



## Lee Moor Newsletter April 2006

### Rural is at the centre of things!

Ian says: "April 2006 for many farmers will be remembered for the classic line 'the cheque is in the post' from the Rural Payments Agency (RPA), this is an unnecessary set back for a set of (mainly family) businesses that are now less likely than ever to take advice from Defra (Government's rural ministry). Lee Moor is caught up in the above debacle just like many other land managers and yet we are determined to do the right thing. We will be doing as much in terms of habitat improvement at Lee Moor as we can, we will also be keen to explain what we are doing in relation to renewable energy. Toasty Heating Ltd will be taking on a strong identity from this summer as people react to all-time highs in oil and gas prices. It is very clear that climate change is increasingly entering the public's conscience. The economy around Alnwick is still very farming focused and that will not change quickly. Having said that, Lee Moor is adapting quickly to the rise of tourism in the area with the setting up of the 'Café at the Farm'; we are selling many and varied local products... come and see!"

### Out and about

April was a busy month for Ian; Newcastle six times, York, Leeds, Warrington, Hull, Kirkharle twice, Bellingham twice, Berwick, Middlesbrough and Darlington. No need to tell him how beautiful our region is! He was lucky enough to be at the opening of the Alnwick Garden Pavilion and would wish to alert the world to its beauty and inherent high build quality. With the Environment Agency he has also been taking his committee to see Blagdon Farm and opencast site - here are some photos for you, to show that he is virtually full time showing people that the countryside will continue to have both a key role in the economic and general wellbeing of society.



## Lee Moor

Open Farm - all welcome! On 11th June 2006 many farms across the United Kingdom will be throwing their doors open to the general public; there is a feeling among many rural commentators that the link between the majority of urban consumers and their rural producers is disconnected. The most effective way to move this debate along is to get the public onto farms to see what goes on, and to understand where the food that they eat comes from.

The other key missing link seems to be between landscape and food; the land managers of Britain need a reason to keep the much-loved patchwork of fields, hedges, walls and thousands of other features in place. Farming and forestry are economic activities although increasingly social goods are the new 'harvestables'. Lucy Carolan's current photographic exhibition in Darlington shows life on an organic vineyard in France and the prints show all too well the linkages between land and people.

## Tenants' news

Café at the Farm is open for business, Isobel and Debbie will take your orders and initially will be open each day from 10am till 6pm, certainly until they find out when people are looking for sustenance. The other linked news is that Rennington Village Hall will have been transformed by the end of May 2006 and Lee Moor is keen to help this upgraded building become an excellent conference venue. The Café at the Farm or Fresh Element can organize the catering for events held there - room for up to 150 people and plenty of free parking. It has become clear to many people that north Northumberland makes a fantastic venue for team away days and Ian Brown is starting the name '**conference at the farm**' to brand that concept. From June we will also be stocking planters by Suzanika, so Lee Moor will look even more sophisticated...

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