



GADDESSEN
ESTATE

Nick Halsey's column for the Great Gaddesden Parish Newsletter

Launch of Rural Specials

On 27th October we are due to host the launch of an exciting new project by the Hertfordshire police. Rural Special Constables, some of them mounted on horses, who would be dedicated to looking after particular rural areas such as Great Gaddesden or Gaddesden Row. We hope that this may provide some answer to the current crime wave which has been occurring on and around the Estate this year.

Beef Shorthorns

We hope that too many people were not disturbed by the loud 'mooing' at weaning time. This always happens when the cows are separated from their calves at about six months of age. The calves settled down quite quickly, but the cows took a day or two. The heifers are in Home Front Park and the steers are in Dell Field.

At the same time as weaning we had two other tasks to do. All the cattle over one year old had a blood test, the first of two, to check for IBR (Infection Bovine Rhinitis), as this is now required for Beef Shorthorn Society sales and all the calves were weighed, so that their progress can be recorded by Breedplan, an Australian system which records Beef Shorthorn Cattle around the world. All our older cows reacted to the test, and we have now discovered that they were vaccinated as calves before we bought them, so effectively we are clear.

Arable

The wheat and oilseed rape are looking well. The winter beans have now been drilled, so all the winter crops for 2010 are now in the ground and growing.

General Maintenance

Hedge cutting continues, as well as maintenance of the ride, mowing the grass and strimming round the jumps for the last time this year. We plan to harrow and roll the ride if conditions permit. We have adapted some "zigzag" harrows, old seed harrows, to fit on the arm of the JCB telescopic handler, to harrow the take-offs and landings of the jumps.

Home Farmhouse

The refurbishment is now almost complete and we are delighted with the outcome. The new occupants are due to move in to the house in November.

Forestry

We plan to fell and sell some of our lovely Gaddesden Oak in the new year, which is in demand for furniture making, provided the price holds up.

We are still working on the plans for woodchip heating for the Home Farm Business Centre site. Initial investigations look promising. This, if successful, will have a huge effect on the silviculture and economics of the woodland enterprise, providing a market for otherwise unsaleable trimmings.

NGH