



GADDESSEN
ESTATE

Nick Halsey's column for the Great Gaddesden Parish Newsletter

GADDESSEN ESTATE NEWS

November seems to have been incredibly wet! This will be our second season out-wintering the herd so we are keeping our fingers crossed that the land will bear up.

We seem to have had a good breeding year for birds of prey, particularly buzzards and red kites, though also I suspect for sparrow hawks and kestrels. We can hear tawny owls calling every night, though we have not heard of any reports of barn owls recently. The new family living in the Home Farm House called us to say that there was a buzzard in their garden!

Forestry

We are soon to have our pre-Christmas visit from our forestry adviser, Rod Pass, when we shall look at the trees which were planted in early 2009 to see if any need replacing, known obscurely as "beating up"; we will choose the oaks we are to fell in February – March 2010, as they are ripe for harvesting and also look at blocks in London Wood for replanting.

Farming

In the next few months we will be reviewing all the three stewardship schemes to which we belong, with the Countryside Stewardship Scheme and the Entry Level Stewardship Scheme, to see whether or not we can enhance them into one High Level Stewardship Scheme.

Beef Shorthorns

At the time of writing we are planning to send 7 cull cows and 7 strong steers to Thame Market at the end of November, where they are to hold a Native Breeds sale.

In December the foot trimming contractors are coming to cut all the cows "toe nails", so to mitigate any problems with lameness; the following day we have our annual blood test for the Bio Best accreditation.

Home Farm Yard

After almost 6 months residence Babcock Networks are leaving the Home Farm where they have lived and worked during the refurbishment of the pylon lines in this part of Hertfordshire. Their green vehicles and machinery marked "Eve" have been a frequent sight on the roads around the area. For one day only they are to be replaced by a film unit filming the early life of John Lennon.

We wish all our staff, contractors and friends a very happy Christmas and successful 2010

NGH