland to produce good quality timber for sawmilling, as well as providing varied and valuable habits for wildlife." ❄️



CASE STUDY

Leaky dams

A pioneering natural flood management scheme on a section of river which runs through the Estate is yielding positive results.

The leaky dams in the River Bourne – a small tributary of the River Pang – have been created to hold back the flow of water, while not stopping it completely, to reduce the risk of damage to homes downstream in Pangbourne.

The forestry team has been working with the Pang Valley Flood Forum to install the leaky dams.

In 2007, the River Pang flooded, causing damage to more than 100 homes and

displacing some people from their homes for up to nine months.

The effectiveness of the 38 dams is being assessed by the University of Reading. Gabby Powell, a PhD student attached to the project, said the initial results show the leaky dams are slowing the flow into The Pang during smaller, more frequent rainfall events.

She added: "We have more water coming into the river than we do going out. The clay soil makes absorption difficult, yet we often see a reduction in the amount of water reaching the Pang, which is great news for Pangbourne". ❄️

Bee-ing part of nature recovery



We're all being encouraged to make space in our own gardens for plants to attract pollinators – and the Englefield Estate is taking-up the challenge.

Populations of pollinators such as bees, butterflies, hoverflies and moths are in decline in the UK due to habitat loss, invasive species, pests and disease.



✂ *Beekeeper, Serena Watts*

According to a study published by the Centre of Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) in 2019, a third of wild bees and hoverfly species in England, Scotland and Wales have experienced a decline in the 33 years from 1980, whilst only 10 percent of species are increasing, largely thanks to flowering crops such as oil seed rape.

“The hives are in a beautiful location and visible to members of the public, so they can see how the bees are thriving.”

The charity Buglife, which works to prevent the extinction of invertebrates, says that one in every three mouthfuls of our food depends on pollinators. “It is almost impossible to over-emphasise the importance of the service pollinators perform for us,” they say.

Serena returns to Englefield Primary School, where she used to teach, to educate pupils on beekeeping, adding that educating the next generation is important to her.

Over the past year, three new wild beehives – crafted by a local carpenter from hollowed logs – have been installed on the Estate at Mayridge Farm and Chalkpit Farm. Another is in the garden of Englefield House, close to primroses, dandelions, creeping buttercups and wild teasels, which the bees love to forage.

Head Gardener, Sue Broughton, has noticed that the bees are most attracted to species like the dog rose and foxgloves. She says: “We’ve created a new wildflower area that links with another meadow we created six years ago to create a really effective wildlife corridor. As well as improving biodiversity in the immediate vicinity of the gardens and deer park, when the gardens are open to the public one day a week, we can pass on our experience and guidance to visitors.”

A further two traditional beehives have been installed within wildflower meadows on the Estate. These are managed by former teacher turned beekeeper Serena Watts.

Sue is encouraging as many people as possible to create their own pollinator haven, whether it’s in a garden or on a balcony. She says; “All you need is a small patch of soil and wildflower seed mix. It’s important that we all do our bit for nature – and it’s good fun too.” ✂

Serena said: “Bees only like to travel a mile or two for their forage so having the wildflower meadows so close is perfect for them.



✂ *Bee Kind Hives*

Matt Somerville of Bee Kind Hives in Andover produces natural beehives out of hollowed-out tree trunks.

Taking inspiration from techniques used in Europe, Matt’s hives are designed to require as little human intervention as possible which reduces both stress and disease for the bees.

There are now three of Matt’s hives in the grounds of Englefield House and across the Home Farms.

They can be affixed to trees or put onto stilts minimising the intervention from humans by allowing for inspection underneath. The bees also prefer to be higher up away from the cold ground and out of reach of predators.

Head Gardener Sue Broughton said: “These hives are very artistic creations, and the bees seem to love them. One hive was inhabited by bees within four hours of being installed.”



✂ *Marbled white butterfly*

Research has revealed that the gardens at Englefield House are also popular with other pollinators including hoverflies, lacewings and butterflies.

Englefield Estate’s Community and Education Officer Dr Liz Mattison conducted a butterfly count this year in the wildflower areas and recorded 10 different species including ringlets and large white butterflies.

CASE STUDY

Hedgerows for habitat



✂ Rob Allen, Englefield Estate forestry team

Over a kilometre of new hedgerow has been planted on the Englefield Estate, as part of a scheme to enhance biodiversity and create new habitats.

1,180 metres of new hedge has been planted, comprising 7,000 trees and shrubs, as well as 4,400 square metres of new scrub woodland, extending existing habitats and linking hedgerows to create wildlife corridors across the Estate.

Planted across two sites, native tree species, including hawthorn, blackthorn, cherry and hazel, have been carefully chosen to provide food sources and habitats for birds, as well as nectar for insects.

Rob Allen, from the Englefield Estate's forestry team, explained: "Extending and creating new hedgerows supports hundreds of species. They're like an ecological hotspot, creating safe places for birds to nest, insects to live and feed, and mammals to collect and store food."

