

Spring Conference 2005 Skipton Yorkshire

From the programme it looked as if the Yorkshire Branch had planned an enjoyable and interesting conference. The actuality was even better.

Delegates started to arrive 11.30 on the 10th at Broughton Hall; unfortunately the Pavilion was not yet complete and so we started in the grand and beautiful surroundings of Broughton Hall itself, where we were treated to a delicious buffet lunch, before David Ainsworth joined us to tell us something about the Estate and Rural Solutions.

Broughton Hall Business Park

The Broughton Hall Estate extends to almost 3,000 acres together with a small village and Public House. The Hall is the private home of the family and is often used for film and T.V. dramas. Recent productions include *Wuthering Heights*, *Tennant of Wildfell Hall*, *Dalziel and Pascoe* and a number of television advertisements.

Due to large death duties by the late 70s early 80s the Estate was becoming very run down, with many leaks in the Hall roof and the estate buildings in a very poor state of repair.

In the early 80s the first offices were let in the Stable Block by Mr Henry Tempest who had recently taken over the Estate following the death of his brother Captain Stephen Tempest. The first tenant was a Norwegian company designing North Sea oil rigs and it is from this first letting that occupied only a small proportion of the Stable Block that the Business Park as we know it today began.

In 1985 Mr Henry Tempest's son Mr Roger Tempest took over the reins of the Estate and further offices were created by extending into the historic Home Park buildings behind the Hall and at the same time offices were also created within the village. By this time it was clear that there was great potential for the otherwise redundant Estate buildings and an increasing demand from companies for this type of location.

Initially there was difficulty with the planners, but as the work has progressed and the benefits to the Estate and the local community have become obvious and Government policy has begun to recognise the problems caused by allowing no development in rural communities, the planners have become more supportive.

The business park has 40 company tenants who employ some 500 people in the large variety of units in the park. The surprising thing is that as we walked around, it was not noticeable that there were so many people at work, it all seemed very peaceful.



The delegates listening to David Ainsworth during the tour



A great building, tastefully converted and retaining the columns from the original Boulton Abbey

David Ainsworth advised that at present there was only one empty unit, which they expected to let in the near future. Their philosophy was to be a good caring and flexible land lord, who kept control of the upkeep and repair of all the buildings. The maintenance and repair work was carried out by the Estate's own staff and workers and was funded by a 10% charge on all rents. This meant that the estate always looked well cared for and the tenants did not have to worry about this aspect of their buildings.

This they believed helped create tenant loyalty. One of the important aspects was to have a good variety of sizes of units, with plenty of small starter units. When a tenant first came to the Business Park the estate always suggest that they name their own unit, then if in the future they wish to move to a larger or smaller unit on the estate, they take the name with them and so did not need to reprint their letterheads and literature.

David reported that with good organisation and planning the business park had little impact on the running of the 3000 acre Estate, but it did bring in an appreciable amount of revenue. One large building which had recently been converted into 10,000 square feet of office space created more revenue for the Estate than the 3000 acres of agricultural land.

The Park is on mains water and sewage, but they will soon put in a bore hole to supply all the Park and Estate with water, which will pay for its self in a couple of years.

The walk around the estate showed how everything was in very good repair. Where new buildings or major renovations are required they normally use local architects, with the quality of design being very high, as can be seen from the photographs. The one exception, where a local Architect was not used is the pavilion, which was designed by Sir Michael Hopkins.



Inside the one empty unit. With David being given the 3rd degree by Clive



Another great range of conversions, which shows the eye for detail, which helps to make the park such a lovely place to work

They have now moved on from converting old buildings to building new ones, ensuring that their design is very much in keeping with the existing structures, again the building work is carried out by the estate staff. Normally they employ 15 people in the Building and Maintenance department, but when they have a large project this can increase to 40.

Broughton Hall Business Park has been such a success, with so much being learnt in the process that Roger Tempest set up Rural Solutions which offers a full planning, design and build service to other landowners who wish to develop their properties. This is now a thriving business with over 40 other rural business parks having benefited from Rural Solutions input. Once again their ethos is flexibility; they can carry out the initial feasibility study, design the park, handle the planning, convert the buildings or build the new ones, advertise and find the tenants, and then manage the estate, with any client being able to pick and mix from these services.

