

Hustwaite Snapshot



*Telling it as it is - on a Flower oMay footpath tree
Photo: RW*

Hustwaite Local History Society
Hustwaite Then and Now
(the millennium book)
5
from the Village Shop

Easingwold Taxis
07763 234080

Hustwaite Newsletter

Edition 1

7

2

8

preparations under way for the May elections

Jointly Funded by Hustwaite Parish Council
ITS TIME TO MAKE
the Village Hall Committee
YOUR STAND

March 2007

Ursula Duncan

Are you willing to do some valuable community service for 4 years involving six meetings a year in the village hall and the opportunity to make a difference in the community of Hustwaite?

This question was discussed at this weeks meeting of Hustwaite Parish Council. If you are interested in standing for election, you should get a nomination form from the Clerk, Barrie Ward, on 868145. Send it in by 4th April Your Parish Council needs you. Thats all!

If Hambleton District Authority disappears and we get the proposed Unitary Authority, then Parish Councils will be even more important in maintaining local (and precious) democracy.

A strong active representation at this local level is good for Hustwaite Present at this meeting were: Carol Fenwick (Chair), Barrie Ward (Clerk), Peter Davison, Elaine Smith, Michael Graham and Ursula Duncan. District Councillor Percy Featherstone represented Hambleton District Council.

School Run Traffic

Councillors agreed the proposal made at the last meeting to set up a small working party to research the feasibility of a set down / turning area in the field designated for recreational purposes next door to the school. Parish Councillor Peter Davison will be part of this small group Hustwaite is to have a bus shelter. And two new seats for the Village Green! When choosing the new seats for the village green it was decided that if it were available, then wood from sustainable forests (Forest Stewardship Council Certified) would be a first choice. Thus Hustwaite Parish Council would be in tune with the spirit of our times, i.e.conservaion and

Deadline for your material in the next Newsletter: Sunday 13th May

Husthwaite Newsletter

Editor: Richard Wood
Falcon Cottage The Nookin
01347 868247
tykescript@aol.com
www.husthwaitevillage.co.uk

Next Edition: late May

Deadline for your writing: Sunday 13th May
FOR YOUR DIARY 2007

Friday 23rd March 8pm Scottish Dancing - Village Hall
Wednesday 28th March 2.00-7.00m CANDO Exhibition - Village Hall
Thursday 29th March 10am Community Easter Service - School
Saturday 31st March 10.30am-noon Parish Plan Launch - Village Hall
Friday 13th April 8pm Scottish Dancing - Village Hall
Saturday 21st April Gardening Club Plant Sale - Village Hall
Weds 25th-Sat 28th April *Importance of Being Earnest* - Galtres Centre
Friday 27th April 7.15pm PCC: Faberg & Imperial Russia - Village Hall
Wednesday 9th May 12noon and 1.00pm Soup n Pud - Methodist Church
Friday 11th May 8pm Scottish Dancing - Village Hall
Saturday 19th May 10.30-12noon Coffee and Chat - Methodist Church
Friday 15th June 8pm Scottish Dancing - Village Hall
Saturday 16th June 5.30pm FOHS Hog Roast/Ceilidh - School
Sunday 24th June Treasure Hunt - Village Hall

Writing in Husthwaite

After the appeal for *Newsletter* reporters in the last edition, it was great to be contacted by Explorer with his offer to write a regular walkers and cyclists column. Explorer prefers to remain anonymous at this stage. The *Newsletter* is allowing him to do this because we are thrilled to have his offer, in spite of our policy that every piece of writing is accredited. Its important that our readers know who a writer is, so that they can weigh up any viewpoints or slants put into the script.

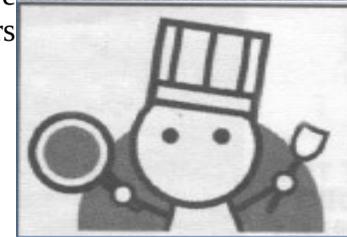
It was a pity for all you other budding writers that you failed to make contact because one of you could have had the privilege, which fell to me, of walking across the hills to speak with Nigel Graham at the Newburgh Estate Office. Im sure youll be fascinated by what he says in the centre pages of this *Newsletter*.

Taylor Made

Husthwaites quality caterers

*specialists in cold buffets
menus to suit all budgets*

Weddings Christenings Funerals
Anniversaries Functions



Debbie Taylor 01347 868576

Anne Marie 01347 868282

07986 925653

Scottish Dancing in Husthwaite

**Come and join us for a few reels and jigs
and the occasional Strathspey !**

We meet once a month, usually on a Friday night,

8pm 10pm in Husthwaite Village Hall.