"The new hedgerows allow for easier access for many animals to migrate around the local area, whilst staying safe under the cover of the hedge. The plant species chosen have flowers and fruit which provide valuable food sources for bees, butterflies and other pollinating insects as well as birds."

3,500 acres of the Englefield Estate is woodland, providing a sustainable source of timber, open space for public access and habitat for important flora and fauna. All the woodland is managed under a long-term plan to ensure that a sustainable timber crop can be harvested.

Rob added: "Establishing new hedgerows and small plantings nearby can help to keep wildlife corridors open so that animals, flora and fauna can continue to thrive."

The hedge and scrub woodland planting was funded by the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE), with funding from Network Rail's 'No Net Loss of Biodiversity' Greater West Programme.

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Lynn Parker, Programme Manager at TOE, said: "The Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment is delighted to have funded over a kilometre of new hedgerow and a new woodland. Hedges provide vital connectivity through the landscape, which enables animals, from butterflies to hedgehogs and bats, to thrive." ✂

Biodiversity in an urban environment

For the Benyon Estate in Hackney's De Beauvoir Town, the challenge of encouraging pollinators and protecting wildlife is no different.

Jennifer Benyon, Head of Landscaping for the Estate, has been working closely with Kingsland Gardeners to encourage biodiversity in urban gardens around the Estate and shares her top tips for creating a wildlife friendly environment:

1. Where possible, leave leaf litter where it is as it is a fantastic natural mulch and is a home for many of beneficial insects in the autumn months.
2. Try not to over tidy. Many insects will seek refuge in the hollow stems of dead seed heads and flower stalks, so where possible it can help nature to leave them. Log piles from seasonal pruning also provide welcome homes for insects.
3. Grow a range of flower shapes and sizes, such as trumpet shaped or daisy shaped, to attract a wide range of pollinating insects.
4. Plant your garden so that it will flower throughout the year to attract pollinating insects active year-round.
5. Create deep flowerbeds to allow a greater range of plants in any given space, helping to create more biodiversity. ✂



✂ Gardens on Ufton Road, De Beauvoir

Hackney Swifts

- The Benyon Estate continues to support Hackney Swifts with a conservation project in De Beauvoir Town.
- The designated conservation area is a safe haven for swift populations.
- By 2019 more than 50 boxes had been installed, with more going up this year.
- Some of the boxes are already inhabited by swifts although it can take up to four years for swifts to nest.
- Some of the boxes are currently being inhabited by other birds including swallows. ✂



✂ Swift boxes installed in De Beauvoir Town

Helping the land along



✂ Head Keeper Murray Wilson

Taking on responsibility for the day-to-day running of an 8,000 acre Estate in Scotland might be a somewhat daunting prospect for some people. For Glenmazeran's new Head Keeper Murray Wilson though, it's a challenge he's already relishing.

Murray took on the role in February 2021 after moving back to his Scottish homeland with fiancée Ella for the first time since he'd left for Yorkshire 12 years ago, at the age of 17.

He has come to Glenmazeran with a history of working on a grouse moor and describes the change as a 'new challenge'.

Murray explains: "It's quite seasonal really and very varied. Our work can include general maintenance across the Estate, carrying out carefully planned culls to manage the red deer population, restoration burning, data capturing of wildlife and vermin tracking. That's just a small part of it – no two days are the same.

"There are just two of us looking after the area – myself and Beat Keeper James Edgar, so we're very busy. It's so important to us that we do everything as sustainably as possible. With moorland management, we need to change with the times and keep up with new technology and new ways of doing things.

"It's already showing benefits. A lot of people think these moorland areas should be left alone to grow and do their natural thing, but careful management is needed to help it thrive. We see it as us helping the land along."

One tool he is already using to great effect is a mobile data-gathering app called Epicollect. It helps Murray to monitor bird activity on the Estate and build a more permanent record of which species are present.

The results so far have been impressive with recorded sightings of birds of prey such as white-tailed eagles, kestrels, merlins and red kites.

Murray explains: "It works by GPS so when you spot something you can mark it down immediately, with photos and videos, if you have any.

"It's a great tool and helps us to promote the good work we are doing to protect and enhance these species."

One of the major projects Murray has been involved in is an initiative to restore the Estate's peatland, which accounts for around half of the Estate. It's been running for three years and brings many benefits such as reducing flood risk and creating new habitats for insects.

Primarily though, the peatland will capture and retain high levels of carbon, helping towards the Estate's environmental strategy objective of becoming carbon neutral.

Murray is pleased with the progress the project is making but says it may take a few years before the true carbon capture potential is fully realised.

He explains: "It's settling in well and has already helped a variety of wildlife during these dryer months.

"Time will tell how well the peat develops, by holding up the water it is allowing Sphagnum moss to form. That will decompose into peat and subsequently lock in carbon – it will work in time. It feels good to be a part of the fight against climate change."

Murray has also been encouraged by the results of a recent survey of Atlantic salmon, which was co-ordinated by the Findhorn, Nairn and Lossie Rivers Trust.