Our thanks to David Ainsworth for looking after us so well and for making the visit so enjoyable and interesting.

From Broughton Hall we drove to the Angel Inn, Hetton, to inspect their barn conversion.

Angel Inn, Hetton

The Angel, a dales pub turned restaurant, has long featured in most restaurant guides. It features a pub brassiere, serving top notch lunches and dinners, and a comfortable dining room. It was founded by Denis Watkins and John Topham. Denis recently died but his daughter, Juliet, was already a partner and is determined to continue this first class establishment. Fish and local produce are always feature and meat from Steven Crabtree (to be visited on the second day) is now on the menu.

There were no letting bedrooms at the Angel, but the opportunity arose



The exterior of the Angel at Hetton



Inside the wine cave before the wine tasting

to develop the traditional dales farmyard, just across the road from the pub. It has been restored and adapted to provide 5 letting units - studios and suites.

We were met by Pascal Watkins, who first showed us around this very attractive conversion to holiday lets. Following which we were taken to the Wine Cave, where Pascal gave a short interesting talk on the problems involved in the conversion.

Not surprisingly the area that caused the most difficulty was Planning. He advised that some years ago there was pressure to put double yellow lines along the village main street, as The Angel did not have a car park, this would have severely affected trade.

Opposite the Angel was a range of run down farm buildings that they purchased to allow them to have a car park and with a view to converting the buildings. The saga of gaining planning over the years was explained, with a number of refusals and failed appeals; a very trying and expensive time. Finally they received approval and went ahead. It is now a benefit to the village and we understand that many who opposed it initially have now changed their mind and now accept that it is good for the village. The 5 units have a 65% occupancy rate and the development has created 1.5 new jobs.

Following this we were treated to a wine tasting led by Pascal and Sponsored by Carter Jonas. He explained that he imports his wine usually direct from small producers offering great value for money. He put the same mark up on all his wines so relatively the more expensive the wine the better the value.

Two white and two red wines were tried and very enjoyable they were too. A number of cases were purchased by delegates and after thanking Pascal we left for the hotel.

Back at the Hotel we had little time before the AGM started. This was planned to take an hour to allow time for everyone to change before dinner, but it ran on as a number of items decided at the last EGM and Council meeting were re-discussed, to satisfy those that had not attended the EGM.

The Dinner was a great success, but unfortunately the battery ran out in my camera and so I do not have any pictures. We were joined by our guests Mr and Mrs Wallbank from Intake Farm Embsay and Mr and Mrs Crabtree from Bolton Park Farm, Beamsley, both of whose farms we would be visiting in the morning, plus our guest speaker John Henderson, who gave a very enjoyable and humorous speech, regaling us with stories from his life in the rural economy.

11th March 2005

Despite the late night by some, everyone was on time for our briefing by Ben Heyes on the Bolton Park Estate, where we would be visiting two

of the Estate farms, having lunch in their Pavilion and then visiting their Tithe Barn. He advised that:

Bolton Abbey Estate

The Bolton Abbey Estate is owned by the Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement, a discretionary trust set up by the 11th Duke of Devonshire. The Duke of Devonshire lives on the Estate and takes a personal interest in its management, which is administered by a resident Land Agent, supported by an Assistant Agent and Heads of Department - Accountant, Clerk of Works, Forestry, Game, Maintenance, Retail Operations and Visitor.

The Estate lies at the southern entrance to the Yorkshire Dales National Park and contains five Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The lands were accumulated and farmed by the Priors of Bolton Priory commencing in the 12th century and its survival as an Estate since the dissolution of the monasteries in 1539 is due probably to having been retained in the ownership of one family and maintained by its heirs who succeeded.

Today, the Estate is run as a traditional country estate with important grouse moors extending to 14,000 acres over which an open access arrangement was reached with the former west riding County Council in 1968. There are also some 80 miles of footpaths, mostly public rights of way. Of the remaining area, there are 14,000 acres of let farms, mostly of smaller size 40 to 100 acres, and some 6 farms of 400 to 600 acres. The balance of the Estate's 2000 acres is mostly woodland but includes a few acres of in hand public access areas which feature car parks, public toilets and gift shops.

