



Contributing to the Community

Welcome to the first edition of **Ragley Estate Matters**, a newsletter designed to interest and involve local residents and business people in the Ragley Estate

The Estate is one of the largest employers in Alcester currently employing 43 full time staff as well as further supporting the local economy by engaging the services of numerous contractors, suppliers and seasonal workers.

For those who are not aware of the history, Ragley has been the home of the Marquess of Hertford for nine generations and now covers an area of 6,500 acres

across Warwickshire and Worcestershire.

There are five 'enterprises' operating within the Estate. *Ragley Hall, Park & Gardens* is probably the most well known locally and operates as a tourist attraction and events venue throughout the year.

Ragley Home Farms rears sheep, cattle and pigs as well as producing wheat, onion and oilseed rape crops across some 4000 acres, working closely with *Ragley Estate Meats* which supplies naturally reared meats predominantly through an outlet at Hillers Farm Shop in Dunnington and to the catering trade.

Ragley Woodlands operates a programme of coppicing, thinning, clearing and natural regeneration in 1100 acres of woods at Ragley with all wood being utilized by the Ragley Sawmill in Arrow. *Ragley Property*

Management looks after a range of commercial, residential and agricultural properties in the area which are available to let.



Alan Granger - Chief Executive

Estate Matters will be bringing you the latest news on all of these businesses which we hope will interest, entertain and maybe even surprise you. The aim is to establish a two way communication between ourselves and the community so if you have any comments or suggestions for future articles please do send them in to ragley@ragleyhall.com ■

Alan Granger - Chief Executive, Ragley Estate



A first for Ragley

Ragley is delighted to announce that **The CLA Game Fair 2010** will be held at Ragley Hall from **Friday 23 to Sunday 25 July**.

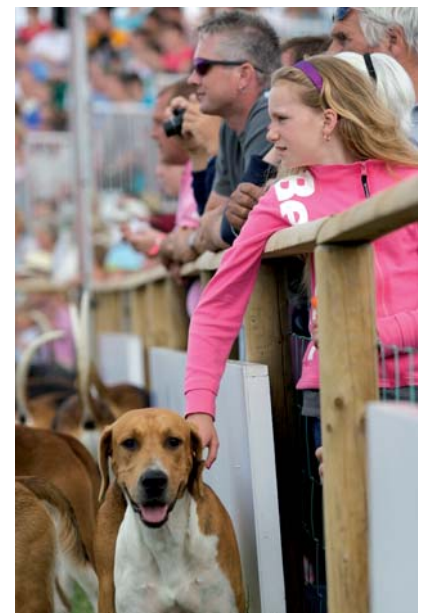
The CLA Game Fair is the world's largest countryside event which makes it very exciting that this year it is being held at Ragley Hall for the first time in the show's 52 year history.

Ragley offers a perfect venue for this world renowned event with all the facets required to site the many exhibition areas - The Totally Food Show, Hooked on Horses and Elegant Gardens, are just some of the major shows and features which will be set in the park alongside traditional areas of the show which caters for country sports enthusiasts.

Such a major national event coming to the region is good news not only to local residents but to local businesses with one third of the 140,000 visitors that the show attracts staying in the vicinity offering a boost to the local economy of between £11m - £13m.

Smooth running traffic is vital for both local residents and visitors and a priority with The Game Fair organisers with 73% of visitors in 2009 rating ease of access as excellent or good.

Although the show attracts visitors from far and wide 30% come from the local area to enjoy the attractions and we look forward to working with The CLA Game Fair Team to bring a great new family event to the region. ■



Educationally speaking...



Ragley opened its doors to education visits in 2004 when head gardener Ross Barbour teamed up with Judith Izzo, reception class teacher from Dunnington School.

They developed a programme of outdoor activities which included pond dipping and mini-beasts sessions as well as plenty of time to burn off energy exploring the park and gardens.

The visits were such a success that word soon spread to other local schools and enquiries increased. In order to cope with the workload, Judith joined Ragley as Education Officer in 2008.

The Education Programme has

continued to expand with the addition of Forest Schools, Orienteering and Art in the Environment sessions.

One of the main objectives is to get the children out in the fresh air for the duration of their visit and Ragley now has three 'outdoor classrooms' to make their experience as close to nature as possible. One of the classrooms is situated in the Gardens, one in the woods in the middle of the Woodland Walk and there is now a new site at Thornhill Farm which comes with its own composting toilet!