**All the dances are called and walked through, so the dancing is suitable
for young and old, fit and unfit, beginners and more experienced dancers
alike.**

Just bring a pair of soft shoes and a drink for the half-time break.

Nominal charge to cover the cost of the hall only.

Future dates :

Friday 23rd February 8pm

Friday 23rd March 8pm

Friday 20th April 8pm

Friday 11th May 8pm

Friday 15th June 8pm

The younger generation, Hushwaite Primary School pupils, speak out

Lets Cool It

Under Water by Lauren Jeffrey

Under water there are lots of different types.
Deep dark, cold seas and coral reefs.
We change these beautiful reefs and cold regions.
Its not a game, its for real we need to help.
Oil is going in, global warming.
Creatures of the sea dying.
Lying,
On the sea bed.
Confusion for sea life.
Swimming where its not safe.
All because of us, but we can change,
And help the
Under water life!

Global Warming by Kerry Barker

The world is getting hotter.
So hot it makes you totter!
Its gone up two degrees already.
Why cant people make it steady?
All they need to do is turn down their electricity,
Or turn off their computer.
It needs to cool down maybe as cool as Pluto!
Maybe we will boil or burn black-to-death.
Maybe all will be left of us will be cinders and dangerous gas!
We need to help..

Litter by Melissa Simpson

Lots of people chuck litter in waters,
In the water animals get stuck,
Trying to get out,
Tail, flapping,
Everything moving,
Rubbish everywhere.

Hushwaite Parish Plan Finished At Last - Or Is It?

Peter Davison

The journey to produce a Parish Plan - just returned from the printers - began a little over a year ago. The Parish Council took a bold decision to go ahead with this initiative, not quite knowing what would be the outcome. A Steering Group of ten volunteers was formed in February 2006, and from the outset every effort has been made to involve the whole community in meaningful consultation. This has been achieved primarily through the Photographic Project, a Consultation Launch, an extensive questionnaire and the recent Final Village Consultation in January. All these events have provided opportunities for everyone in the village to express their ideas and opinions on what should comprise the Parish Plan. The Distribution Launch on Saturday 31st March, when finished copies will be handed out, brings us to the final stage of this process. Or does it? Although there is a justifiable sense of achievement in having completed the Plan, it leads us into new challenges - delivering the ideas, aspirations and priorities which have been agreed. In many ways, the real task is about to begin. The Steering Group has now met its remit, and the Parish Council will formally adopt the Plan and assume overall responsibility for implementation. It is likely that small focus groups will be established to assist in addressing the challenges identified in the Action Plan. Incidentally, there are no fewer than thirty two priority issues, of which eight have been classified as Key Issues. Clearly, there is much to be done but with continuing support from the community a significant impact should be made over the next few years. Reports which monitor and review progress will be presented at least annually. Finally, it is important to express sincere thanks to everyone in the village who has contributed to a document of which we can be well pleased. Hopefully, it will help us value even more the many delightful features of the village and provide us with a corporate vision of how Hushwaite can become an even better place for everyone.

Peter Davison is Chairman of the Parish Plan Steering Group and a member of Hushwaite Parish Council

Village Hall Committee completes its grants applications

N ow We Wait Again

Richard Wood

We have completed the grant application stage for the first phase of the Village Hall refurbishment project. It has been a painstaking process and a steep learning curve.

Making the Halls frontage match 21st century community expectations is a large and expensive job. We have asked for grant support from five organisations. Each of them has required detailed information presented in different forms. Hence the length of time before we get so much as a glimpse of a JCB or a bricklayer.

At this stage I have no intention of doing a Dome or a Wembley or an Olympics, so you will look in vain for s attached to the work outlined below. If you want to talk money, the monthly Village Hall Committee meeting studies the Treasurers Report, and you are welcome to attend. It would be only fair to advise you that if you do so you are unlikely to emerge without being given a share of the work load currently being carried by the Committee.

These are the details of our applications. We are talking, remember, only about the front area. The new extension, the roof work and the internal facilities are all future phases of our project (details on the next page).

Garfield Weston Foundation - (i) retaining wall to the roadside (ii) retaining wall to the northern boundary (iii) replace the existing retaining wall behind the kitchen and toilets.

