

# GRIDLINE

The magazine for National Grid grantors

AUTUMN 2012

nationalgrid

PERFECTION  
IN A PINT

A journey from  
grain to glass

Mud  
glorious  
mud

The speed  
demon who  
is happy  
– whatever  
the weather

*Sweet smell of*  
**SUCCESS**

The family business enjoying a purple patch

**PLUS:** Bridging the gap • Dial before you dig • Energy and the next generation • Win a luxury pamper day for two

# WELCOME TO GRIDLINE

Our grantors cover every aspect of **British life** so we want to **celebrate that diversity** in your magazine

**A**s Gridline goes to press, we are in the midst of our 2012 County Show programme and it is another great opportunity for National Grid to maintain strong links with you, our grantors across the nation.

This year's programme has been hampered by the weather, and days two and three of the Great Yorkshire Show were cancelled due to torrential downpours. But we thought on our toes about the perishable food we had on site, and lands officer east Nick Henderson-Newton and Julie Smith (admin support) distributed the food to a Barnardo's charity in Harrogate, where it was gratefully received.

We're always thrilled by the photographic competition entries we receive and hate to disappoint, so we've launched a Flickr website at [www.flickr.com/photos/gridline/sets/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/gridline/sets/) so your lenswork can reach a wider audience.

I've added entries received over the years and I think you'll agree we have some very talented photographers among us. So, blow the dust off your camera and start clicking away for our next competition on the back page.



Your Gridline magazine is exactly that - a publication that's about you, for you, so if you're part of a success story that deserves to be shouted about, please get in touch on the email address below and it could be your

business featuring in a future edition.

This time we visit the mud-filled pit holes of Staffordshire, the golden fields of the Cotswolds and the lavender-painted fields of Kent, but we're always on the lookout for something different.

**Dawn McCarroll**  
Editor, Gridline

## GOT A STORY?

Please contact Gridline if you have any news or stories that you think would be of interest to other grantors.

**Tel:** 01926 656 325  
**Email:** [gridline@uk.ngrid.com](mailto:gridline@uk.ngrid.com)  
**Write to:** Gridline,  
Summersault Communications,  
23-25 Waterloo Place, Warwick Street,  
Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 5LA.

nationalgrid

## National Grid's Land and Development Group

The Land and Development Group is responsible for acquiring all rights and permissions from statutory authorities and landowners needed to install, operate and maintain National Grid's electricity and gas transmission networks. The Group acts as the main interface for landowners who have gas and electricity equipment installed on their land. Your local contacts are listed below.

### ELECTRICITY AND GAS

- North-west and Scotland 0161 776 0706
- South-east 01268 642 091
- South-west 01452 316 059
- East 0113 290 8235.

### WAYLEAVE PAYMENTS

- For information on wayleave payments, telephone the payments helpline on 0800 389 5113.

### CHANGE OF DETAILS

- To inform National Grid of changes in ownership or contact details, telephone 0800 389 5113 for electric and 01926 654 844 for gas, or email [grantorservices@nationalgrid.com](mailto:grantorservices@nationalgrid.com).

### ELECTRICITY EMERGENCY

- Emergency calls to report pylon damage to National Grid can be made on 0800 404 090. Note the tower's number - found just below the property plate - to help crews locate it.

### ELECTRIC AND MAGNETIC FIELDS

- For information on electric and magnetic fields, call the EMF information line on 08457 023 270 (local call rate). Website: [www.emfs.info](http://www.emfs.info).

### GAS EMERGENCY

- 0800 111 999.

### DIAL BEFORE YOU DIG

- Before carrying out any work in the vicinity of gas pipelines, overhead power lines or underground electric cables, you should contact Plant Protection on 0800 688 588 so that searches can be made to determine the exact position of any National Grid assets.

### CUSTOMER COMMENTS

- Write to Land & Development, National Grid House, Warwick Technology Park, Gallows Hill, Warwick, Warwickshire CV34 6DA. Or email [ld.customercomments@uk.ngrid.com](mailto:ld.customercomments@uk.ngrid.com).

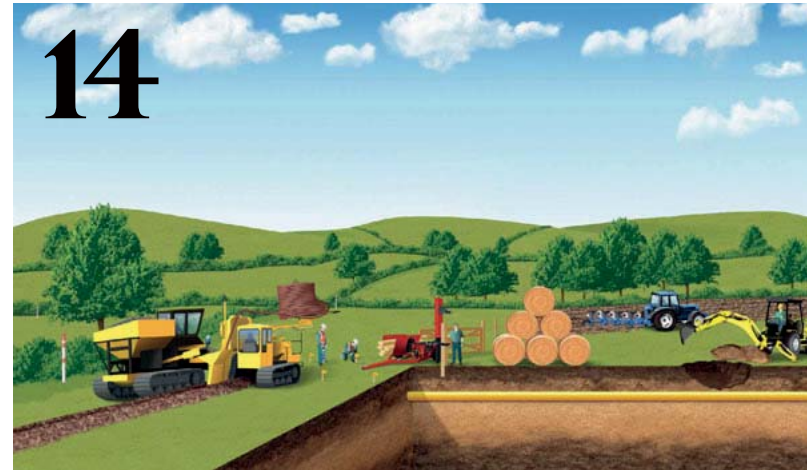


Gridline is produced by Summersault Communications, 23-25 Waterloo Place, Warwick Street, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 5LA.



10

# CONTENTS



14



04

## Regulars

- 04** Touch technology answers youngsters' The Big Why questions
- 05** How National Grid rose to the Olympian challenge
- 06** Capital tunnels project set to harness the future for a generation
- 07** National Grid praised for backing environmental awareness drive
- 07** Farmers join forces in landmark bid to tackle rural crime



08



07

## Day at the races winner

Congratulations to Margaret Hirst from Outwood, near Wakefield in Yorkshire, who wins lunch and a VIP day for two at the races after correctly answering the question: By what percentage has the theft of metal from grantors' land increased and what is the hotline number to report suspicious activity? The answer was 32% and 0800 404 090. Margaret said: "I'm delighted to have won. It's totally unexpected, but I'm already looking forward to going – it's sure to be a great day!"