The reception class from Dunnington continues to visit Ragley every Wednesday and as you can see they love getting messy and creative! ■



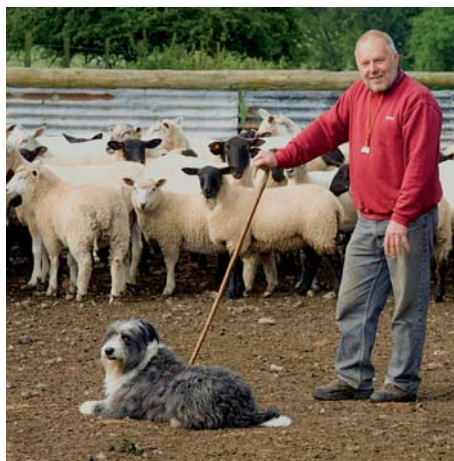
Chloe (top) & Robert (bottom right) from Dunnington Primary School. Far left: The outdoor Classroom.



Spring is in the air at Ragley

This time of year is busy for Ragley Home Farms as there are lots of new arrivals around!

Regular visitors to Ragley will no doubt have seen Barry the Shepherd and his flock around the Park and may even have encountered the Spring Lambs that are in abundance at this time of the year.



Barry the Ragley Shepherd and his dog Pip.

Lambing at Ragley tends to start at the beginning of February and will go through to mid April and around 1400 lambs are born at Ragley each year resulting from a birth rate of 175% from our 800 ewes.

The Ragley team need to be on standby 24 hours a day with Barry the shepherd looking after the flock in the daytime and Farm Manager Jon Parker and his wife Emma doing alternate night shifts during lambing season.

The lambs are sold on to Ragley Estate Meats and the meat is sold through the butchers counter at Hillers Farm Shop in Dunnington and to local caterers and restaurants.

With the importance of sustainability a hot topic amongst conscientious consumers, Ragley is a model example of local sourcing with the 'food miles' kept to an absolute minimum at every stage of the process.

For more information on the Shop or to find out more about Ragley's commitment to locally sourced, naturally reared meats please visit www.ragleyestatemeads.com ■

Did You KNOW?

Lord Hertford's family name is Conway-Seymour and the family were highly influential in Tudor times with the most well known relative being Lady Jane Seymour, third wife of King Henry VIII, who died in childbirth bearing the much awaited Prince Edward.

A portrait of Lady Jane Seymour.





Green Fingers...

Women offenders have been getting their hands dirty in an innovative new scheme run by the Making Tracks project at Ragley Hall. Making Tracks is a horticultural therapy project run by the national charity Cultivations, which promotes the therapeutic and educational benefits of working with nature.

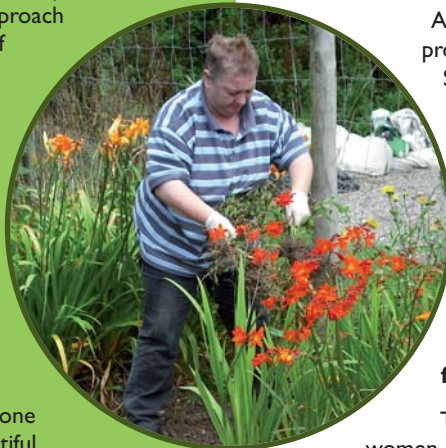
When Cultivations project leader Neil Marsh got in touch with Probation West Midlands, Probation Officer Becky Phillips realised that this approach could really benefit some of the offenders on her caseload. She thought the scheme could increase focus and self-esteem, and also that the work could prove valuable experience to enhance an offender's CV.

Becky referred two offenders to the project - Catherine and Anna - who started in May. Since then, they've been working hard one day every week in the beautiful gardens at Ragley. As well as weeding, raking, pruning, composting and planting, much of the women's work has been in improving access around the extensive grounds - such as improving access to pond-dipping for wheelchair-users.

Making Tracks support worker Jayne Mason says the offenders are always enthusiastic and cheery on site, whatever the weather. There is much laughter - and quite a lot of singing. But on a more serious note, Catherine points out that the team is very supportive and she feels she can chat through things that sometimes bother her. "I can be myself and relax here," she smiles.

Anna recommends the course. "It is hard work but it's so nice to see the results - you really notice the difference you've made," and she is so enjoying her gardening, she's signed up to do a horticulture qualification this autumn.

Lord Hertford is extremely supportive of the project and has recently become patron of Cultivations with Ragley continuing to support the charity through a variety of activities in 2010. ■



Woodchip Heating...

Ragley Hall is now being heated in a much more environmentally friendly and economical way thanks to the installation of a new Woodchip Boiler.