Awards for All - (i) install road kerbs (ii) re-surface the area

The remainder of the work is grouped as a single project to be financed by the North Yorkshire Hambleton Area Committee, Hambleton District Council and the Police Disposal of Property Fund. Husthwaite Village Hall has to contribute 15%. (i) re-locate the existing drainage to the front of the

Hall (ii) make a connection to the roadside drain (iii) build a new access to the Billiard Room entrance, (iv) build a new access to the Main Hall. Each of these accesses will have double-sided steps.

We have jumped through a lot of paper exercise hoops for these grant awarding bodies. Hard through this has been, it has also been rewarding. At the end of these exercises your Village Hall is going to be well equipped for its role in 21st century life. These are some of the features we now proudly possess: a Child Protection Policy, a Criminal Records Bureau Disclosures procedure, a business plan, an upgraded all-purpose licence, new fire procedures and enhanced insurance coverage.

Id like to tell you that its all plain sailing now. Alas not! We are into another

Walks from Husthwaite - 1 the first in a series of local walks and bike rides by Explorer

The first walk that anyone new to the village (or to walking) might choose is a favourite of many and without much effort takes you to the awesome viewpoint of Beacon Banks. On one side you can see the distant Pennine hills of the Yorkshire Dales and across to Coxwold, the White Horse, Byland Abbey and Ampleforth, while on the other you may spot Ferrybridge power station more than 40 miles away, and the towers of York Minster. This circular walk of around three miles should take no more than an hour or two, and in theory can be done on horseback or with a mountain bike though this may involve dismounting in places.

At the top of the village, near where Kays Bank joins Malton Street and Gibbet Hill, is the driveway up to Lists House and Beacon Banks (signed bridleway to Newburgh Priory). Straight on up through gates you soon reach the ridge and the white stone trig point once used by Ordnance Survey mappers. Near here was the site of the beacon, one of a line stretching across the nation and lit, for example, to spread news quickly of the Spanish Armada.

Along the edge of the woods, High Leys Farm comes into view. Go right towards the large tree, a sign confirms you are on cycle route 65, and follow this narrow road up to the crossroads. Continue straight across and soon down the hill is another crossroads. Here turn R along a track, and down as it narrows and passes through trees to the stream and bridge. The bridleway continues up the field along the hedge, but near the top of the field dont follow the hedge to the left but go straight on through the middle gate, and then to the L of a tall coniferous hedge, through bridleway gates with The Old Lodge to the R. The last part of the walk is a narrow path on the side of The Old Lodge to the R. Turn L and soon you will reach

*the path descends through
Garbutt Ghyll Farm*



Bluff, Bluff and Double Bluff!

Sarah Aspinall

Much fun and merriment was had by all at the Friends of Husthwaite Schools Call my Bluff wine-tasting quiz last Saturday. The esteemed panel of Brian Watt, Colin Burn and David Aspinall, all resplendent in their dress suits and bow ties (Frank Muir would have approved), was on sparkling form and they were all utterly convincing in their bluffs judging by some of the scoring! A wide variety of quality wines was offered to suit every taste including some rather unusual ones to fool the testers eg a white pinot noir and a German red. The Californian Sauvignon Blanc and the Gran Reserva Rjoja were my own favourites.

Our MC Nicola Cuthbert was also enjoying herself and kept the evening rattling on with just a bit of gentle leg-pulling here and there! The team of waitresses (in suitably short skirts) worked very hard too thanks to Vikki Nixon, Sue Smith and Susan Burn and to our bar staff Allison Sheard and Nick Cuthbert. Thanks also to Ann Smith the cheese lady from Easingwold market who provided a lovely cheese selection which everyone enjoyed with lots of bread at the interval.

One very impressive team (Alun, Richard, Martin and Sophie) got all six wines right well done to them. They won the 20 prize which they very kindly donated back to the school a splendid end to a splendid evening.

The quiz was very well supported by the village and we are really grateful to everyone who came along. Thank you.

PS: Date for your diary: 16 June 2007- hog roast and ceilidh with Byland Rigg at the school. More details next time.

April and May at the Methodist Church

Linda Davison

Coffee and Chat

There will be no Coffee and Chat in April as the date clashes with the Gardening Club Plant Sale. However, we will be open for business as usual on 19th May from 10.30am to 12noon, serving free coffee and biscuits.

Soup n Pud

The last of these light lunches before the summer break will take place on Wednesday 9th May, with two sittings - 12noon and 1.00pm. As usual, if you could let us know you are intending to come, it would help us in deciding on quantities of food. To book your place, please ring Margaret Duffield (868192) or Jackie Earley (868504) or myself (868449) by the previous Saturday.