## Thanks for getting back to us...

Many thanks to the gas grantors below who won £50 in vouchers in a prize draw for responding to our annual letters asking them to confirm their contact details.

The winners are: Mr Metcalfe, Wetherby; Mr Hurdle, Stowe-by-Chartley; Mr Swift, Ettingham; Mr Varley, Patrington; Hoskins Farm Partnership, Tiverton; Mr Thomson, Athelstaneford; Mr Scott, Auchterarder; Mr Done, Wrexham; Mr Spencer, Stratford-upon-Avon; Lady Cowie, Wetherby; Mr & Mrs Muncaster, Bedford; Mr Drake, Attleborough.



19

## Features

- 08** Ever wondered how to prepare the perfect pint? Grantor Jake Freestone reveals all
- 10** John and Sindy Bostock on how their need for speed moved their business into the fast lane
- 14** Gridline's easy-to-follow guide to avoid digging up a 'hole' lot of trouble
- 16** The grantor family making scents of biscuits, tea and jam... today
- 19** Thousands join the fun to get closer to the country

The latest news from  
**National Grid** and its  
nationwide grantor network



Visitors compete in  
The Big Why quiz

## Show and tell

YOUNGSTERS AND THEIR parents were given an insight into the work of National Grid at a new interactive area unveiled at the Royal Cornwall Show.

The idea was conceived by Land and Development communications officer Dawn McCarroll to improve public awareness of the role of National Grid and its grantors.

"We really wanted to emphasise to a broader range of people just how important the daily work of National Grid is and how it would be impossible without the support of our grantors," she said.

The solution came in the shape of an interactive touch screen quiz that families tried out as they sought refuge on National

The touch screens help visitors learn about energy



Grid's prominent public stand from the torrential rain and high winds outside.

The interactive screen featured a game called The Big Why, which brought players a series of facts and figures about the work of National Grid.

### Demand

The quiz also raised awareness of society's reliance on energy and encouraged visitors to the stand to think about the role they can play in ensuring a secure, affordable and sustainable energy system in the future.

Visitors could play against each other using the touch screens, answering questions about National Grid's current national energy network, the impact of energy consumption and carbon emissions, and likely demand for energy in the future.

Helen Pearse visited the Royal Cornwall Show with her husband Michael and children Louise, 14, and Ian, 11, who tried their hand on the stand.

She said: "Some of the statistics were quite surprising and certainly made the children think about energy needs in the future.

"The main theme of it was the



growth of renewable energy, which is going to become increasingly important as the children get older."

Helen, from Ashburton in Devon, added: "It made us all think about what National Grid actually does because energy and how it reaches our homes is often something you take for granted."

Avril Glessing, who was there with husband David and children Bradley, 13, five-year-old Freya and two-year-old Thomas, said the gale-force wind could not ruin their enjoyment.

"We were pleased to find a public area at the National Grid stand and thought the interactive quiz was excellent," she said.

"It gave the children, especially Bradley who is a bit older, something to look at and learn from. He got a lot out of it."

She added: "It was great to shelter from the rain, but also good that National Grid people were at Wadebridge talking to the public about the work going on around the country."

# On the right tree-lined path



The teenagers worked hard planting hundreds of trees at the park

NATIONAL GRID JOINED UP with a group of youngsters from The Prince's Trust to plant 600 trees, all native species, on a section of the Millennium Path in Llanelli, South Wales.

The 12-mile, traffic-free path forms part of a larger Millennium Coastal Park on the Burry Estuary, which was created from an area of industrial wasteland. The park attracts more than 1 million visitors a year, and has won several national design and environmental awards.

The trees were planted by a team of 16 and 17-year-olds on a four-month programme, which helps them improve social skills and prepare for the world of work.

National Grid provided the trees, stakes, tools and moisture-absorbing granules for the project, along with advice.

A major refurbishment of more than 80km of high-voltage power lines between Pembroke and Swansea has recently been completed by the company.



Company colleagues on hand to give advice



The 600 trees planted were native species

## News in brief

### EVERY CLOUD HAS A SILVER LINING

Provisions earmarked for grantor hospitality were donated to a training restaurant for young people with learning

difficulties when torrential rain forced the Great Yorkshire Show to close two days early.

Students and staff at Dr B's (Barnardo's) Restaurant and Coffee Bar in Harrogate were able to enjoy the food – including more than 30kg of chicken, as well as salad and chocolate fudge cake – on their annual outing and picnic.

"Dr B's does a great job equipping young people with the skills they need to find employment in the hospitality and service industries," said Nick Henderson-Newton, lands officer east.



### OLYMPIC CHALLENGE

National Grid seamlessly balanced the supply and demand for energy during the opening ceremony for the Olympic Games, despite a peak TV audience of 27 million. It was the largest audience since England lost on penalties to Argentina in the 1998 World Cup.

There were no significant 'TV pick-ups' during the Games. These spikes of demand over a five-minute period are caused by people rising en masse to switch on the kettle or grab a drink from the fridge when an event ends.

"We think the non-stop action during the Olympics kept people glued to their TVs for longer and resulted in less mass synchronized tea breaks," said Andrew Richards of National Grid's Energy Forecasting team.

## Landmark gas anniversary celebrated in Staffordshire

THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF the gas industry was celebrated in July at an event hosted by National Grid and brewery company Molson Coors in Burton-on-Trent.

The Staffordshire town, famous for being the home of the brewing industry, was the first place in the UK to be converted to North Sea gas in May 1967.

The gas industry was born in 1812 when town gas was first used. The switch to North Sea gas took 10 years to complete, with more than 13 million gas customers visited.

Because natural gas has different characteristics to town gas, all gas

appliances had to be converted to the new fuel. About 40 million appliances of all types were converted, including 2,000 different designs of gas cooker.

On the day of the changeover in Burton-on-Trent, customers were required to switch off their appliances and the old town gas was purged from the local mains system. Gas engineers then went from house to house fitting the new parts. When this was complete for every gas user in the sector, natural gas was allowed into the system and the conversion was finished.