As he looks to the future, Murray is enjoying settling in to life in Scotland. When he's not out on the moorland, he likes to play football and, perhaps not surprisingly due to his Scottish heritage, the bagpipes.

One of Murray's greatest pleasures in his role is a simple one. He says: "For me, one of the best bits about my job is watching people enjoying their time here when visiting the Estate. It's so rewarding to see them appreciating the work that is taking place and it feels good to know we are helping to protect and enhance the land for the future." ✂

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⌘ Atlantic salmon survey on the River Findhorn

CASE STUDY

Atlantic Salmon survey

The Findhorn, Nairn and Lossie Rivers Trust carries out surveys of Atlantic salmon in the River Findhorn, which runs through the Glenmazeran Estate, every three years.

The Trust promotes sustainable management of river resources and fish populations through research, restoration and education. Its work on the Findhorn takes place in the autumn when the salmon which have migrated from the sea, have arrived in the river.

Director Bob Laughton says this survey work is important for many reasons. He explains: "Salmon are an iconic and important species to wildlife and also our economy. With our changing climate it's essential we are able to monitor the health of these fish as well as any behavioural changes or shifts in how and where they are travelling.

"This year's survey results have shown there is a good population of salmon in the river and we are very encouraged by that. We see it as a very good breeding ground. It's important it stays like this."

Surveying takes place at three regular locations, using a technique known as electrofishing. This involves a member of the team wearing a special backpack with two probes attached – an anode and a cathode. The probes are submerged in the water and an electric current is passed between them, which attracts the fish. They are then collected in a net, counted, and assessed, before being released safely back into the water.

Bob explains: "Salmon typically have a life span of between three and five years and tend to spawn in November. Before they can migrate to the ocean, they go through what is known as the smoltification process which is where young fish adapt from living in fresh water to living in the sea. They will then usually return to the river after one or two years to spawn." ⌘



CASE STUDY
Peatland restoration

Peatlands are wetlands which, over time, accumulate large amounts of carbon-rich peat, providing an effective way of locking in carbon.

Peat soils cover almost a quarter of Scotland. That's about 1.7 million hectares, storing some 1.6 billion tonnes of carbon – the equivalent of an estimated 140 years of Scotland's emissions.¹

Many peatlands though are in a poor condition, having been previously drained to encourage the water to run off the land so it could dry out and be used for agriculture.

Murray explains the restoration process taking place on the Estate: "Originally, channels were ploughed out across the land which were about a foot deep and 100 yards or so apart, so the water would drain off.

"Now, to reinstate the peatlands, we are closing up these channels by pushing the ground in to slow down the flow of the water. This process allows the Sphagnum moss to form which creates peat, which subsequently locks in the carbon. Essentially we are creating a dam to stop the water escaping." ⌘

¹Source, Scottish Government website - <https://www.gov.scot/news/peatland-restoration-fund-tackles-global-climate-crisis/>



⌘ Walkers in Estate woodland

A prescription for fresh air and exercise

Access to green space – and increasingly blue space such as rivers and lakes – has been linked to improved mental wellbeing for adults and children alike.

Across the country, many local NHS Trusts and Clinical Commission Groups (CCGs) are using social prescribing initiatives in patient care.

The Englefield Estate has been working with social prescribers in the area, offering over 1,500 hectares of public access areas, fantastic for exercise, fresh air, wildlife spotting and quiet contemplation.

The Estate's Community and Education officer, Dr Liz Mattison, explained: "The aim is to help people feel better through positive connections with their community and the environment.

"We've created a series of visual guides to walking routes on the Estate, which include maps, photo directions and details of surface conditions and parking where required.

"Where possible, walks start from the villages where GPs are situated, enabling people without access to a car or public transport to get out into the fresh air in beautiful surroundings."

Lucy Hill, Social Prescribing Link Worker for Theale Medical Centre and The Boathouse Surgery, explained: "The guides to walking routes around the Estate have been a huge hit, I've lost count of how many times I've printed and shared them.

"Knowing how long the walk is, having a photographic guide, and knowing there is somewhere to sit gives the patient peace of mind and the confidence to go out and just enjoy themselves, which is what social prescribing is all about."



But of course, there is no need to wait for a prescription to get outdoors and enjoy what the Estate has to offer. Visit the Estate website to download our walking guides or take a look at the new signs in Estate woodland. ⌘

Easing isolation and loneliness



✂ Amelia with her hearing dog Scamp

From the young to the old, one of the enduring issues to have emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic is the social isolation and loneliness felt by so many. This has been reflected in the support given by the Englefield Charitable Trust this year to local charities working to help those affected by the strain this period has placed on them.

At a time when donations and fundraising have been greatly impacted, the Trust has continued to support a wide range of good causes and initiatives in and around Berkshire and North Hampshire, and close to the Benyon Estate in De Beauvoir Town.

One such charity is Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. In 2020, it helped more than 3,200 deaf people and it now supports more than 1,000 hearing dog partnerships, including 16-year-old Amelia (pictured), who has been partnered with her hearing dog Scamp for three years.

