

A look at one of the businesses here at Iford

## The Costume Store Ltd

www.thecostumestore.co.uk  
enquiries@thecostumestore.co.uk  
01273 479727



*Situated in one of our brick and flint barns, The Costume Store describes its business as 'accessible accessories and personal props for stage, television and film'.*

The Costume Store was started by Veronica Pollard in 2000. A look through their hot-off-the-press 2016 catalogue shows a truly fascinating and extensive selection of under-clothes, masks, parasols, spectacles, shoes, gloves, hats, socks and tights, jewellery and pocket watches – in fact pretty much every accessory a performer in period dress needs.

Their client list reads like a who's who of the performing arts! They supply top names such as the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre, Glyndebourne, Shakespeare's Globe,

The Royal Opera House, English National Opera, the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, La Scala in Milan... the list goes on. Chances are you will have seen their clothing and props on TV programmes like *Downton Abbey* and *Ripper Street* and, to come in the autumn, ITV's 4-part drama, *Tutankhamun*.

It makes you smile to think that such a world-class business operates from the midst of our rural community. Long may it continue so – and we wish Veronica, Ruth and Eleanor a really successful 2016.



## Building for the future

John Robinson

In a previous newsletter I wrote about the need for long term thinking when designing future building developments in order to avoid some of the mistakes that we have made in the past, when buildings put up to aid expansion have turned out in the long run to be in the wrong place.

I said that we were using a firm of national agricultural architects and planners. However this time round they seem to have gone to sleep on us, so we have switched horses and are now using 'Smiths Gore' which has recently become part of 'Savills'. They are based in the south of England and have the particular advantage of previous experience of working with the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA).

We have also been talking to the SDNPA direct and they are very keen for the large downland estates to produce a long term plan which would form a framework on which future planning decisions would be made. Smiths Gore are going to help us produce the plan, hopefully by the summer, and following consultation with residents as to what they would like to see included. This plan will be a public document to which everyone can have access.

There are some big decisions to be made. The particular problem that both villages have is that most of the farm buildings are concrete framed and asbestos roofed and were put up in the '60s and '70s to house dairy cattle. They are all coming to the end of their useful working lives and unfortunately don't lend themselves to conversion to alternative enterprises. Ironically, the brick-built and tile-roofed cow sheds that were knocked down to put up the concrete buildings are perfect for

conversion! But we can't rewrite history. All farmers did it because it was the right thing to do at the time and nobody imagined that dairy farming would hit the buffers in the way it has. When I started farming in 1970 every single farm in this valley had a dairy herd and now there is only one left.

I know that Ben's wish list for the future would include siting all the farm buildings in one place with a dedicated access onto the C7. The situation at present with cattle buildings scattered all through the two villages makes for very hard work and creates a lot of disturbance for residents. Also, the grain drier, which is no longer large enough, is situated at just about the most awkward part of the village. That also raises two important questions. What to do with the redundant sites? And how to pay for it all, because in buying Swanborough last year we have nearly exhausted our borrowing capacity from the bank.

The important first step is to consult you all to see how you would like the village to look in the future. It is our intention to hold an exhibition in the village hall this spring at which you will be able to give us your views.

In the meantime I should tell you that, as a stand-alone project, we are about to submit a planning application for some holiday cabins to be sited overlooking the fishing lakes, where they hopefully won't be seen from any public point of view. There is very little provision for this sort of accommodation in the SDNP and we have been advised by the letting agents 'Hoseasons' that a development of this type is badly needed in this area. Anybody wishing to do so may view the plans in the farm office by appointment with Ben.



Cattle enjoying the sunshine in the new buildings put up this autumn

# Iford Estate News

J & H Robinson Iford Farms Ltd – est. 1895

www.ifordestate.com

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Winter 2016



## A new hope

Ben Taylor, Estate Manager



It's always nice at this time of year to reflect on the previous season and try and learn some lessons, and equally, as the days get to their darkest, look forward to the spring and the promise and hope that time of year brings.

When I last wrote we were on the cusp of starting harvest, and I'm pleased to report that 2015 will go down as a vintage year for yields, with the wheat crop averaging about 5 tons per acre. When you compare this to just 15 years ago when you felt pleased to have a couple of fields that managed 4 tons, or even last year when we set a (then) record average of 4.4 tons per acre, it goes to show what a perfect growing season last year was. You could also see this in the hedgerows and fruit trees where the harvest was bountiful, and I certainly won't expect to break this year's records for many years.