## Contact Gridline



Call, email or go online.  
Tel: 01926 656 325  
Email: [gridline@uk.ngrid.com](mailto:gridline@uk.ngrid.com)  
[www.nationalgrid.com](http://www.nationalgrid.com)

## Jubilee joy for town's youngsters

PLANS ARE IN PLACE FOR A time capsule to be placed on a historic gas site in Burnley to mark the Queen's visit to the town in her Diamond Jubilee year.

The remains of a huge underground gasholder tank were uncovered during remediation work being carried out by National Grid to clear contaminated water and soil on the Parker Lane site.

The gasworks was established in 1823 by Burnley Gas Works Company and supplied town gas for nearly a century. It was one of the most efficient in the country, generating electricity for the town and burning waste in a destructor until its closure in the 1920s.

News cuttings, photographs and children's artwork will capture the heritage in a time capsule at the site.



Exciting interactive displays aid learning

# Exploring the future of energy

A NEW ENERGY EDUCATION Centre has been opened by National Grid at the site of its London Power Tunnels project.

The free facility is aimed at primary and secondary schools, and provides information about energy production, its usage and the need to change our relationships with energy in order to safeguard the future.

Visiting groups can explore the subject through a range of materials and interactive displays, with experts from National Grid on hand to answer questions and encourage discussion.

The pupils also learn about National Grid's £1 billion project to rewire the capital, and are able to see for themselves some of the live construction activity.



### One-minute interview



**Victoria Pearson, lands officer south-east**

**BACKGROUND:** I joined Land and Development in November 2011 after working as a rural surveyor on the outskirts of Ipswich, Suffolk, for five years.

**CURRENT FOCUS:** The Norwich to Bramford overhead power line refurbishment, among other projects.

**LEISURE INTERESTS:** I enjoy being active, and do a lot of sport, including tennis and shooting.

**MOST OVER-USED PHRASE:** It'll be alright on the night!

**PET HATE:** Fly-tipping and cold callers.

**LAST HOLIDAY:** Marrakech in Morocco. It's the most vibrant place I've visited, with friendly people, but crazy drivers.

**WHO WOULD PLAY YOU IN THE HOLLYWOOD FILM OF YOUR LIFE:** Miranda Hart. We're both a bit ditz!

**IDEAL DINNER GUEST:** The Queen – I'm sure she would have some pretty interesting stories.

**FAVOURITE FILM:** I've watched Dirty Dancing about 100 times. I think most of the female population will understand why.

**MOST PRIZED POSSESSION:** My gorgeous black Labrador, who is called Myrtle. She's always pleased to see me and she generally does as she's told.

### Project watch

## Trawsfynydd to Treuddyn overhead line refurb

**WHAT?** National Grid is carrying out a £75 million refurbishment of a 70km stretch of overhead power line from Trawsfynydd, Gwynedd, to Treuddyn in Flintshire. The project has taken several months to plan and involves ongoing consultation with local landowners with regard to providing access to the 200 pylons on the route.

"Next year, the project team will begin the access work concerning multiple towers in Snowdonia," said James Dean, lands officer north-west and Scotland.

"Consideration will be given to challenges along the route, including remote upland terrain, woodland and wetland areas."

**WHY?** A new conductor will be strung, along with the replacement of new fittings



at each tower along the route, which was originally constructed in 1961. This project is part of National Grid's ongoing national maintenance programme and represents a substantial continued

investment in the region's power network.

**WHEN?** Initial work on access arrangements started in April 2012 and the project is expected to be complete by late 2014.

# A duty of care to rare animals

A CAMPAIGN TO RAISE awareness of some of Britain's most threatened species has landed a major boost from National Grid.

A new sponsorship deal with The Mammal Society will help safeguard the future of animals such as the hedgehog, harvest mouse, hare and polecat.

All feature on a list of species recommended for protection under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). But none of them have strict legal protection, leaving project teams in a grey area when they find the animals during upgrades or repairs.



Stephanie Wray

National Grid has sponsored a new 94-page booklet for the society, which is being distributed to environmental consultants and local authority ecologists around the UK.

The publication, the first of its kind, will set out new standards for project workers on the steps to take before work can begin.

Stephanie Wray, principal specialist in Land and Development for National Grid, said: "We have a big capital investment programme for major infrastructure projects over the next 20 or 30 years.

"Because of that, it's crucial that we take a responsible attitude to the environment and nature conservation so that when we encounter these species, we know how to deal with them properly."

The booklet, which contains BAP guidelines for every agency working on the land, has been hailed for 'raising the bar' by The Mammal Society. Its chief executive Marina Pacheco said: "Experts around the country now have a set of guidelines to suggest



methodologies for carrying out surveys, impact assessments and, if necessary, mitigation.

## Priorities

"Thanks to National Grid's sponsorship, developers now understand the measures that can be taken to lessen the impact of the work if they know there are BAP mammals on the land."

Eight of the UK's mammals are high priorities for conservation action, but there has been little

published guidance on how best to protect them - until now.

Marina said: "We hope that our guidance will create the necessary action to take them from a list and give them a future."

The booklet can be downloaded from [www.mammal.org.uk](http://www.mammal.org.uk) - The Mammal Society's website.

Marina added: "If we can mitigate against the impact of development through things like rope bridges and protective boxes, that is to everyone's benefit."



## Cracking down on crime in the countryside

MORE THAN 100 FARMERS and landowners in north Lincolnshire have come together in a community scheme designed to be an 'early warning system' to combat rural crime.

Members of the North Lincolnshire Country Watch scheme keep a lookout for suspicious individuals or vehicle activity, report it to Humberside Police, and share their knowledge with members.

"After contacting the police, a member sends a text message to their local coordinator, who uses a computerised system to forward an alert to others," explained Alex Godfrey, a farmer and National Grid grantor, who helps to administer the scheme.

Members also receive updates on local issues and other news, such as successful prosecutions, and the police can use the system

to issue appeals for information about stolen property.

Although still rare, crime in the countryside is on the up. In addition to wildlife crimes, such as hare coursing and poaching, there have been thefts of plant and farm equipment, diesel and even cable from telephone lines.

Similar schemes are operated in a number of counties. Contact your local police force for details.