During the pandemic, with the need to maintain social distancing or to isolate, many people who are severely or profoundly deaf have faced even greater isolation and loneliness.

As well as continuing to match its clever dogs with those who need support, at the start of the pandemic the charity launched an online platform, the Pawtal, offering self-help training, publications and leaflets, and demonstration videos for its hearing dog partnerships. In addition, almost 3,000 people received a deaf awareness product free of charge.



✂ Sarah and hearing dog Albert

Caroline Girling, the charity's Trusts and Foundations Officer, said: "Over the past year, like many organisations, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People have had to adapt and evolve to continue providing support to deaf people throughout the UK. We are so grateful to the Englefield Charitable Trust for its generous donation, which has helped to support our beneficiaries in West Berkshire through a tough year."

“
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In Hackney, a grant given to Groundwork London's Silver Linings programme helped it to support older people who were feeling lonely and isolated.

Clare Norwood, Silver Linings Programme Manager, explained: "Groundwork London has been running our older people programme, Silver Linings, in the London Borough of Hackney since 2015. In light of the coronavirus pandemic, it is more important than ever to give older people the opportunity to escape isolation by building social connections."

Silver Linings are supported volunteering clubs for older people at risk of social isolation. The sessions help participants gain a sense of purpose and fulfilment by helping other vulnerable people in the borough, including the homeless, hospice patients and new parents.

Its 'Craft for a Cause Club' enables Silver Liners to hand-craft items which are then donated to other local organisations, giving them a sense of accomplishment and reconnecting them with their local community.



✂ Groundwork London supports older people in the community

One participant shared: "Silver Linings makes you think that someone cares about you, that you're not forgotten and you're a part of society because someone is thinking about you."

From the older to the younger members of our community, the Trust's support this year has been varied.

It also provided a grant for Young People and Children First (YPACF), which has two houses in West Berkshire; Cornerstone and Rebecca House. They give a home to young people who are leaving care or who are homeless.

Tracy Underwood, CEO of YPACF, said: "Our young people are care leavers – from foster care or children's homes – and/or homeless. Our homes are family sized homes with 24/7 support. Through your grant we can provide them with emotional and practical support; therapy, money management, education, work placements, fun activities and camping holidays to name a few.



"Our support workers care about our young people and are there for them daily, helping with homework, cooking with them, braiding their hair and being that listening ear through dark times.

"Grants such as yours ensure we can continue to be there for these young people, so when they leave us, they are happy, healthy, independent young adults." ✂



⌘ Wheelwrights at work in the yard



⌘ Englefield Village tea rooms



⌘ The former social club has been refurbished to provide a new village hall

Thriving rural communities

Rural life has, in Britain as elsewhere, been transformed in recent decades and what were once considered everyday certainties can no longer be relied on.

As the House of Lords Select Committee on the Rural Economy says: "Changing living and working patterns, the mechanisation of agriculture and the diversification of the wider economy – among many other factors – have all fundamentally changed rural life."

Estates such as Englefield are well placed to understand these changes and to work with others to help ensure that rural communities continue to adapt so they can continue to thrive.

Back in 2019 we shared our vision for the future of Englefield Village to try to ensure it remains a vibrant and sustainable rural community with a good mix of facilities, employment and homes to meet the needs of those who wish to live, work and visit the parish in years to come.

“
We want to ensure Englefield Village remains a vibrant and sustainable community.
 ”



⌘ A group of workers in the 1800s

The Estate’s vision included:

- Sensitively updating the Estate Yard to create new workspace for a relocated Estate Office, improved maintenance facilities and other employment.
- Providing a new community meeting space within the former Social Club building.
- A modest and sensitively designed car park to serve the school, local residents and visitors.

We are making excellent progress, and we have planning approval for all three projects. The conversion of the former Social Club to create a village hall has been completed and it is already hosting a range of activities, safe in the hands of a new management committee.



⌘ Pupils at Englefield Primary School

It is likely that work will be able to start in earnest on the Estate Yard in the spring. This involves the conservation of an important part of the village’s heritage, while also providing the opportunity for more people to work there, supporting local services and helping to maintain a diverse rural economy.

The Yard was once a hive of employment with a sawmill, joiner’s shop, blacksmith, wheelwright, and other associated trades and activities.

Today, it is also home to a small number of independent businesses, and the conversion will generate more space for other individuals and firms to join them in the heart of the village.

As that Select Committee says: “...the rural economy is as diverse, dynamic and vibrant – in places more so – than its urban counterpart. Rural businesses and communities also have a strong interdependency; where individual sectors are thriving or declining, this can have an impact across the board, be it on service delivery, prosperity or sustainability.”

A number of the existing buildings in the yard are no longer fully utilised, and the regeneration of the old sawmill and joinery shop will see the creation of a new Estate Office, meaning more of the Estate team will be based in the village once more. ⌘

Burghfield new homes

A proposal to deliver 100 new homes in Burghfield Common, 40 of them affordable, has been agreed in outline by West Berkshire Council.

