



## September 2008 diary

### Austrian efficiency in Hexham?

My visit to [Egger](#) in Hexham as the MD of [Toasty Heating](#) was a real eye opener; 180,000 tonnes of wood being processed into wood products such as MDF and various laminates.

The Austrian point is interesting. This is not a slur about UK construction, but there is an efficiency of approach which makes me glad that I sell Austrian boilers! The scale of the Hexham plant is awesome and the investment of nearly £110 million in the last two years; very substantial. This business is owned by a couple of brothers who have grown the business in a single generation, and they are in half a dozen countries across Europe.

### Hunger for local food



The Farm Bakery was the Lee Moor Business Park representative at the [food festival in Alnwick](#) during September... what a fantastic event, and blessed with the big yellow sphere which I'm assured was the sun making a rare public appearance this summer! Next month I hope to be able to write in more detail about a new hotel and hospitality business called Lamberts that Richard Sim and James Chapple will be launching with me. Needless to say the launch of a food and drink business in Northumberland is going to be a great deal easier against the background of the Taste campaign and the numerous food festivals.

I have also been involved in visiting applicants for [RDPE](#) funding; it was great to visit the Jackson's near Belford at [Sunny Hill Eggs](#). (See photo.)

### Green event

The people at the [National Trust property at Wallington](#) have been doing some really good work around carbon neutrality and also organised a green event which I attended. My grandfather helped to install the four iconic gargoyles, because he was a descendent of [Capability Brown](#). They are Griffin heads from the tower of London - I hope he wasn't deemed to be handling stolen goods.

### New Life Fitness

Pete Manion is launching some great offers at the [New Life Fitness gym](#). You can [download the details here](#) (Word document 69KB).

### Students here to learn

Honesty is the best policy with students! - especially when they are about to set out on a life of farming - so Aberystwyth sent a group to Northumberland to see a number of interesting farming case studies, and of course

Lee Moor... as a contrast. Lovely group of young adults and I wish them well in an industry that is still tricky - flooding and commodity prices being but two massive issues to deal with. 17 September 2008 was also the day that Tiptoe farm became a LEAF demonstration farm, just like Lee Moor, and it was a pleasure to represent the farm on the day – see [Tiptoe Farm's summer newsletter](#) (PDF file - 5.2 MB).

## **Flooding could have been a lot worse for Lee Moor**

The flooding in September was a once-in-680-years event and tested Lee Moor... A new river of some 70 metres' width passed us by, Aunty Enid's cottage was almost surrounded, but I am glad that those who built these properties several hundred years ago understood the dynamics of flooding. The dog club did have a foot of water on their sand but it quickly went away and they are back to normal... more than I can say for many other homes and businesses all over north Northumberland. [Well done to ONEnortheast for their emergency funding](#)... speed of action is very important, talk is cheap!

## **Bong... enigma not yet explained**

Irony is not universally understood. When I was asked to do a Q&A for the NECC business magazine I was delighted, and since what I do is so complicated I do sometimes explain that I'm a rural enigma... just by way of shorthand, really. I was then phoned to explain what I meant, and later and most amusingly the lady involved phoned my wife, saying: " Ian says he is an enigma... what does he mean by that?"

**Ian E Brown**

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