The three year project was completed at the end of 2009 and the new boiler means that the House will no longer need to be heated with oil.

The unit is, in principle, based on a steam engine although it generates much more power and does not require the skills of a 'man with a shovel'. In fact, a computer controlled series of augers deliver the wood chip to the fire and the wood chip is topped up when required.

All the chippings are provided by Ragley Sawmill making excellent use of what would have

been wasted wood.

The boiler currently serves the Hall for heating and hot water and it is hoped that it will be extended to supply the Stables and Estate Offices in due course.

According to Ragley's Maintenance Manager Mike Hatcher; "The boiler will reduce the need for fossil fuels such as oil and electricity, especially in severe Winter spells such as the ones we have faced at the beginning of this year. The maintenance and sawmill teams have worked hard to bring this project together and we should see the benefits for many years to come." ■

Easter Fun at Ragley

Over the recent Easter Bank Holiday, Ragley brought a touch of the 18th Century to visitors as a living history group took up residence in front of the House for the four days.

The group of men and women slept in traditional tents that would have been used on the battlefields on the late 18th Century and cooked and entertained themselves as they would have done 200 years ago.

In addition to the camp there was also a sword fighting academy for children to get involved with costumes to dress up in and a selection of children's toys and games from the period to try.

Period musicians encouraged visitors to try traditional dancing in the

rather appropriate setting of the Great Hall which was decorated and furnished in 1780.

According to Ragley's Operations Manager Lisa Sinclair; "Despite mixed weather over the weekend, the event was enjoyed by our visitors and it was great to see the characters looking at home within the setting of Ragley."

Look out for future events at the Hall on our website or if you would like to suggest a type of event which could be held at Ragley why not send your ideas into ragley@ragleyhall.com ■



events

easter & may

Ragley Spring Garden & Craft Fair

2nd & 3rd May



Classic Car & Transport Show

30th & 31st May



See over 600 classic cars and motorcycles from specialist clubs as well as Autojumble, Trade Stands and Children's Inflatables.

NEW for 2010
Mon 31st May
 is VW Day
 with VWCars,
 Vans & Buses.

Toy Car Boot Sale

6th June

Why not have some fun and earn some extra pocket money by selling your unwanted toys at the Ragley Toy Car Boot. Arrive before 11am and pay just £5 per car to set up your Car Boot stall at Lakeside.

Only toys, games and children's clothes to be sold please.



Children's Section

Spot the Difference...

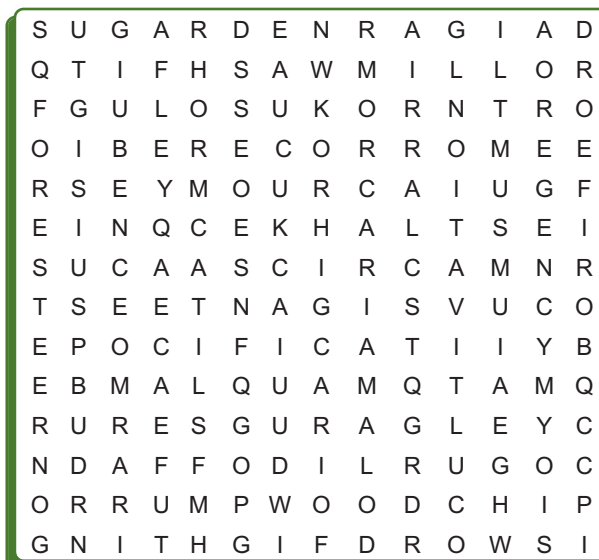
Can you spot the five differences in this picture taken at Ragley's Victorian Market?



Ragley Springtime Wordsearch

See how quickly you can find the following words:-

- | | | |
|-------------|----------|---------------|
| RAGLEY | WOODCHIP | REGENCY |
| PEACOCK | LAMB | SWORDFIGHTING |
| SEYMOUR | FOREST | SAWMILL |
| CULTIVATION | GARDEN | DAFFODIL |



competition...

to enter the draw answer the following question...

WIN a 2010 Ragley FAMILY SEASON TICKET!

When does the CLA Game Fair take place?

Email your answer to competitions@ragleyhall.com by 14th May 2010
 Don't forget to include your full name and address.

The winner will be notified by email and posted on the website.

RAGLEY
 HALL, PARK & GARDENS

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Have YOUR Say...

Let us know what you think about

Ragley Estate Matters – please send your comments and questions to ragley@ragleyhall.com