The Estate has chosen Croudace, a Home Builders Federation Five-Star holder, to complete the project, based on a design code and building manual, drawn up alongside the masterplan.



The development was masterplanned by ADAM Architecture, the award-winning practice known for its work with the Duchy of Cornwall. The masterplan seeks to create a strong sense of community with open space at its heart, prioritising people over cars.

Edward Crookes, Estates Director, said: “The housing shortage is one of the greatest issues facing society today, and the Estate is playing its part to deliver high-quality affordable and open market homes.

“We chose to work with Croudace because we know they understand and share our vision for well-designed homes built to the highest standards at an important gateway to Burghfield Common.” ⌘

Out of the blocks!

Right across Britain the Covid-19 pandemic has presented a huge range of challenges to businesses of all shapes, sizes and sectors for well over 20 months.



✂ Guests at the 'welcome back' party (above and opposite)

At the De Beauvoir Block in London's Hackney district, the community of creative enterprises have worked hard to maintain momentum, keeping their businesses and morale buoyant.

This autumn, the Benyon Estate hosted a 'welcome back' party for all tenants and their teams who were thrilled to celebrate being together once again, firmly putting the buzz back into The Block.

The Block is home to an array of thriving businesses, including the headquarters for Alexa Chung's eponymous fashion label;



✂ Dedicated co-working space



“ After a very tough period for everyone, I can't begin to explain how excited the whole De Beauvoir Block team feels in witnessing the creative hub coming back to life.

”



✂ The new Studio hot-desking area

Bleach London, the DIY-hair colouring brand which opened its first US salon in LA this year; international fashion brand GANNI; and BAFTA-nominated animation studio The Line, whose clients include Gucci, Ubisoft, Virgin Media, and Doritos.

Estate Manager, Edward Benyon, said: "After a very tough period for everyone, I can't begin to explain how excited the whole De Beauvoir Block team feels in witnessing the creative hub coming back to life.

"I'm extremely proud of our tenants to have survived the challenges that Covid-19 has thrown at them. Not only that, but we also have many new members of The Block community, both as tenants and as members, showing the resilience of our creative industries."

The Block has seen enquiries for its space increase during 2021, leading to the Benyon Estate investing in a new reception area, new co-working and hot-desking space fit for a post-pandemic world, along with a revised membership offering.

"In response to what the local workforce tell us they need in a post-Covid world, we've made a major change to our membership packages.

"We now have three tiers of membership and an extra co-working space which is proving to be very popular. In addition, we've introduced day passes for the very first time, perfect for those who want a taster or are looking to join on a more casual basis."

Additional updates to The Block include secure bicycle storage and an online tenant portal, where tenants can book meeting rooms, pre-order food, connect with others and hear about upcoming events. ✂





Back in the spotlight



Like many other businesses operating in hospitality and events, we were very pleased to welcome-back clients this summer – and to see the results of a filming project from two years ago.

A major filming production that took place at Englefield House in 2019 finally hit the big screen this summer with the hit Disney movie *Cruella*.

Starring Emma Thompson and Emma Stone, the House doubled as the exterior for Hellman Hall, home to Thompson's ruthless fashion designer character, The Baroness.

The House was transported to a clifftop location through the power of computer-generated imagery (CGI), with the lodge gates offering a grand entrance, and the garden terrace providing the perfect terrain for the dalmatians' dramatic chase.



✂ *Rehabilitating soldiers in Englefield Gardens in World War 2*



✂ *US Attorneys General visited the House and grounds*

“
The role for the House as a convalescent home was particularly poignant.
”

In August, Englefield House was transformed into the setting for a new World War II series directed by Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks. *Masters of the Air* is the third in a WWII drama trilogy following *Band of Brothers* and *The Pacific*.

Based on Donald L Miller's book *Masters of the Air: America's Bomber Boys Who Fought the Air War Against Nazi Germany*, the series follows the US Eighth Air Force unit, known

as the 'Mighty Eighth', who bombed Berlin, Hanover, Leipzig, and Dresden and destroyed enemy targets including rail facilities and oil refineries, whilst engaging in air-to-air fighter combat.

Englefield House was portrayed as a convalescent home for wounded soldiers, with the Governor's Room transformed into a doctor's surgery. The role of the House is particularly poignant, given its history as a hospital for recovering servicemen in both world wars.

In the autumn, scenes for the DC Comics drama *Pennyworth* were filmed in the library. The Warner Bros series tells the story of Alfred Pennyworth prior to him becoming the butler for Bruce Wayne (alias 'Batman'). Alfred was formerly a special forces soldier in the British military who initially worked for Bruce Wayne's father, Thomas Wayne, in 1960s London.

Elsewhere on the Estate, we've welcomed back a number of corporate and charity events as well as some fantastic private functions.

In October, a delegation of US Attorneys General, visited the House and grounds before dinner in the Long Gallery. Their trip was part of a wider tour of UK and London venues but marked the first visit to Englefield House from overseas guests since the pandemic began.

