



December 2007 diary

Blog on!

Visits to this website have been increasing thanks to the blogging that I am doing with The Journal (http://blog.nebusiness.co.uk/ian_brown/). Getting into a conversation in the void that is hyperspace is a little surreal but we are in 2008, which, as I mention later, is a world with hi-tech gadgets - and the best of traditions, utopia... by the sea!

EU scale makes me think!

It can be very useful to think of the European Union as a collection of regional states rather than the 27 countries. During my December visit to Brussels I was reminded that one reason for a lack of trade in the EU is that many of us in business are comfortable at a regional basis - and perhaps what we do works at that level. What strikes me more than anything is the need - post the Lisbon agreement - to do more trade within our common trading area, given that most business people speak English. Secondly, those of us in high-end artisan food need to think how China will have moved from no middle class to 650 million members of that demographic in a generation. These people will have a massive buying power and luxuries will be exchanged around the world. Trade is good, and despite being tucked away in one of the most tranquil places on this green earth, we at Lee Moor do need to 'marinate' our minds in these thoughts once a year.



All Purple Place

New laptop - last one blew up - so with two new replacements and Wi-Fi working in home and office, we are starting to be the laptop family. I was amused to see a good package of games with it, complete with 'Purple Place'. Making cakes could well breed a new entrepreneurial generation; add Wii to that (not at Lee Moor yet) and the old idea of computer games being sedentary goes out the window. The other Nintendo-led game which is frustrating many adults is the Brain Game, where many of us are proving to be much older than our years. Talking of Utopia by the sea, the walk on the beach at Alnmouth after Christmas lunch was just fantastic and helps one put life in focus.

Partridge project has new ambassador

Congratulations to the Duke of Northumberland's gamekeeping team who have, over a three year period, taken the grey partridge numbers from a tiny 16 to over 2000. Lee Moor has had this red-list bird species protected within its biodiversity action plan for more than a decade, so it is good to see resource being put in to amplify this early work. Also, can I congratulate a man who sees Lee Moor at all times of day and night, Kevan McCaig? - who also won the Farmers Weekly Gamekeeper of the Year award. The blue containers in each of the field margins are filled with grain so that the partridge - and the other species - have plenty of food over the winter. The stubbles at Lee Moor have also been left this year - against the economic trend at the minute, which is to plough all land out and get it into more cereals. High cereal prices have been in response to supply and demand at a world level, the pendulum swings; just ask Joseph and pharaoh!

Swan Lake back?

We had limited swan activity in 2007 but let's hope we can once again benefit from seeing them breed, hatch and fledge - 5 out of 7 in 2006, very impressive. It is this sort of interaction with the natural surroundings that I know the Care Trust staff will miss when they move to Alnwick.

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