A man with sunglasses on his head, wearing a brown polo shirt and a watch, is smiling and leaning over a field of golden barley. The background is a vast field of similar crops under a bright sky.

# GOING WITH THE GRAIN

Grantor **Jake Freestone** is the first link in a chain **from field to glass** that transforms **barley into a pint of beer...** so we salute him!



**“W**hen I visit my local pub, I sometimes wonder whether the other customers have any idea of the care and attention that goes into producing their favourite brew,” said Jake Freestone, farm manager at Overbury Farms in the Cotswolds.

Jake (main picture) is part of a growers group of around 100 farmers who supply 30,000 tonnes of malting barley to brewery giant Molson Coors each year.

With its UK headquarters in Burton-on-Trent, Molson Coors Brewing Company (UK & Ireland) produces many well-known brands, including Carling, the nation's bestselling lager. It is also the UK's only major brewer to malt its own barley sourced entirely from British growers.

The Molson Coors Growers Group was launched by the brewing company in 2008, in partnership with its major grain merchant, Frontier Agriculture, and with guidance from the English Farming and Food Partnerships, for security of supply reasons.

“At the time, barley prices had plummeted and many farms were switching to more profitable crops,” explained Jerry Dyson, brewing sourcing manager at Molson Coors.

“We use 150,000 tonnes of malting barley a year, and it's vital to secure the right quality and quantity of ingredients, whatever the market conditions.

“Traceability in the supply chain is important for quality control and demonstrates that our beer is 100 per cent sourced from British farmers, using quality ingredients.”

For Jake and the other farmers, the relationship with grantor Molson Coors means they get a fair deal for their grain and can plan ahead knowing they have a firm buyer.

“Growers can also share knowledge and implement best practice to improve barley yields and quality,” said Jake.

As well as flexible options on crop pricing, members receive preferential terms, such as prioritised transport at harvest time and dispensation to deliver grain with a higher moisture content without incurring penalties.

Overbury Farms, which has National Grid pylons and gas transmission pipelines crossing its land, supplies the brewery company with 1,300 tonnes of grain a year. The crop includes both winter barley (sown late September for a July harvest) and the faster-growing spring barley (sown January to April and harvested in August).

Spring barley is better suited to brewing because the nitrogen level in the grain is lower. Too much nitrogen can



As the combine cuts the crop, the grain goes straight into a trailer ready for storage



Jerry Dyson, brewing sourcing manager at Molson Coors

“It's vital to secure the right quality and quantity... whatever the market conditions”

affect alcohol yield, although some is needed for yeast growth and beer foam.

“A key challenge is to apply enough nitrogen fertilizer to maximize crop yield without increasing the grain nitrogen content,” said Jake. “Too little rain can also raise levels.”

After harvesting, the grain is dried and must be stored in cool conditions to preserve its ‘potential to germinate’ - another essential attribute if it is to be used for beer.

In the malting process at Molson Coors, grain is steeped in water to induce partial germination and then dried in a kiln. This creates the enzymes that will convert the starch in barley into fermentable sugars during brewing.

The Growers Group has delivered improvements in the quality of the barley delivered to Molson Coors over the past four years and is helping the company in its global target to save a billion litres of water by the end of 2012. Most of the water consumed in the production of a pint of beer occurs in the barley growing stage.

Molson Coors sponsors a water management tool, developed by Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF), which its growers can use to improve water efficiency through measures such as rainwater harvesting and improved water retention in the soil.

Members of the growers group also meet socially. Jake said: “A 210-mile charity bike ride for The Prince's Countryside Fund told the story behind a pint of Carling - from grain to glass - by riding from the maltings in Burton-on-Trent to one of the firm's Hampshire breweries, stopping off at malting barley and hop growers on the way.

“It was hard work, but also great fun, and we raised the £5,000 target, so it was well worth it.”

### It's a fact

- The name beer is probably derived from the Anglo Saxon ‘baere’, which means barley.
- The origins of Molson Coors' UK operations can be traced back to 1777 with the foundation of Bass Brewers Ltd in Burton-on-Trent.
- In the late 19th century, a quarter of all beer sold in Britain was produced in Burton-on-Trent.
- Barley can be easily distinguished from wheat because the ear has long spikes known as awns.

### In numbers

**£510m** the annual value of the UK's 1.7 million acres of barley crop

### For more information...



... on Jake Freestone's year-round farming activities, view his blog at [www.farmerjakef.blogspot.co.uk/](http://www.farmerjakef.blogspot.co.uk/)



The joint wheat and wheels venture is a labour of love for Cindy and John



Operations manager Richard Harris makes light work of the glorious mud in his quad

# A PIECE OF THE ACTION

**Torrential rain** or bright sunshine can be the difference between **success** or failure for grantors, but one couple have **removed the risk** from their business



Admin worker Laura Franklin (below) takes a rest as a customer puts one of the Rage Buggies through its paces (left)



Come torrential rain or rare glimpses of sunshine, John and Cindy Bostock care less than most what the weatherman says.

Where a weaker wheat yield from a dismal summer might once have decimated revenue for these grantors, they are now powering ahead - whatever the weather.

Until five years ago, they devoted their 600-acre farm to oilseed rape, barley, potatoes and wheat, but John always harboured a need for speed.

Falling margins, a crop susceptible to the elements and the farm's remote location prompted him to take a fresh look at where the business was going.

His mind made up, he ripped up the crop, designed and dug out a 750-metre racetrack, and now has a fleet of £14,000 Rage Buggies and 10 Yamaha quad bikes.

A lap-time counter and race director's box, complete with chequered flag and finish line viewing gallery, meant the new project was ready for its corporate market.

**John satisfies his need for speed by taking visitors on the Thrill Ride (above), one of only four ever made and capable of 0-60mph in four seconds**

Mother-of-two Cindy was initially reluctant to give up her high-flying career management job, but as company and stag party bookings grew, she was left with little option.

She looks after Team Action's marketing, bookings and website, and ensures the personal lap times of all racers are monitored by computer for that crucial competitive edge. With colleagues, grooms and even brides-to-be hurtling round the track at speeds of up to 45mph, bragging rights are everything when it comes to a podium finish.