The summer months saw a very successful clay shooting season. Working with Royal Berkshire Shooting School, we welcomed corporate and private groups for simulated clay shoot days which begin with breakfast in the Long Gallery and include four drives across the Estate, concluding with drinks in the garden and a traditional shoot lunch in the dining room. We were also pleased to host the Englefield 10k run in August which raised vital funds for the Thames Valley Air Ambulance. ✂



From fashion to film

Englefield House is not our only link with *Cruella*. Acclaimed milliner J Smith Esquire, a commercial tenant of the Benyon Estate, worked on the film creating the hand-draped turbans worn by Emma Thompson in her role as The Baroness.

Justin explained: "My job is to create a beautiful tool for the costume designer and the actor to help them embody the character. I worked with a talented wardrobe department led by Oscar-winning costume designer Jenny Beavan.

"For Emma Thompson's Baroness, I wanted shapes that could really speak for themselves that would help to tell the story of her character."

Justin began work on the turbans for *Cruella* two years before the film was released, a long wait from studio to screen.

"I love seeing the final production, it all becomes so much more than the sum of its parts. There is endless work that goes on behind the scenes that you don't think about when you see the film on screen...but that's all part of the magic of cinema."

“
My job is to create a beautiful
tool for the costume designer
and the actor to help them
embody the character.
”

In addition to film work, Justin has created hats and headpieces for fashion weeks and runways across the globe, his work has been sold in boutiques and renowned department stores worldwide, and he creates bespoke pieces for private commissions.

His work has adorned a wide range of famous heads, including Amanda Seyfried in *Pan*, Robert Downey Jr. in *Dolittle*, and he was principal milliner on *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*. But perhaps his most iconic piece was Angelina Jolie's magnificent horned headpieces for *Maleficent*. ✨

Events 2022

As we look ahead to 2022, the calendar is already filling up, with the highlight set to be our weekend of summer concerts in July, which has been postponed from summer 2021 due to Covid restrictions.

From Friday 22nd to Sunday 24th July 2022, we will welcome thousands of guests to enjoy three nights of live music.



On Saturday, we'll welcome Boy George & Culture Club and very special guests Lulu, Kim Wilde, and Gabrielle – plus DJ Fat Tony will be getting the party started.

Last Night of the Heritage Proms with Russell Watson will take place on the Sunday. The show will feature the Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra conducted by David Arnold, as well as composer, arranger and producer Mike Moran, coloratura soprano Christina Johnston, and very special guests The NHS Choir.

Please visit our website for booking details.

We hope to be able to announce many more events for 2022 very soon.



Inspiring the next generation

From learning about the benefits of gardening and growing their own produce, to producing renewable energy, more than 1,100 youngsters from across Berkshire gathered at the Englefield Estate for a two-day education event.



Schools Days made a welcome return in 2021, with over 1,100 children from 25 schools in Berkshire attending an outdoor classroom experience in food, farming and how the countryside works.

This year's theme was sustainability, and sessions covered how the Estate and its partners produce food and timber and provide places to live, work and relax, whilst caring for the environment, conserving the landscape and historic buildings, and investing in the future.

"You could see the excitement on the children's faces being able to go out on trips again," explained Dr Liz Mattison, the Estate's Community and Education Officer.

"There's real value in getting that tangible connection between what you're learning about in the classroom and visiting the places, touching the stone and smelling the flowers. Plus, there are all the memories that are created as part of this.

"For this year's Schools Days, we did as much as we could within the restrictions and tried to make it as interactive as possible, whilst prioritising everybody's safety and wellbeing.

"As well as members of the Estate team, we had a range of charities, businesses and organisations acting as 'teachers', providing expertise in everything from animal lifecycles, to caring for soils, to construction and building."

Reading and District Beekeepers Association, Berkshire Moth Group, Butterfly Conservation Upper Thames Branch and the National Gamekeepers' Organisation Educational Trust offered sessions on animal lifecycles, wildlife, habitats and conservation.

Teaching the children more about farming and food production were the Estate's gardeners who worked alongside volunteers from HBH Farming, Newbury and District Agricultural Society and the John Simonds Trust. The Estate's forestry team and Oakey Tree Services talked about why trees are so important and how they are cared for throughout their lifetime, while the Estate carpenters provided information on timber production and demonstrated how timber is used in construction.

A key focus for the 2021 event was health and wellbeing, with sessions from Life's Little Bugs, Hampshire County Council Countryside Service and Small Fire Big Adventure on mindfulness, positive thinking, and outdoor skills.

As Liz explained; "Following the pandemic, prioritising the mental health of children and adults alike has been more important than ever and we were pleased to use this opportunity to help raise awareness of mental wellbeing among the pupils and their teachers." ❄



❄ Thank you letters from Silchester CE Primary School



✂ *A-Level Biology students from Reading Blue Coat School (above and opposite)*

✂ *Woolhampton Church of England Primary School learn about life on the Estate in World War Two*

“Kick sampling” for freshwater invertebrates from two different water courses was carried out by A-Level Biology students from Reading Blue Coat School. Samples from the River Pang, a chalk stream next to farmland, and a shady stream running through Estate woodland, were compared to understand the influence of the surrounding landscape and the water chemistry on the invertebrates.