Husthwaite Parish Council

Michael Moves On

Ursula Duncan

Michael Graham has given in his resignation after five years as a Husthwaite Parish Councillor.

Michael told this months Council meeting that he had very much enjoyed this time and would maintain his interest in local affairs. In view of his increased responsibilities at work and also travel commitments, however, he felt he had been unable to contribute as much as he had wished in recent months. He thought it better to leave the vacancy open to someone else. Councillors thanked Michael for his valuable contributions over the years. He will be very much missed.

Anyone who might be interested in coming forward is welcome to ring Michael (who is still a Parish Councillor until May 3rd) on 868216 and find out what being a Parish Councillor has involved.

CANDO Exhibition

CANDO is a partnership which includes English Nature, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency , AONB (Howardian Hills) , North Yorkshire Moors National Park, Local Authorities and other agencies. CANDO, which stands for Cultural and Natural Development Opportunity, is holding at exhibition in Husthwaite Village Hall 2.00pm to 700pm on Wednesday 28th March.

The aim of CANDO is to improve the landscape, increase bio-diversity and make links between culture and wild life that create economic and social benefits for local communities. This exhibition shows the proposals so far and includes the villages and communities on the boundaries of the National Park. Lottery bids will be made on the basis of some of the things you will be able to see and comment on at the exhibition.

T

reasure Hunt Promises Another New Route

Stephen Barker

Our annual Treasure Hunt and Barbecue will take place on the afternoon of Sunday June 24th.

Another new route has been identified via public footpaths and bridleways which have in the main not been walked over on any of our previous hunts. In recent years we have established a relaxed Sunday afternoons social occasion for everyone to enjoy.

So make a note in your diaries and make sure you are free. You may also

Hustwaites Howard Gets the Stamp of Approval Roy Leverton

When Pauline and Howard Brown moved to Hustwaite in 2003 to escape the and stress of London living they expected to have a couple of years of reflection to recharge their batteries. They joined Coxwold Tennis Club and developed a reputation throughout the area as players of merit. However Howards reputation as a creative graphic designer soon intruded into their rural idyll.

History caught up with him. In 1991 he had been invited to participate in a competitive bid to design a set of Royal Mail stamps to celebrate the bicentenary of the Ordnance Survey and was subsequently awarded the contract. Since then his talents have continued to be recognized by the company with further designs being accepted for a succession of subjects including Marine Timekeepers, Football Legends, Weather, Christmas, The World Cup, Extreme Endeavours and Ice Age Animals. In recognition of his work for the Royal Mail he was awarded the Phillips Gold Medal for his contribution to British postage stamp design in 1994.

This year we celebrate the bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade and Howard was given the opportunity to design a set of six stamps to mark this occasion. His designs were accepted and the selected six stamps feature important characters involved in the abolition movement - William Wilberforce, Ouloudah Equiano, Granville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson, Hannah More and Ignatius Sancho. Abolition has great relevance to Yorkshire as Wilberforce was MP for Hull whilst Ignatius Sancho, a former slave, corresponded regularly with the Rev Laurence Sterne former vicar of Coxwold who resided at Shandy Hall.

First Day covers and presentation packs of the abolition designs will be sent to subscribers imminently whilst the stamps go on national distribution from March 22.

Authors at Hustwaite School

Howard is already working on his next design project but dont tell anybody as its a secret! Ssssh.

Maggie Wilson

Hustwaite School has been extremely lucky to have been chosen as one of only nine schools from the *whole* of England to take part in a unique writing research project. It is being run by NAWE (National Association of Writers in Education) and is being funded by The Paul Hamlyn Trust.

The project involves the placement of a range of writers in each school over three years an author a term for three years! Each writer works with the same children over 3 days, sharing the writing craft so that a piece of work is polished.

The school gets to choose the authors and last term we were visited by Lisa Chaney whose biography of JM Barrie has just been published. She worked with the children both in school and at Shandy Hall. This term were awaiting Craig Bradley, a performance poet from the midlands who will give us the skills to both write and perform poetry

Reminiscences of Hustwaite Angela Ovenston

The latest booklet covering the period 1950s - 1970s has sold well with only a few copies still available. Due to demand, more copies of the first booklet covering the 1930s-1950s will soon be available.

We are now thinking about topping and tailing the 20th Century so if anyone has photos or cuttings from about 1900 to the 1930s or would like to make a contribution (written, oral or photographic) to the period 1970s to 2000 please contact me (868347) or Stephen Barker (868259).