The buggies - four of them once belonged to singer Robbie Williams - pack 620cc of power with a top speed of 70mph, and are all British-made.

John also turned over the outer perimeter of his land, including four deep pit holes, to an all-terrain quad biking course that tests even the most bullish speed freaks.

And if the water, mud and bruises don't provide enough of an adrenaline rush, there's the Thrill Ride, a two-seat quad bike with power to spare.





### In numbers

74

years young - the age of the oldest person to brave the quad bikes

£14,000

the cost of one of the British-made 620cc Rage Buggies that can hit 70mph

50/50

the estimated time John and Sindy spend on traditional farming and Team Action



This beast, one of only four ever made, eats up the highs and lows of the brooks, pits and mudbaths of a jaw-shaking five-minute circuit that leaves the passenger a shaking, mud-soaked youngster once again.

Perfectionist John, 53, with the zeal of a man half his age, insisted he went into it all 'without a thought of failure'.

"I've always approached things with a very positive attitude and knew that if we set things up in the right way to the highest standards, people would come," he said.

"We'd seen a few places try this on the cheap, but we wanted to do it properly with clean toilets, immaculate overalls and properly maintained buggies - and it's paid off."

The couple, whose venture is a 20-minute quad bike ride from Rugeley Power Station in Staffordshire, have approached everything to the highest standard, from safety and first aid right down to getting the local villagers on side.

So much so that event winners who handle the challenges of Watery Corner, The Sweep and Teal Curve - bends in the track - qualify for a free pint at the Shoulder of Mutton 'local' in Hamstall Ridware.

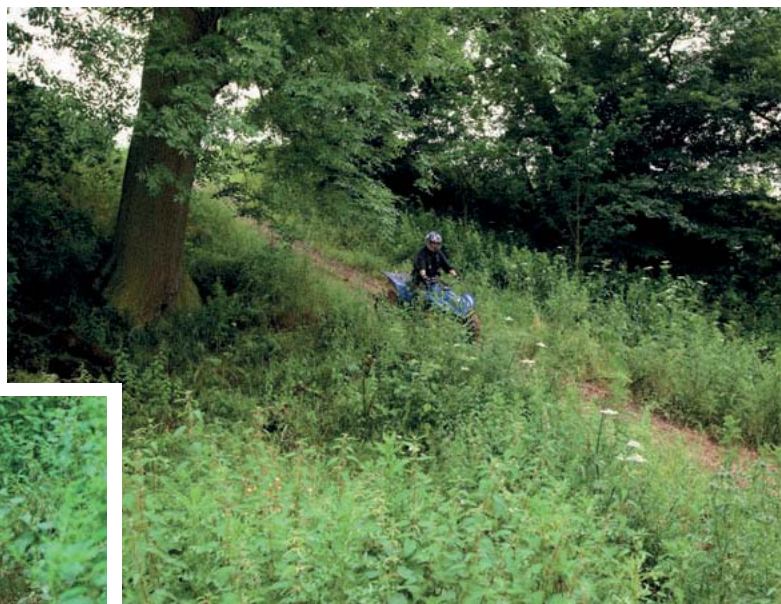
"I've always approached things with a very positive attitude and knew that if we set things up in the right way... people would come"

Sindy, a youthful-looking grandmother of two, said: "We're hoping to expand now things are going so well, with a kitchen to offer quality locally produced food.

"The great thing about this type of diversification is that we're no longer dependent on the weather. We're making the most of what we've got in terms of land and location."

It's clearly working. Bookings have soared year-on-year, the Bostocks have extended their fleet of quad bikes to 10, and now have a motivated team of race marshals, quad party leaders and a full-time mechanic.

John estimates that the business is now finely balanced in work terms at 50/50 between traditional farming and Team Action. But he's quick to concede that the arable farming he's been involved with for the past 25 years comes



Rage Buggies capable of 70mph fly round the man-made track (above) where mud just doesn't matter



A stream and four pit holes like this one (left) provide the perfect environment for parties

Mechanic Martin Jellis (left) ensures every buggy is checked over and in full working order after each visit, however wet it gets

eyes of Formula 1 fan John, who has turned a hobby into a thriving business catering for around 80 people a week.

Sindy said: "The market is about 70/30 in favour of stag and hen parties over the corporate side, but we'd like to promote company away days a lot more. We've had parties from Cornwall, Scotland and abroad, so word is definitely out that we're trying to offer a quality experience."

Quads and Cup Cake days for the girls ensure it's not just a 'boys toys' thing too, with Sindy adding: "The girls are often better than the men, but we had one chap in who was 74 and he loved it."

"We'll always be grateful for the farming side, but there's no way either of us would turn back the clock."

## For more information...



... about Team Action, visit the website at [www.team-action.co.uk](http://www.team-action.co.uk), call 01889 504 000 or email [info@team-action.co.uk](mailto:info@team-action.co.uk)

a clear second to the new revenue stream.

"I love dealing with the public and it's a wonderful feeling to see them go away at the end of a race session absolutely thrilled," he said.

"It does require attention to detail and you have to ensure that people are just within their capability zone, but it is extremely good fun."

He's not so naïve as to take his eye off the ball entirely when it comes to the business that has made Team Action possible though: "We'll carry on with the wheat because it's the bread and butter of the operation. Most of the crop goes to feed, but we're selling increasing amounts to go to biomass fuel, which is a really positive development."

But it's the faster stuff that really puts a sparkle in the

# SAFETY FIRST

**Dial before you dig!** That's the message behind a **new safety campaign** to cut potential **gas pipeline incidents**

**N**ational Grid is taking a string of measures to improve the communication of crucial safety messages following grantor feedback from an independent survey it commissioned.

With gas pipelines mostly hidden in the landscape, National Grid has a high duty of care to ensure landowners and other parties know exactly where they are located.

Gas grantors are contacted twice a year, with an annual letter and a calendar, to establish if they are still the owner or occupier of the land crossed.

"In one respect this has worked very well, with 95 per cent of landowners responding to confirm or update contact information," said Niki Wileman, National Grid's asset protection manager.