In the Pang, mayfly larvae, freshwater shrimp and leeches were found, whereas in the woodland stream it was predominantly freshwater shrimp, fly larvae and worms. The total number of species did not vary significantly but the type of species, or community composition did.



“We expected the water bodies to be home to different species, but it was something we had never sampled or mapped ourselves,” Liz explained.

“Visits like this not only give the students opportunity for practical learning to support their studies, but it has also fed into the Estate’s knowledge of biodiversity in the area that we can then explore further as we need to.

Elsewhere on the Estate, Masters students from the University of Reading, studying Rural Land and Business Management, were able to understand the wider context of Estate management during a visit to Englefield.

As Liz explained: “There are multiple business enterprises and associated forms of environmental land management on the Estate, including arable and grassland habitats, rivers and streams, heathland restoration after mineral extraction, woodland creation and tree health. Each of these require a different approach, but equally have to complement each other – you can’t look at each area, or carry out work, in isolation.

“Introducing our activities and the team of staff who work together provided a great overview at the start of the students’ Masters degree course. We had an excellent discussion about opportunities and challenges, from day-to-day decision-making to the influence of international economics and policy.” ✂

Training future leaders



Careers in countryside management can be very rewarding but are often not widely promoted in schools and colleges. Englefield Estate is committed to raising awareness of a range of jobs through Countryside Days for Schools and other educational trips, and also offers apprenticeships and trainee posts.

Forestry Roots trainee Joe Western began his placement with the Englefield Estate in September 2021.

Growing up in Suffolk, Joe spent a lot of time outdoors with his family and knew from a young age that he wanted to pursue a career in forestry.

The challenge that he faced was finding a way into the industry with no prior experience, which is when he discovered the Forestry Roots programme.

Funded by the Royal Forestry Society (RFS), Forestry Roots matches college and university leavers with employers to enable students to pursue their career aspirations in forestry and woodland management. Each year, the RFS helps students to secure placements across the country, supporting future foresters.

“Forestry Roots is really good for people like me who are keen on a career in forestry, but don’t have a route into the industry,” Joe explained.

“It’s an invaluable experience. I’m starting to learn the whole picture of what the role entails, from woodland planning and securing grants to planting and felling. The Estate has a strong focus on conservation too and I’m pleased to be learning how to do things sustainably.

“It’s completely hands on, I am learning so many practical skills and I feel like a useful part of the team already.”

Joe’s placement will run until September 2022, and he has packed a lot into his first few months, including learning how to use a forwarder – a machine used to pick up felled timber from within the forest – and has received training in felling as part of the Estate’s sustainable timber cycle.

At the other end of the cycle, he has been involved with planting and guarding saplings to ensure they are protected from wildlife.

With the Estate often supplying timber and products for film, Joe has also helped to fulfil the briefs set by production companies. “For film sets, they will be looking for a really specific piece or an exact look of tree, so it is an exciting challenge to try and deliver that,” Joe added.

“It has been a real learning curve so far. I do get frustrated when I might not get something first time, and I do compare myself to the rest of the team, but I need to remember that they have been doing this for many years and I can learn so much from their expertise.

“It is both challenging and rewarding, but I am thoroughly enjoying how much I am learning.” ✂



✂ Forestry Roots trainee Joe Western at work on the Estate



A flourishing career

In 2020, we welcomed Caroline Jones as an apprentice gardener and, upon completing her course in Easter 2022, we are pleased that Caroline will be joining the gardening team full-time.

Working at Englefield four days per week, with one day per week at Sparsholt College, Caroline's apprenticeship covers all aspects of practical horticulture, from formal borders to woodland areas, as well as learning plant profiles, pest and disease and understanding the importance of health and safety.

Sue Broughton, Head Gardener, said: "Caroline really impressed us from day one being keen to learn and having great attention to detail. She has been a really valuable

member of the team over the past year and we are thrilled to have her join us full time.

"She has got stuck in to every aspect of managing the gardens, and has had particular success with our main rose beds which are flourishing and tending to the kitchen garden."

Caroline said: "I really enjoy the variety of work that I can get involved with here, from planting and clearing to looking after the woodland and stream. I get to experience everything in one place. Sue and the garden team have given me the confidence to give things a try and learn for myself, particularly in the formal beds where I've focussed a lot of my time. I've learnt so much from their expertise and I'm so pleased to be joining the team full-time, it's a brilliant place to work." ❧



❧ Head Gardener Sue Broughton chooses flowers for a service of thanksgiving

Remembering His Royal Highness, The Duke of Edinburgh

Back in April this year we sent our condolences to the Royal Family and paid tribute to the Duke of Edinburgh, recognising his many decades of loyal service to the Queen and Country.