The greater part of the Estate has been designated as heritage property under section 76 and 77 Finance Act 1976 and as such exempted from Capital Transfer Tax. As a condition of this exemption the Trustees undertook to prepare a Landscape Conservation and Recreation Plan for the Estate in consultation with the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The objectives of the management contained in this Plan are reviewed annually by the National Park.

Footpaths were constructed in the Wharfe valley in the early nineteenth century and the public admitted to these and the riverside, since when it has become a popular place for visitors. When the railway arrived at Bolton Abbey at the end of the nineteenth century thousands of people visited the Estate from towns in West Yorkshire and Lancashire. On an August Bank Holiday in the 1890's the railway brought 40, 000 people to Bolton Abbey. 10 years after the railway arrived the Cavendish Pavilion was built to serve tea and cakes to the many visitors who arrived by train. Recently enlarged the Pavilion continues to serve meals and refreshments to the many people who visit Bolton Abbey.

The number of visitors remains very high at 500,000 visits per year and creates 45% of the estate income. 10 years ago agriculture contributed 37% of the estates income, this has now reduced to 25%, all from tenanted farms. Ben advised that they had no plans to bring any farms in hand.

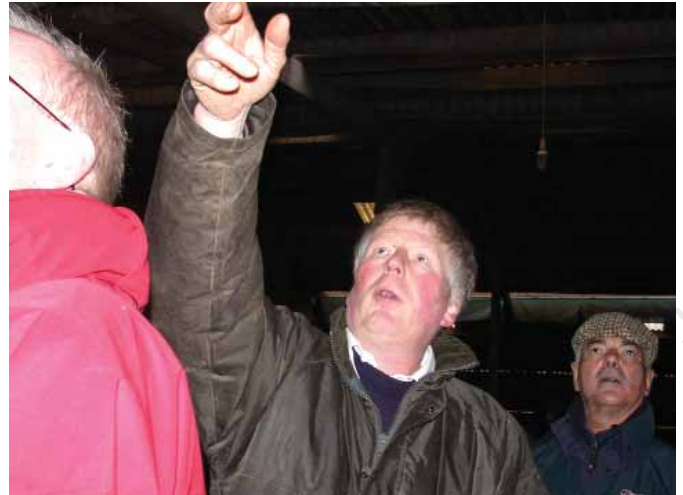
They have looked at sustainable energy such as wind power and woodchip but they have not yet found a system that is efficient enough to justify the cost.

We left in convoy to our first visit at:

Intake Farm, Embsay, Skipton

Farmed by Michael & Hazel Wallbank, who invited us into their lovely warm kitchen for the introduction to the farm.

Michael advised that prior to foot and mouth his dairy herd probably produced the 7th highest yield of milk in Yorkshire. After the trauma of losing all his cows to foot and mouth, he decided to restock with genetically superior cows to produce as much milk as possible.



Michael Wallbank pointing out the ventilation fans at Intake farm

His farm comprises 100 ha (250 acre) all grass tenanted farm on the Bolton Abbey Estate. An additional 13 ha (32 acres) are owned and 15 ha (37 acres) rented separately. 18 ha (45 acres) maize and 12 ha (30 acres) wheat are also grown on contract away from the farm.

He has 300 pedigree Friesian milking cows milked 3times a day with a yield in excess of 10,000 litre. Last year the farm had the 3rd highest yield of milk in Yorkshire. There are 210 followers on the farm. All managed by Michael, Hazel, one full-time and five part-time staff.

Buildings have been erected at regular intervals, starting with a 3 bay Crendon hay barn and loose yard. Another 2 bays and lean to were added in 1966, when the first cubicles were fitted. Other developments included a 4 bay Wareing building with lean to (1970), extra cubicles and outside feed area together with the slurry store (1975), the first part of the silo (1976), slatted cubicles for young stock (1979), roofing of feed area (1981) and extended silo (1985).