"But when it comes to getting over key safety messages, the position is not so positive. Industry statistics suggest that landowners and land managers continue to be responsible for the majority of pipeline incidents."

In particular, too many grantors fail to contact National Grid for a risk assessment (see panel far right) before starting work near a gas pipeline.

To increase the effectiveness of monitoring for 'infringements', foot patrols will be introduced at five-yearly intervals, in addition to aerial surveys.

Extra resources are being committed to ensure safety communication is user-friendly, tailored and effective.

"A key change from next year is that - in addition to the XY coordinates for the location of gas pipelines - the annual safety letter will be accompanied by a map indicating the exact route of the pipelines," said Niki. "The Defra field number ID will also be given."

National Grid is also responding to criticisms that revised grantor details are not always fed back into the national gas grantor database quickly enough. New processes and tools are being put in place to ensure updates are input immediately.

Another focus is to look at how communications can be tailored to the specific requirements of



each individual grantor - whether they are, for example, a smallholder with a couple of fields, a large landowner, or an agent.

"The intention is to set up a grantor advisory panel, with representatives of all these groups, to monitor and feed into communications, ensuring they are targeted, accessible and fit-for-purpose," said Niki.

"Our sole purpose with all these measures is to protect the integrity of the gas network and the safety of everybody who lives or works in their vicinity."

### What you need to do

No work can be carried out in the vicinity of a pipeline without the written consent of National Grid.

To ask about proposed work near pipelines, call 0800 688 588, write to National Grid Plant Protection, National Grid, Block 1, Brick Kiln Street, Hinckley LE10 0NA or email [plantprotection@nationalgrid.com](mailto:plantprotection@nationalgrid.com).

Remember to supply a clearly identifiable plan, site grid reference or postcode, a works start date, contact details and details of the planned work.

The team will check the location of any assets in the vicinity of the proposed works, and say if the action is of high, moderate or low risk.

You will be sent a map showing the location of the asset, together with advice on 'Avoiding danger from underground services' (HSG47) and specific guidance on working near the asset or assets found.

National Grid should be contacted at least seven days in advance of any works.

### Self-search

➔ [www.linsearch.org](http://www.linsearch.org) is a free online enquiry service giving instant results from a grid reference, postcode or street name. If your result is within a National Grid zone of interest, you can click directly through to the Plant Protection team to request plant location details.

### Emergency

➔ If you smell gas or are worried about gas safety, or if you suspect a pipeline may have been damaged, call 0800 111 999.

### Update your ownership details

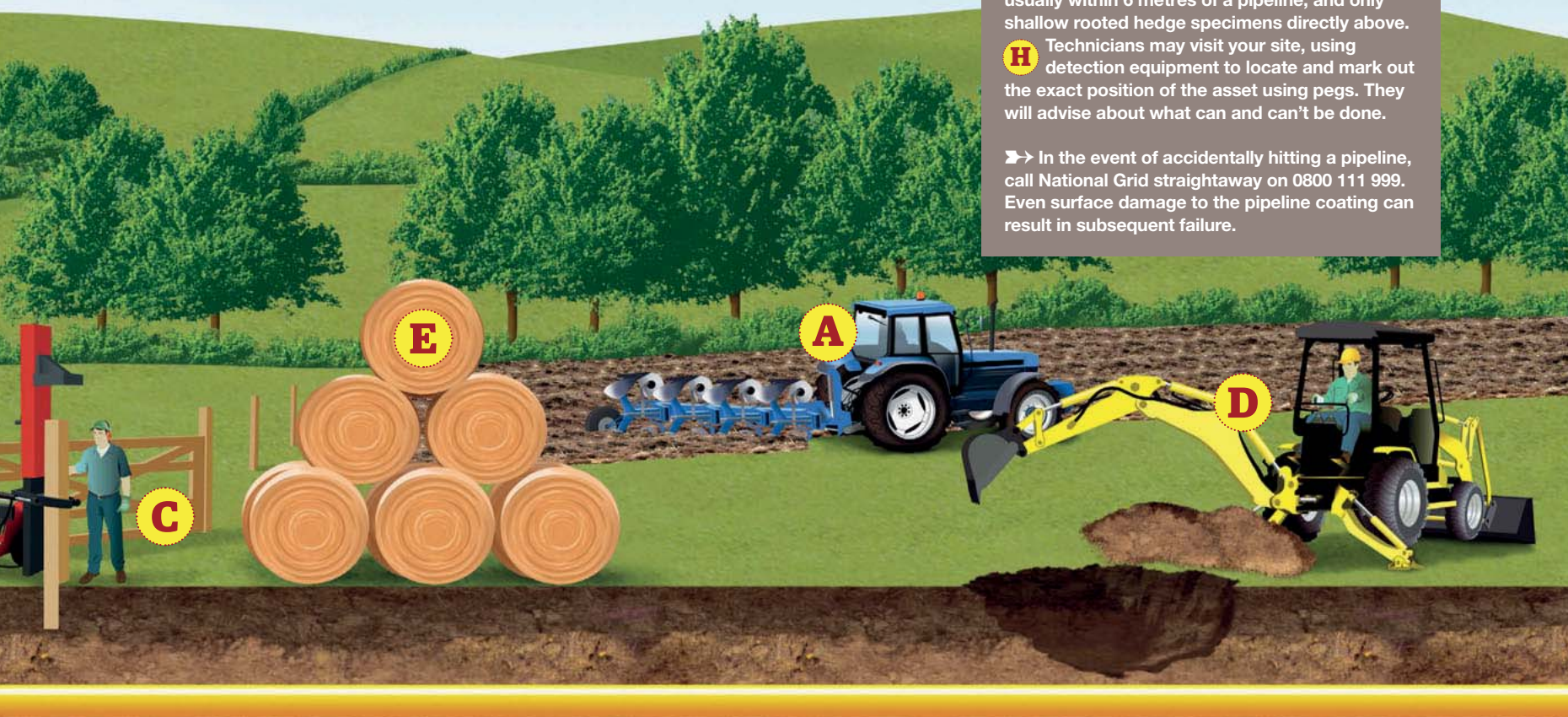
➔ Call the gas grantor helpline on 01926 654 844 to update land ownership/occupier records.