Of course I wouldn't be a proper farmer if I didn't moan a little bit, so here goes. Prices for agricultural commodities have fallen dramatically over the last 18 months with record harvests all around the world leaving stock levels globally very high, and demand from places like China slowing down. As an illustration, in 2012 I was selling wheat for about £230/t and this year it is worth less than £110 for good quality wheat and under £100 for lower quality feed wheat.

The wildly swinging commodity cycles highlight the need to become more efficient, producing our products

for as little as possible whilst maximising the yield and minimising the impact on the environment. We do this through a combination of expansion (spreading the costs over a larger area), technical improvements (minimising the costs of establishing and growing the crop) and new technologies (GPS guidance, precision applications of fertiliser and spray) – at the same time trying to reduce inputs of chemicals and improve the health of the soil through the use of products like sewage sludge, green cover crops and reduced cultivation.

Meanwhile it becomes ever more important to produce income from other sources. In bad years it can be this income which makes the difference between profit and loss. Of course one of these diversifications is the two shoots we have on the Estate, and I realise that 2015 has been a fairly torrid year for all of us in this respect. I hope that with the start of a new year we can move on from the tensions that have resulted from the shoots and strengthen the good relationships we had with all of you.

As 2016 gets underway we have a lot to look forward to. Spring is always my favourite time of the year, seeing how the crops have come through the winter, and watching them grow away from the rabbit and pigeon damage, turning out cows, and seeing the pleasure they take in eating fresh grass for the first time in many months, new calves standing and drinking for the first time and, best of all, some warm weather and sunshine! Of course I also have the challenge of trying to better last year's record yields (unlikely!) and attempting to produce those crops and animals cheaply enough to make some profit.

So as I sit here on a wet morning with the lights on I am filled with hope for the new year, and I wish you all the best for 2016. May the Force be with you!

## The Farming Year in brief

### January

Cattle work, machinery servicing.

### February

TB testing, vaccination of cattle.

### March

Spring drilling, first doses of fertiliser, calving and turnout.

### April

Fungicide applications, more fertiliser, pea drilling.

### May

Final fungicide applications, silaging.

### June

Store preparation, silaging, wild bird strips sown.

### July

Oilseed rape harvest.

### August

Wheat and barley harvest.