In recent years the building has continued with a calving pen building in 1992, an outside silo roofed in 1996 a calving pen building extended and slatted building joined to others in 1997.

June 2001: An old stone barn that could not be disinfected after foot and mouth was replaced with the Wareing building which was erected by Wharfedale Farm Profiles and now forms the cubicle house nearest the parlour.

Milking Parlour: The original 4:8 Fullwood herringbone was extended five times (5:10 then 10:10 then 16:16 then 20:20 and finally 30:30 in 2002). Fullwood equipment has been used throughout, but the shells and liners are now Boumatic. The most recent up grade reusing much old equipment was carried out at a cost of £18,000, whereas a new dairy to give a similar through put would have cost in the region of £100,000.



The dairy at Intake farm, recently upgraded at a cost of £18,000

The stocking densities in the buildings looked to be very high, particularly as the beasts are so large but Michael always ensures that there is plenty of ventilation, which was obvious from the dust free atmosphere, even the high level cobwebs were clean. This helped to ensure that all the beasts were in very good condition.

At the end of the visit we were invited back into the kitchen to warm ourselves and to enjoy a cup of coffee. We were introduced to their daughter, who is considering using the farm's milk for cheese making, the cheese was sampled and all agreed that it was a lovely creamy Lancashire.

After thanks from Jim Rogerson we left in convoy for our next visit.

Bolton Park Farm, Beamsley, Skipton

We were shown around by the tenant Steven Crabtree who is the third generation at Bolton Park Farm. His grandfather moved there in 1957 and Steven took over the tenancy in 1996.

The Farm comprises 270 ha (660 acre). Much of the farm is rough grazing. 195 ha (480) acres are also farmed away from the estate.

The beef herd comprises 500 (200 sucklers and followers taken to beef). The cows are mainly Limousin cross and are mated to either a Limousin or Belgian Blue bull. The sheep flock comprises 1,200 ewes and followers, totalling about 3,000.

Labour is Steven and his and wife plus two full time staff and a part-time man.

The old stone buildings are all listed, some incorporate columns from the old priory. Most are still used including one which has been converted into bull pens.

The construction of the modern buildings started in 1977 with timber kennels, still used but now with automatic scrapers.

A timber building with cubicles was erected in 1979. The cubicles were replaced with cantilever ones in 2002.

A sheep shed, now used for young stock out of the lambing season, was erected in 1994.

A new 41 m x 24 m (135' x 80') galvanised steel framed building was erected by RE Buildings in 2002 to fill the gap between the above two buildings. This has a split level roof with Farmscape sheets and cantilever cubicles.

The slurry store was erected in 1991 when the old muck midden was covered to provide calving pens. These have closed circuit TV to aid management.



Stephen Crabtree talking to some of the delegates



A lovely old barn which has reused some of the columns from Bolton Abbey

An earth banked silo was constructed in 2002, allowing the old silo to become a muck heap.

The latest development was a small steel framed building used as a calf creep and feed passage.

Steven's views on the way animals are being pushed too hard to produce more and more were interesting. He felt that the recent change in emphasis away from quantity may redress the balance.

Steven has recently set up **Bolton Abbey Foods** in order to sell his beef and lamb. Local restaurants are supplied. The new estate shop (The Pantry) is selling the meat and space has been taken at some local Farmers' Markets. Leaflets have been professionally produced to sell the meat in convenient boxes, vacuum packed and delivered to the customer's door. For a leaflet or order just phone 08458550015.

Following thanks by Keith Musson, we left in Convoy to the Cavendish Pavilion for lunch.

Following a delicious lunch in the lovely surroundings of the Pavilion, our Chairman Antony Lowther thanked the Yorkshire Branch for such an interesting and enjoyable conference. Many delegates then left but others were shown around the Tithe barn by Ben Heyes.

This is a beautiful old barn, which is still being used for estate business. So often these barns are cleaned up and put to use as a display area, which somehow detracts from their grandeur so it was nice to see one still in use and in particular that it is still roofed in massive natural stone slates.

We thanked Ben for helping to make the Conference such a success and went our separate ways.



The inside of the tithe barn