### How to avoid digging up a 'hole' lot of trouble

➔ Pipelines are the safest way to move large quantities of liquids and gases over distance, but work will always need to be carried out nearby and that's when they can become a hazard. A gas leak from a damaged pipeline has the potential to ignite. Here are some of the dos and don'ts of working near gas pipelines.

- A** Routine agricultural activities, such as ploughing (to a depth of about 0.5 metres), do not normally pose a threat to gas pipelines.
- B** Always contact National Grid before putting in new drainage using deep excavation methods, such as mole ploughing and chain trenching; before carrying out fencing operations; or clearing out ditches with toothed excavators.
- C** Take particular care when installing gate posts, which are often driven in deeper.
- D** No mechanical excavators should be used within 3 metres of a high-pressure gas pipeline.
- E** Ground cover should not be reduced or increased, or materials stacked or stored above gas pipelines.
- F** Remember, gas marker posts can be accidentally moved, and that pipelines change direction and may not always run in straight lines between posts.
- G** Written approval from National Grid must be gained before any planting on the easement strip above a gas pipeline. No trees are permitted usually within 6 metres of a pipeline, and only shallow rooted hedge specimens directly above.
- H** Technicians may visit your site, using detection equipment to locate and mark out the exact position of the asset using pegs. They will advise about what can and can't be done.

➔ In the event of accidentally hitting a pipeline, call National Grid straightaway on 0800 111 999. Even surface damage to the pipeline coating can result in subsequent failure.



# HEAVEN SCENT

It **looks spectacular**, is **wonderfully fragrant** and even adds a **distinctive flavour** to food. Gridline meets a family building a **successful business** out of a **passion for lavender**

**Y**ou can smell the fresh, sweet aroma of lavender at Castle Farm long before you see the vibrant blue and purple fields. The sunnier it is, the more intoxicating the scent.

National Grid grantors William and Caroline Alexander decided to devote part of their 1,200-acre mixed arable farm, near Shoreham, Kent, to lavender growing 13 years ago. Today, with 80 acres under cultivation, they are one of the largest commercial operations in the country.

Built on the site of an 11th century Norman castle, the farm nestles in the Darent Valley, part of the North Kent Downs, but only 20 miles from London.

Wheat, beans, rapeseed oil, hops and apples are also

grown, while the lush meadows are grazed by a herd of cattle. Fifty acres are managed specifically for wildlife under an environmental stewardship scheme.

Developing a successful farming business at Castle Farm over the past 35 years has involved a process of adaption and diversification that continues to this day.

In the mid-1980s, the farm became one of the first to sell dried hop bines for decorative purposes. Over the next decade, William and Caroline became large-scale producers of dried flowers - growing 50 varieties of flower and winning five consecutive gold medals at the Chelsea Flower Show.

When that market matured and declined, the couple



The whole family is involved during the busy harvest season - including daughter Lorna, who returns each summer from Australia, where she now lives



converted an old cattle building into a farm shop - The Hop Shop - to direct sell home-sourced beef, apple juice and honey, as well as food from local producers.

Another landmark was reached in 1999 when the farm ceased commercial hop growing for the brewery industry, which had become unviable.

"By the 1980s the brewing process had become more efficient, requiring less hops to impart the bitterness, and at the same time, beer consumption was in decline as tastes shifted to wine drinking," explained William.

Along with other hop growers, the family investigated the potential for growing traceable essential oils, which were in demand by manufacturers who were



## Varieties grown at Castle Farm

➔ Maillette - this sweetly fragrant variety is used in aromatherapy oils, and for pharmaceutical and perfume purposes. As a pure lavender, it is known for being soothing and calming, but also has antiseptic, anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties.

➔ Lavandin Grosso - a lavender hybrid cross, it contains camphor and is a mild stimulant. Its powerful, uplifting scent is well suited to candles, soaps, toiletries and room scents, and for use as an insect and mosquito repellent.

➔ Folgate - with an attractive dark blue colour, it is mainly used for the hand-picked lavender bunches that are sold as dried flowers.



There's far more to lavender than just its sweet scent



"Making and selling your own food gets you closer to your customer, adding value to what is produced on the farm"

increasingly looking for natural ingredients.

A small lavender crop was trialled on the farm in 1998. The free-draining, flinty soil and chalk proved a good fit for the plant, which is native to the dry climate of the Mediterranean. As a crop, lavender doesn't need much fertilizer, prefers a slightly alkaline soil and requires regular attention to remove weeds, often by hand.

Crops grown for lavender oil are machine harvested in July, while flowers to be sold fresh or dried are hand-picked from late June - the couple's daughter Lorna helping with the harvest each summer.

William and Caroline are part of a small co-operative with three other growers who jointly harvest and then process their crop in a distillery at Castle Farm. Steam is passed through the lavender to extract the oil, which is then stored for at least six months to mature.

While the bulk of the oil is supplied to manufacturers of pharmaceuticals, toiletries and perfumes, Castle Farm continues to diversify by developing and selling lavender-based soaps, hand creams, aromatherapy oils and distinctive lavender-flavoured foods.

William said: "To grow a farm business you can either

### It's a fact

- Lavender is a xerophyte – a plant adapted to grow in dry conditions – and is an example of an aromatic herb.
- The word lavender is derived from the Latin lavare, meaning wash, because it was widely used to scent the sometimes impure water used in Roman baths.
- In Medieval and Renaissance Europe, it was strewn over the floors of castles as a disinfectant and deodorant.
- During the Great Plague in the 17th century, people tied bunches to their wrists to ward off disease.
- During the First World War, lavender was used as an antiseptic in field hospitals.

add more acres to deliver a lower cost per unit of production through economies of scale, or diversify. Making and selling your own food gets you closer to your customer, adding value to what is produced on the farm, and generating additional income."

### Awareness

Lavender flower heads were initially used to flavour The Hop Shop's biscuits and other foods, but in 2006 a lavender essence was specifically developed for culinary use with two versions available - one for cold preparations and drinks, and a hot essence for use in baking and cooking.

