

July/August 2021 Edition

We have lost another friend from our family. At the beginning of June we made the sad journey to the vets in Ashbourne to say the last rites to Vossie our 14-year-old Labrador. Vossie had been a companion for over a decade at Tissington and knew the Estate like the back of her paw. Early in my tenure I decided to name my canine friends after painters that I have sold to keep the roof on. Her name came from Cornelius de Vos a Flemish Painter from the 17th century whose picture I sold to the nation in 1990 to secure funds to fix the roof at the Hall. For Vossie's final outing I took her to two of her favourite spots namely a new plantation at Lea Hall and the Ford at Bradbourne Mill. A life well lived and I know that she will be chasing rabbits in the sky.

It is not often that a really unknown property comes on the market in the Peak District but Narrowdale Farm falls into that category. My companion and I decided to plan one of our weekly walks around it and came across 'the land that time forgot'. Starting from Milldale car park we ascended to Alstonefield and swept across the fields to the site just two miles north of the village off the road to Hulme End. Stumbling into the yard, by chance we encountered the selling agent who offered us a glimpse around the main farmhouse and outlying barns. It is on the market for £2.5million but probably needs a similar amount to make good. The last inhabitants were the Bold Brothers who lived on the steading for over 80 years and left in 2002. Narrowdale is a real gem and I trust that the site will be returned to its former glory. Ohthe walk returns along the Dove via Wolfscote Dale. Stunning.

Progress on our latest restoration project at High Flatts Barn has been hampered by the tardiness of the necessary bat survey that fulfills compliance issues under building regulations. In May we contracted the bat specialist to assist as the team from The Peak Building Brigade took the Staffordshire blue tiles off the roof for safe keeping before reconstruction. As they carefully stacked the tiles one bat was seen and captured and then subsequently broke free for two hours before being recaptured and rehoused in his new home. I can report that Barney is safe and well and happy with his new roost. The building has now been structurally reinforced with ten tons of concrete and work is cracking on for an Autumn completion when we will host visitors in this two en-suite bedroom cottage complete with renewable energy from solar power and air source heating.

The COVID 19 pandemic has of course brought with it many challenges. The restrictions on weddings being the biggest threat to our portfolio of businesses. The fact that (at the time of writing), it is advised, that guests cannot sing and dance at weddings is one of the obstacles that we must observe as we try to catch up with the postponed nuptials from 2020 and the original ones booked for the 2021 season. Social distancing, face coverings and sanitising are all part of the procedure and there seems to be no let-up imminent. By the end of June Fiona had managed to safely complete the weddings of six thankful and patient couples and we all trust that the remaining 30 brides and grooms this year will fare the same on the greatest day of their lives.

We celebrated the 80th birthday of Ken Unwin at the Hall in June. Ken was born in the village and has undertaken all sorts of 'local jobs' over the years. He mows, he strims, he fixes benches, he builds stonewalls and generally does all the jobs that others don't bother to do. He does all the jobs at St Mary's Church and is never not wearing his Tissington Estate livery. Thank you, Ken, for everything that you do for the community and our village. We even got him a special cake for the Occasion.