We also reflected on the Duke's great passion for the countryside and how he supported and inspired many generations of young people.

Photographs from the Englefield Estate archive show the Duke visiting Englefield on April 6th 1955, on the occasion of the Practical Examinations of the Land Agents' Society when he inspected livestock and crops and met the late Sir Henry Benyon and members of the Society.

The garden team contributed flowers and foliage for a service of thanksgiving for the life and service of the Duke, which took place at Reading Minster on Saturday 16th October. ❧



New Starters

Englefield Estate

Matt Butler has joined the maintenance team based at the Estate Yard. He is a carpenter by trade and will be doing a wide variety of work for the Estate.

Forestry Roots trainee **Joe Western** began his placement with the Englefield Estate in September 2021. His placement, funded by Royal Forestry Society, is part of a scheme to inspire future foresters.

Englefield House

Over the past 12 months, the House has welcomed two new cleaners, **Susan Gower** and **Jasmine Anderson** and more recently **Tadas Bernadisius** as the new caretaker.

Benyon Estate

Duncan Urquhart joined as maintenance supervisor in March, seeing him tend to maintenance requirements across the Estate.

Louis Hammonds joined the De Beauvoir Block team as receptionist in June 2021 and works closely with The Block manager on the day-to-day running of the space.

Glenmazeran

James Edgar joined the team in Scotland as Beat Keeper in June 2021, working closely with the Head Keeper managing the 8,000 acre Estate.

Congratulations to **Bianca Christie**, Benyon Estate residential lettings manager, who welcomed a baby girl called Edyn this September. The Benyon Estate is pleased to have **Laila Baxter** on board covering Bianca's maternity leave.

Estates Director, **Edward Crookes**, completed The Prince of Wales' Business and Sustainability Programme this autumn, designed and delivered by the University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership.



Farewells

Englefield Estate

In October, **James Holbrook-Bull** moved on from Englefield to a prestigious new role as Head of Property Management at Windsor with the Crown Estate. Edward Crookes shared: "During his seven years at Englefield, James has played a key role in the day-to-day management of the Estate and his hard work and dedication has been greatly appreciated by us all. We wish James, Kerry and the boys the very best with their exciting move."

Everyone at the Englefield Estate would like to wish **Andy and Laura Allen** of Englefield Stores & Tea Rooms and their family all the very best for their future. They have been an integral part of the community for many years, and we'd like to thank them for their dedication to the village.



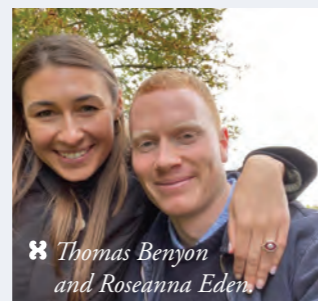
✂ Andy, Laura and family

Benyon Estate

After almost 20 years at the Benyon Estate, maintenance supervisor **John Bell** retired in March 2021. Edward Benyon reflects: "His knowledge of the properties and the tenants was and still is unrivalled and was an enormous help to me. John is a man whose work ethic, courtesy, sense of humour and sense of duty will be long remembered by not only those on the Benyon Estate but also the wider community of De Beauvoir."

Congratulations

Our congratulations to **Harry Benyon** and his wife **Sarah** who were married at Sarah's childhood home in Yorkshire in April 2021.



✂ Thomas Benyon and Roseanna Eden



✂ Thomas Whitby

In October, wonderful news came with the engagement of **Thomas Benyon** and **Roseanna Eden**.

Steven Whitby, buildings surveyor and manager at the Benyon Estate, welcomed a baby boy called Thomas in June. Congratulations to Steven and all his family.

In memory

We fondly remember **Gloria Sleep**, who worked for many years as House Administrator and PA to Sir William and Lady Benyon. Richard Benyon reflects: "When Gloria came to the Estate in 1996, she enriched all our lives in a way far greater than we could ever have imagined from the narrow boundaries of her original job. She became a part of our family and an extraordinary force for good in this village.

"Gloria loved St Mark's Church, she would involve herself in much more than just Sunday services and she was very much committed to the Englefield Schools Days. She was dedicated to her family, particularly her great-grandson Alfie, and the children of the village will remember her ever-present biscuit tin for them to enjoy. Working at the Duchess of Kent Hospice was something she loved, and I know she was loved by the amazing team there. Her views were always worth listening to, she was fun, full of stories, kind, but also very wise."



We pay tribute to farmer **Charles Kolosowski** of Chitty Farm, Silchester who died in January 2021, aged 72. Charles took on the tenancy in 1985, rearing beef and sheep, later converting the farm to organic status in 2001. Despite living with Multiple Sclerosis for almost 40 years, Charles and his wife Janet managed the farm, with their son Ben running day to day operations.

Ben describes his father as a "tough, resilient" man who loved horseracing, shooting and cruises. Ben continues to manage Chitty Farm, where he lives with his fiancée Monika, their son Isaac and his mum Janet.