## Last year we produced...

Wheat for 3 million loaves

Barley for 30 million pints of beer

Oilseed rape to make 250,000 litres of oil

Pea seed to grow 1.5 million bags of peas

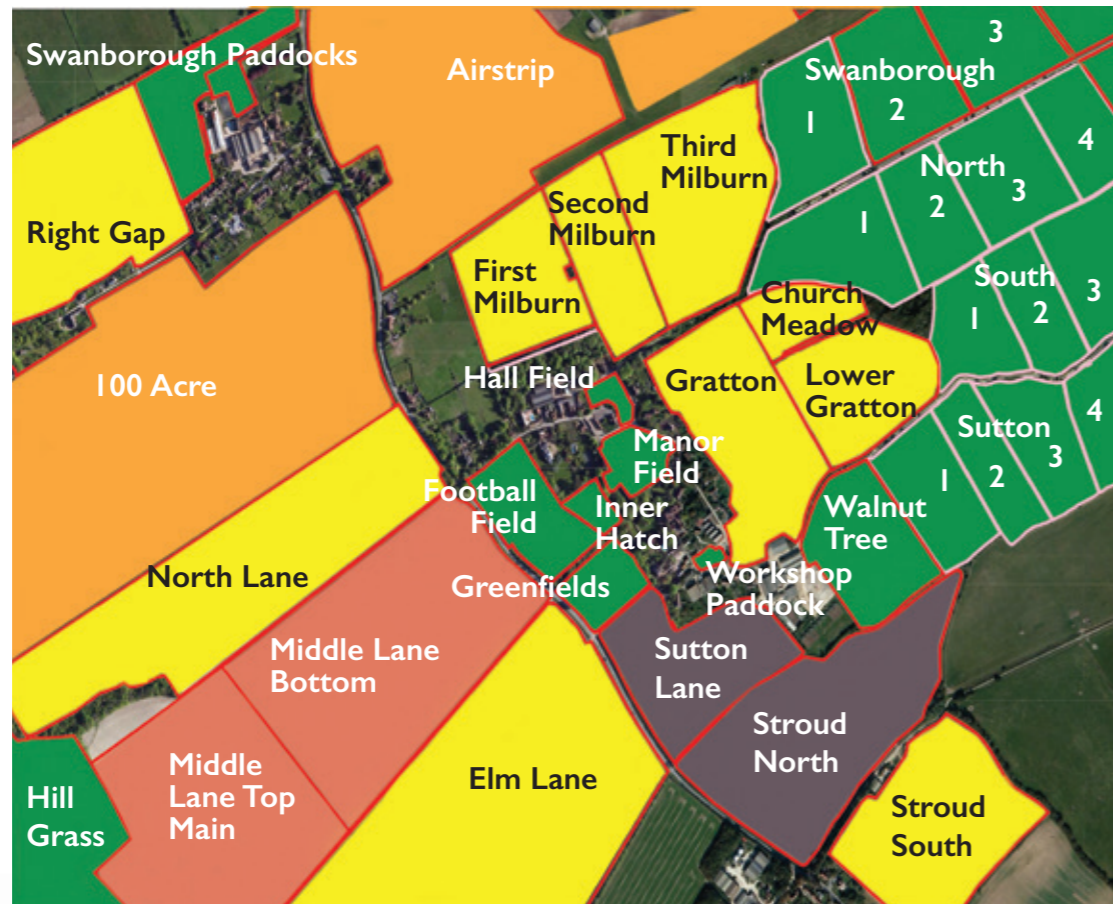
Barley to feed 2000 pigs

Beef to produce 1 million beef burgers

See what crops are going to be growing near you this year

KEY to CROPS

- Spring barley
- Winter wheat
- Sweetcorn
- Spring peas
- Grass



Not all of us complain about the rain!



Above: Pintail drake. Below: Lapwing over the flooded Iford bird hide

Our mild, wet winter has been disastrous for people on the flood plains, particularly up north. Here the flooded fields, while an inconvenience to us, provide an attractive habitat for waders and waterfowl. On an early January walk down to the bird hide it was uplifting to see so many duck and geese – wigeon in their hundreds whistling away to each other, mallard and teal of course, as well as the beautiful shoveller duck and the less seen pintail, so called for its needle of a tail, as you can just see in the inset picture.

It was particularly gratifying to see so many lapwing circling about in flocks of several hundred and perhaps up to a thousand. These birds have declined hugely in recent decades so to see them in such numbers gives one hope for the future.

In an hour's walk we counted about 40 species of bird including several reed buntings and the previously featured Cetti's warbler overwintering in our reedbeds and sending out its characteristic 'pieces of eight' song.



A NOTE FOR YOUR DIARY

The Village Day last October unfortunately had to be cancelled, however John is hoping to give his illustrated talk "Who Were J & H?" on the evening of Friday 3rd June. More details to follow.

Iford farm staff – then and now



1989

THEN: Back Row L-R: Colin Jenkins, Geoff Wells, Brian Cable, Brian Deepprose, Ron Munt (dcsd), Cyril Bates, Jim Vincent, Les Costick (dcsd). Middle Row L-R: Fred Mouland (dcsd), Eric Ross (dcsd), John R, George Flanagan (dcsd), Tony Warrington (dcsd), George Withycombe (dcsd). Front Row L-R: Paul Notley, Neil Archard, Dick Welch (dcsd), Ian Welch, Tim Field (dcsd)



2015

NOW: Back Row L-R: Liam Carter, Peter Martin, Rob Westgate, Brian Deepprose, Brian Cable, Sam Rea, Lawrence Carr-Gomm. Front Row L-R: John R, Ged R, Ben Taylor, Sue Brothers, Ireneusz Kosek

Businesses on the Iford Estate

We have a wide range of offices and workshops in our midst (with no vacancies at present). For website links go to [www.ifordestate.com](http://www.ifordestate.com)

- ANNABELS KITCHEN**  
Catering for all occasions
- ASHDOWN SITE INVESTIGATION**  
Ground investigation and geotechnical consultants
- AUTOPAINTS**  
Distributors of paint and refinishing products
- BIMBLE SOLAR**  
Suppliers of solar panels and equipment
- FITM FURNITURE**  
Bespoke upholstery and antique restoration
- GOODMAN WOOD**  
Carpentry work, specialising in furniture
- GRAIN FURNITURE**  
Manufacturers of bespoke fitted furniture
- IMAGO PHOTOGRAPHIC**  
Fashion photography
- LEWES TAXIS**
- ORANGE BADGE MOBILITY**  
Wheelchairs, mobility scooters and stairlifts
- READING ROOM DAY SPA**  
Boutique day spa
- REFLEX**  
Instrumentation for the global minerals industry
- RISE JOINERY**  
Quality bespoke joinery
- RUGGED MANAGEMENT**  
Artist management and touring agency
- SOUTH EAST METAL SERVICES**  
Designs in metal and glass
- THE COSTUME STORE**  
Costume accessories
- THE IRON WORKS**  
Ironing and laundry