These essences are now ingredients in a selection of artisan food products, including ice cream, chutneys, jams, cakes and chocolate. Lavender is also widely recognised for its relaxing and calming properties. The Hop Shop's Sleepy Scent is a blend of the essential oils of hops and lavender, which when launched, attracted a huge amount of interest in 2009 following a BBC TV programme by James Wong on the power of lavender to assist insomniacs.

Caroline said: "We ask customers for feedback on how our Sleepy Scent works for them so we can refine our products. Research has also shown the calming effect of lavender with dementia patients and its role in skin repair."

Endorsement from chefs like Raymond Blanc and Gordon Ramsay help build brand awareness and 10,000 people come to the annual lavender festival in July to tour growing areas, attend food tastings or have a lavender oil aromatherapy massage within the colourful fields.

William said: "First and foremost we're a working farm with no plans for a massive visitor centre, but we enjoy informing and involving people in our seasonal farm activities, which certainly develops customer loyalty."

### In numbers

**50%** of farms in the UK today supplement traditional incomes through a farm diversification

### For more information...



... on Castle Farm, visit [www.hopshop.co.uk](http://www.hopshop.co.uk)

# BRIDGING THE GAP

Thousands **get closer to the countryside** thanks to **National Grid's** grantors

**F**armer John Butler saw visitor numbers soar almost five-fold when he rolled out the welcome mat for Open Farm Sunday.

Nearly 1,000 children and parents flocked to his 700 acres of arable land to ride tractors, grade the wheat and get a buzz from the bees.

Grantor John, who has five towers on his land in Rowde near Devizes in Wiltshire, says the event is crucial to generating awareness of sustainable food production.

National Grid is a principal sponsor of the public open day, which attracted an estimated 150,000 people to 335 farms this year. Organisers Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF) say more than 750,000 new visitors have been to a farm since the event's launch.

John said: "This year the word was out, the weather was fine and we were busy all day. Visitors left knowing more about us, bridging the gap between us and the consumer.

"It's crucial that the next generation learns about conservation and sustainable farming, so it's great that LEAF and National Grid support that."

The farm, which produces wheat, oats, oilseed rape and rye, offered tractor rides and petting areas to meet the sheep and pygmy goats, as well as a display from Wiltshire Beekeepers.

Mum Wendy McWilliams said: "It showed us what goes into making what we eat and how labour intensive it is. The children learned about the grading of wheat and saw the end product in the shape of a loaf of bread. It was great fun."

Dozens of grantors took part and Dawn McCarroll, Land and Development communications officer, said: "For many, the countryside is something they drive through, a collection of fields. They often have no concept of what goes on there. But this brings it home to children and their parents in very real terms."

Caroline Drummond, LEAF's chief executive, said: "It is helping reconnect the public with the countryside. And more than 75% of farmers saw real business benefits, from building community relations to gaining new contacts.

"National Grid's support has created promotional materials and visitor information sheets, and workshops have improved farmers' event management skills."



John took time out of his schedule to join in the family fun



**Date for the diary**

➔ Next year's Open Farm Sunday is on 9 June.



Wiltshire Beekeepers show youngsters how a hive works



Wendy McWilliams and her daughter get a real buzz from the day

**For more information...**



... about Open Farm Sunday and how to get involved, visit [www.farmsunday.org](http://www.farmsunday.org)

# Lastword

Your chance to enter two great competitions



## TOP OF THE POPPIES

Congratulations to grantor Bronek Gynla, from Market Drayton in Shropshire, who wins a 32-inch HD ready TV for this 'Summer' picture of Judy, her black Labrador, among the poppies.

Take a look at more entries on our Flickr site at [www.flickr.com/photos/gridline/sets/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/gridline/sets/)



## A YOUR M&S GIFTCARD

With autumn approaching, thoughts inevitably turn to Christmas and that never-ending present list.

So here's a chance to lighten the load with a £150 M&S giftcard, which can be spent at more than 600 M&S stores in the UK or online.

Giftcards are valid for 24 months from the last transaction and the balance cannot be converted back into cash. They cannot be used as payment for made-to-measure shirts or large appliances.

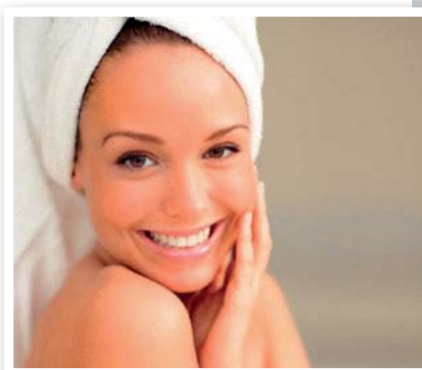
To be in with a chance of winning a giftcard, send Gridline a high-resolution picture on the theme of 'Working the land'.

Send your photo to Gridline M&S Competition, 23-25 Waterloo Place, Warwick Street, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 5LA. The closing date for entries is 27 October 2012.

Only National Grid grantors are eligible to enter and, regrettably, prints cannot be returned.

WIN!

## A luxury pamper day for two



Enjoy a relaxing deluxe pamper day for two at one of 33 Bannatyne's Health Clubs across the UK.

Relax as you both receive a one-hour treatment from a range of massages, facials and manicures, before using the spa facilities, including air-conditioned gym, pool, Jacuzzi, steam room and sauna. You can even join in with any exercise classes including t'ai chi, pilates, boxercise and aerobics,

if you're feeling energetic (subject to availability).

Prize valid until 23/12/2012 and subject to availability. Terms and conditions apply. This prize comes from Buyagift who offers 20% off a range of 3,000 gifts from Ferrari and tank driving to balloon flights, flowers and chocolates.

To order visit [www.buyagift.com](http://www.buyagift.com) using discount code 527193.

**Q** What percentage of landowners respond to National Grid to update contact information?

Send your answer from our Safety First feature to Spa Competition, 23-25 Waterloo Place, Warwick Street, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 5LA. Please note you must be a grantor to enter. Closing date is 27 October 2012.

### Contact Gridline



Tel: 01926 656 325  
Email: [gridline@uk.ngrid.com](mailto:gridline@uk.ngrid.com)  
[www.nationalgrid.com](http://www.nationalgrid.com)

**nationalgrid**