

Community MATTERS

THE NEWT IN SOMERSET

Dear Neighbours,

Autumn is one of our busiest and most rewarding times on the estate with Harvest, Apple Day Weekend and Fire Night punctuating the seasonal shift. Out on the fields, harvest started earlier and was more abundant than ever with our exceptional farm team working long, hard hours to provide for the rest of the business - you'll see their incredible yield below.

Locally, Cary in Bloom was a triumph and another reason to feel pride in the community where we work. On the estate we have also enjoyed a season of success: The Head Gardener's Conference brought together an inspiring cohort of horticultural experts to celebrate the wonder of trees, and I'm also delighted to share that we have retained the prestigious Three Michelin Keys award for another year. This accolade recognises excellence across all areas of hotel hospitality, and we are proud to remain one of only 14 properties in the UK and Ireland to hold the highest distinction.

May this autumn bring its own successes for you. I hope to see you at Fire Night to celebrate the legend of the Fisher King together.

Warm wishes,

Andrew
CEO of Hospitality



THE NEWT *on the* FARM

Autumn with Jim

Jim Pitcher has been an integral part of the estate for more than 30 years, working across everything from hedges and woodland to crafting the hotel croquet lawn and Marlborough pond. His care and expertise can be seen throughout the site and underpin much of what makes The Newt landscape thrive.

Of course, to most of us, Jim is known for his enchanting deer tours and autumn is a magical time to visit the Deer Park. Around 70, native red deer can be found in the lower park, including our magnificent stags Galahad and Percival, who are now beginning their rutting season. Their deep roars can often be heard across the valley. The fallow deer, around 50, will follow a little later with their distinctive barking calls - see if you can tell the difference!

The conservation work continues too for Jim. Our Great Bustard breeding programme has had a particularly successful year, with two chicks hatched. This is an encouraging step toward the goal of releasing birds back into



the wild. Jim's passion for birds of prey has been reflected in our regular programme itinerary and his collection includes red-tailed and Harris hawks, kestrels, and little owls.

Other projects for Jim include ongoing support for native species such as red squirrels and hedgehogs, with dedicated enclosures and habitats developed for conservation and school education programmes. Constantly on the go, tending to the animals and sharing his knowledge, we are so grateful for Jim's enthusiasm and presence at The Newt.

Harvest Highlights

This year's harvest began earlier than ever, kicking off in early July and wrapping up 34 days ahead of last year thanks to the warm, dry summer. Around 2,000 tonnes of wheat, barley and beans were brought in, alongside 1,500 bales of straw ready for winter bedding. Over 1,000 tonnes of silage were also made, though yields were down due to the drought.

Our British White cattle have thrived in the sunshine, while the water buffalo made the most of the heat, creating their own wallowing holes to stay cool. With harvest complete, preparations are already underway to establish 800 acres for Harvest 2026 in the coming weeks.

DATES *for the* DIARY

QUIZ NIGHT AT THE CREAMERY: 27 NOVEMBER
FARM SHOW: 27-28 JUNE
XXXXX: XXXXX
XXXXX: XXXXX
XXXXX: XXXXX

Farm Build

We are well underway on our exciting new farm build. The new site, which replaces the current location at the edge of Yarlington, will become the hub of our farming operations and a modern complex for our mixed livestock and arable enterprise – a showcase of farm to fork and regenerative farming. Current works include drainage installation and foundation building. The access road is 60% there, with completion due at the end of the year. Timelines are on target, with full farm completion by the end of 2026. Exciting times ahead for our Farm Team!



The George & 1 Market Place Consultation

Thank you to everyone who attended the recent public consultation for The George and 1 Market Place. It was wonderful to see so many local residents, business owners, and community representatives engaging with the proposals and sharing their thoughts.

We are now consolidating all feedback and correspondence, which will help shape the next stage of the project. Your input is invaluable as we refine the plans ahead of a planning application submission in the coming months.

Community LIAISON HIGHLIGHTS

As ever, there's been plenty to celebrate in our local area; here's my quick-fire round-up:

Gold for Cary! Attending the award ceremony with other members of the committee was an absolute joy. 'Plants, Pelicans and Palaces' felt an apt keynote speech title, for a day of celebration and oddities and has certainly inspired plenty of ideas for our 2026 entry. Unsure of the format, or the exact prize categories, we were there to enjoy the atmosphere but ended up in training for a marathon with the frequency that Cary in Bloom kept being called to the stage. No complaints from us though!

At the South West in Bloom Awards, Cary in Bloom secured Gold across Horticulture, Environment and Community and won the Ayre Cup (Small Town winner); Eat Cary and Castle Cary Primary School were both awarded Outstanding, and the town also picked up the South West Tourism Silver and the Viridor School Composting Award.



In other valiant efforts... This is a shout out for the brave pilgrims who regularly hike to the estate come rain or shine. Whilst we've been forging a safer walking route, they've been tying rope to trees and hoisting themselves up through brambles and over ditches. I'm pleased to say that there are now steps in place opposite the Quarry, though I'll miss the Ninja Warrior-esque ingenuity.

I'm saying it – the Christmas countdown has begun. The shops are, of course, awash with stocking fillers, but having now attended my first carol service rehearsal, I feel ready to embrace at least some festivity. It's also the time of the year when my inbox overflows with requests for incredible Christmas fundraising and initiatives. The hampers are heading out the door as I scramble to respond, whilst match-funding of coffee mornings in Castle Cary has meant over £3,000 has been added to local causes so far. That's certainly a reason to be merry!

Speaking of merriness... Castle Cary and Ansford Carnival was a magnificent display of hoedowns, twirling and an impromptu disco in the centre of Cary. Another successful procession night and we were proud once again to be a Gold Sponsor.

Some work is undertaken more quietly. Ahead of Remembrance Sunday, Saul has been cutting and maintaining the cross on Lodge Hill. He's also done an exceptional job refurbishing the viewpoint and I know

many of you have already been enjoying his handywork.

In historical maintenance... Bruton Museum stands out as a cornucopia of local history and intrigue, much like its Festival of History and Heritage which we are pleased to be supporting. The event is well under way with an array of fascinating talks and events for everyone – witches, Zulu power and 'A Career in Ruins' are all on offer and there are even ghost stories for Halloween!

The nights are drawing in... The Creamery is gearing up to get us through the winter months with quizzes, wine and cheese nights, and a delicious warming menu all on the cards. Put 27 November in the diary and book your slot for quiz night with a chance to win Egg Head status and a Newt Hamper! It's hard to decide which is better...

As you can see there's no time to hibernate, although as The Bruton Boost's Seasonal Supper taught us with the exceptional wisdom of Beau Lotto, autumn is a time to build our own mental resilience, challenge our perceptions about uncertainty and embrace change. I remain a champion for a guilt-free duvet night, but I'll now be reframing it as vital self-care!

As always please do get in touch with ideas, feedback, or let us know about local opportunities.

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