Hustwaite and District Gardening Club

Mike Wells

The Annual General Meeting had to be postponed because the 8th February was the day we had a winter this year! We will now have the AGM on 12th April, immediately followed by a talk from Jan Hoyland on the gardens of Nunnington and Rievaulx.

The March meeting was well-attended for a return visit from Stuart Dixon, speaking on The Four Seasons. He showed slides of the derelict farmhouse and garden, adjacent to the River Trent, that he and his family had moved into some 17 years ago. From a property with one habitable room and a tap, but no garden, Stuart has developed a beautiful garden crammed full of unusual perennials. He invited the club to visit it, and after seeing the slides, we were keen to do so.

The Plant Sale will be on 21st April. For those of you who have been living on another planet and have missed this ever popular Hustwaite event, imagine the cross between a church bazaar plant stall and a shoal of piranhas in a feeding frenzy. Now think of it happening in the Village Hall on a Saturday morning, starting at 10 o'clock sharp. You're nearly there. but dont be late!

Walking on the Moon

Vickki Nixon

Just a reminder that on 19th May this year I will be doing the Breast Cancer Moonwalk in London.

It is 26 miles, which for someone who only ever walks the dog round the village is going to be a challenge.

Fabulous Faberg

Roy Leverton

It was following a trip to the Kings Road in London with her father that Diana Leeper, then only ten years old, developed her abiding love and appreciation of the dextrous and beautiful works of Carl Faberg. Whilst visiting one of the many antique dealers there she was shown a small, carved mouse by the master, which captivated her.

Some years later whilst walking on the Yorkshire Moors, again with her father, he told her of his meeting with a giant of a man who turned out to be an uncle of the Tsar of Russia.

These two events triggered a life-long desire to study the history of both Faberg

and Imperial Russia and she purchased her first book on the subject in 1954. Since then she has collected an extensive library of books, illustrations, memorabilia and items relating to that era.

Carl Faberg was originally a goldsmith who over the years extended his expertise to include precious stones and jewellery with his renowned eggs achieving fame because of the Russian practice of presenting decorated eggs at Easter time, a practice much loved by both Russian and British aristocracy. Today his name is revered worldwide and is always newsworthy.

When Diana and her husband, Ralph, moved to Hushwaite in 1981 she was invited to talk on the subject to the Hushwaite branch of the Womens Institute. This proved so popular that she was then invited to speak at a Ladies Luncheon Club in York at the Gimcrack Rooms. Following that her fame spread and she has been in regular demand to speak at functions across the North of England and East Anglia to audiences ranging in size from 15 to 400.

It is with great pleasure therefore that the St. Nicholas Churchs PCC can announce that Diana has agreed to speak in the Village Hall on Friday, April 27 at 7.15pm. Her presentation is entitled Faberg and Imperial Russia and she will be delighted to answer any questions that arise. The evening will not only be stimulating and enlightening but a social occasion with a glass of wine being served together with zakuska. Tickets, 6 each, can be obtained from any member of the PCC but it is recommended you purchase early as a sell-out is expected.

Hushwaite Burns Supper

Philip Hewitson

The second Hushwaite Burns Supper at the Village Hall was a culmination of several months of Scottish country dancing practice, which now came together in music and polished (well sort of) movement and in complex routines undertaken with almost military precision and style.

A champagne reception greeted guests as they arrived and then Malcolm Wride was piped in and Presented the Haggis. Will Mowatt gave a resounding and animated recital of the Address to the Haggis followed by Brian Watt, who spoke affectionately in proposing a toast to the Immortal Memory of Robert Burns. Malt whiskey was provided on each table for the toasts and this superbly complemented the haggis, mashed neeps and tatties while also helping the non-Scots among us follow the more difficult passages of the Address to the Haggis.

Andrew Black, wearing a kilt, gave a hilarious speech before proposing the toast to The Lassies. He read from a prepared text, pointing out that at only 8 a ticket, he certainly wasn't going to bother learning it! Mary Hill, wearing a tartan sash that cleverly echoed the tablecloth, replied on behalf of The Lassies. In an equally amusing speech, she reminded the men in the audience about the Rules

rules and is never wrong. No man can be wrong, then it is the mans fault. If a woman is wrong, then it is the mans fault. If a man is thoughtful, then it is the mans fault. If a woman is thoughtful, then it is the mans fault. If a man is thoughtful, then it is the mans fault. If a woman is thoughtful, then it is the mans fault.

The dancing that followed the dinner was a highlight, continuing on until after midnight, concluding with a traditional Burns Night Lang.

Thanks are due to Sheila and Will for organising such an excellent evening and to all who patiently took us through each dance. Special thanks for calling the steps for



Mary and Lawrie Hill - dancing the Burns Night away

The Eye in the Sky Looks Down on the Meadow Edge

Richard Wood

in conversation with Nigel Graham, Newburgh Estate Manager

On the farms and in the fields around our homes, change is happening at a bewildering pace. I asked Nigel Graham what we should look for in our



Nigel told me, is the absence of the sugar beet. In response, the European Commission has ordered the closure of the sugar beet factory at Newark and the closure of our nearest factory at Newark and the closure of sugar beet from the Plain of York. Nigel Graham, Estate office, and he explained to me the changes in the modern farming world. He said that farmers intersperse it between growths of cereals, oilseed rape, and so on. What we will see them do is increase the use of protein crops used as animal feed. Livestock farming is on the decline and it is being done so badly. Supermarkets use it as a loss

There is some hope in that oil seed rape produces very high grade oil. It is used in jet engines and now its use is being extended to the production of bioethanol. This could be the saviour of our local farmers. By 2010 it is planned that 15% of petrol will be bioethanol. However, its not necessarily as bright a picture as that. Bioethanol factories are being developed on Merseyside, Teesside and at Immingham. All are ports, so well have to wait and see whether our farmers are competing to sell their rape (and their wheat, by the way) against dumped imports from abroad. Unfortunately, these factories cant distinguish between Russian and Yorkshire crops. There will other new and surprising sights in our fields. Look out for miscanthus. Its growing in a field at the junction of the A19 and the A168 outside Thirsk, Nigel said. Its tall with a sharp leaf, a bit like overgrown pampus grass. They bale it and lead it to Drax Power Station, where they burn it as a renewable fuel. Its expensive to grow and might not be the answer, since two companies specialising in it have already gone bust.

Growth in the use of woodchip boilers is going to impact on the countryside. Ampleforth College is putting one in. Ryedale Council are looking at heating Malton swimming pool with one. They tick all the boxes of the Governments renewable energy policy and the Kyoto Treaty requirements. There will be a market for farmers to bring neglected woodland back into production. Birch, for example, is a quick-growing wood that can crop every 18-20 years. Weve been hacking it back. Now its time has come. Its going to be worthwhile for a farmer to look after their woodland.

Farmers have been encouraged to get involved in Defras Entry Level and Higher Level Schemes (explained in an earlier *Newsletter*). Here you will see other obvious changes to the local landscape,said Nigel. Europe and the British Government put 1.54bn into agriculture in 2006, and the public perception is that farmers must pay back in environmental and animal welfare terms. An Entry Level farm, for example, attracts 30 per hectare and must cross-comply by leaving 2-metre meadow margins at the edges of cropped fields, 6-metre margins along watercourses. These margins cannot be sprayed. They will become habitats for protected species, such as brown hare, grey partridge, tree sparrow, skylark. Farmers will be controlling noxious weeds (e.g. ragwort) and pests. They cant burn straw any more. Huge amounts of it are already being transported west, along the A66 into Cumbria. There is talk of straw- burners, using straw as fuel, and the use of straw bales as insulation. Newburgh sells straw locally to livestock farmers.

I was amazed to learn from Nigel that an eye in the sky is used to enforce the new regulations - a satellite operating as a countryside CCTV. It can count sheep, acreages of potatoes and spot if vehicles are driven along the meadow edges.

What are the prospects for North Yorkshires family farms? I asked. There is no doubt that the big farms are the ones that prosper, Nigel told me. They have the economy of scale. They are ultra-efficient, with bigger fields, bigger tractors, bigger drills, bigger combines. A farmer can sell a cow at York Market and it changes hands three times, each dealer taking his profit, before the meat arrives on a plate. Its only large scale farmers that can compete in this national and international trade.

The small farmers are diversifying. There are locals who are thriving by trading direct to the customer. They produce a top quality product. They add value to it. They sell at at the Farmers Market or direct to restaurants or from the farm door. If they have to, they take it to Leeds Market. Others are being creative with their land: caravan parks, environment and recreation marketing, PYO fruit, growing asparagus (selling it direct to restaurants), riding schools, nature walks, motor bike tracks.

I walked home through winter sunshine up High Leys Lane and across Beacon Banks with a deeper appreciation than ever for my native North Yorkshire countryside and its farmers. Before sneaking behind a tree, I had a nervous glance at the sky!