

# Outlook

Number 21 Summer 2009



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## SYWELL AERODROME: RUNWAY HARDENING

**AN UPDATE FROM DAVID MONTAGU-SMITH**

(OUR AVIATION SPECIALIST WHO IS A KEEN AMATEUR PILOT)

Approval for the laying of a hard runway at Sywell was granted in November 2007, after prolonged dispute. Controversy over the owner/operator's plans and the potential use of the aerodrome is continuing. Only recently has the operator agreed to institute to Consultative Committee, which is required by law. The first meeting is due to take place shortly and CPRE will be represented.

The terms of the Approval (including the authorised runway length) would restrict the size of aircraft capable of operating at Sywell to small propeller-driven aeroplanes with around 20 passengers, with no prospect of significant jet or commercial freight traffic. But the Approval does allow intensive all-year training operations until late at night and in the early morning.

There is some evidence, however, that the location of the new runway does not conform fully with the terms of the Approval, and that the Operator is preparing for a larger scale level of activity. Recently a section of the Sywell wood, lying on the centreline of the new runway, has been cut down and the ground ploughed. The work is reported to have been

### Interested in hedgerows?

Our hedgerow management event is on Friday 9th October 2009 at Holcot Village Hall. It is being jointly organised with Louise Pymm of the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group.

**Morning indoor session:** the importance of hedgerows for wildlife, the role that they play as part of our landscape and the stories they tell of our past. Practical hedgerow management techniques and surveying and recording the hedgerows will also be covered.

**After lunch:** a practical hedge planting demonstration at a local farm.

After this launch event, farmers and other land managers will be invited to apply for hedge planting grants for gapping up existing hedgerows, planting new ones that will help biodiversity and the landscape, or restoring a hedgerow of historic importance.

**Please make a note of the date now:** booking details will follow later

undertaken on behalf of the operator, ostensibly for the safety of landing aircraft, without the approval of the Forestry Commission which leases the wood from the owners, the Pytchley Hunt.

It is clear that close and continuing vigilance will be needed, by the council and the neighbourhood, to monitor the activities of the aerodrome operator. We are keeping close watch and will provide advice and support where appropriate.

CPRE does not object in principle to airfield developments such as Sywell, but we know how much noise and nuisance they can make. We are determined to ensure that such projects are rigorously and expertly tested for their impact on the local community - especially one located in countryside as beautiful as that around Sywell - and that developers are kept very strictly to the terms of the approvals granted to them.

Please let us know your view - [info@CPRENorthants.org](mailto:info@CPRENorthants.org) or 01858 433136.

## AFFORDABLE HOMES: SO VERY FEW ARE BEING BUILT

### AN EXTRACT FROM A RECENT PRESENTATION BY DAVID EDSALL

Affordable Housing comes in two kinds:

- a) that built by commercial developers for sale within the planning structure and
- b) social housing, which is provided mainly by Housing Associations outside the planning structure.

The problem with a) is that house builders often refuse to build cheaper houses, even though the numbers as laid down are well below the predicted requirements. Whereas with b), although

### Upcoming Events

#### Dates for your Diary

Our Events Secretary can be reached at [Sue.Baylis@CPRENorthants.org](mailto:Sue.Baylis@CPRENorthants.org) or 01858 433136

**Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> September 2009 – Late Summer Supper** at the new Visitor Centre, Stanwick Lakes. Sit on the decking with a glass of wine and watch the sun set over the lakes. A brief introduction to this exciting new building, built to the highest ecological standards, will be given by Alyson Allfree, Director, and followed by Supper. Tickets are £15, including a glass of bubbly. Starts 6.45 pm for 7.30 pm

**Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2009** – Hedgerow management event at Holcot Village Hall (see panel on page 1).

**Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2009 – 7.30 pm**  
A Talk on The History of Salcey Forest by Andy Patmore at Great Houghton Village Hall, Leys Lane, Great Houghton NN4 7QA. Tickets are £10, including refreshments

**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2009** - Christmas Carols by Candlelight and the presentation of the Town & Country Awards at Cranford Hall, by kind permission of Sir John and Lady Robinson

Housing Associations often have funds, they have difficulty in getting planning permission if land has not been allocated.

Requirement for social housing should be viewed against the statutory duty of local authorities to provide accommodation for the homeless, who are increasing as a result of the current financial climate. The backlog in supply goes back to the initial sale of council housing when the government forbade local authorities from replacing the housing that had been sold off at subsidised rates.

The Government has accepted the Barker Report – build more houses as a solution to first-time buyers. This is also in line with the MKSM sub-regional strategy. The Regional Spatial Strategy for East Midlands 2007-8 shows that the numbers of houses being built are well short of the predicted requirement. Lower quartile house prices increased by 40% in the four years to 2008, although they have since fallen back by around 10%. Therefore affordability, derived from the ratio of prices to lower quartile earnings, has fallen dramatically.

Some of the associated issues are:

- The style of building for affordable housing has, traditionally, not been compatible with local properties. Future building should ensure that the style and design of new homes is appropriate to existing properties: using local materials, a low carbon footprint and having an affinity to existing buildings in the village.
- Young people should be able to live in the villages where they were born, and to find local employment there.
- Proposals by Housing Associations often meet with local resentment; *affordable* is often said to equal *social* housing.

Following a consultation period, the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit has drafted an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document. This is available on their website Consultation Portal – see [www.westnorthamptonshirejpu.org](http://www.westnorthamptonshirejpu.org).

In summary, the living countryside requires affordable and social housing; developments should be fully in line with the local planning system and must be sympathetic with the local built environment, in quality and style.

## A LETTER FROM TREVOR

*As part of our aim of building closer relationships with farming in the county, we invited the former county chairman of the NFU, Trevor Foss, to address our recent AGM. This letter is his follow up to that address.*

Since your kind invitation to speak at your AGM just about one month ago, farm prices for cereals have fallen by £25 a tonne, due to a predicted world harvest that looks likely to be the second biggest on record. Here in the UK the combines have started cutting winter barley in southern counties and in a few short weeks - weather permitting - will start on the wheat fields.

The price of finished lambs has eased back, due mostly to an increase in numbers being sold in the UK, but with fewer lambs coming in from New Zealand, hopes are high that they will stay well above £1 a kilo liveweight. Finished cattle prices are holding quite well at around £1.50p a kilo again - with low numbers worldwide this should keep farm prices up. The dairy industry is reeling after the collapse of a major milk buyer and confidence has really been shaken. Milk surely has to be worth more than the price of fizzy water! How about a UK fair trade milk price?

We await the announcement concerning Hilary Benn's 5% set-a-side options. Whilst not wanting set-a-side at all, the NFU is hopeful this will at least be brought in as put forward by them and the CLA - as a voluntary scheme. The appeal by DEFRA regarding the Georgina Downs case ruling - that farmers must notify neighbours when they are going to spray crops - is also to be announced shortly. This could have huge implications for us farmers: the weather changes so quickly that spraying operation decisions are often made on the spot. Ringing a person at all hours of the day and night to inform them may give rise to more ill feeling than just getting on with the job!

The countryside will change to a golden colour shortly as crops ripen, but as farmers cultivate the ground behind the combine it will very quickly turn these golden fields to brown. Over the next three months, hedges will be trimmed and a huge amount of effort made to get the harvest in and the ground sown with next year's crops.

I hope that the CPRE will continue its very helpful work in promoting local food and that we can work closely together, looking after this fantastic countryside that we all enjoy.

**Do you have a favourite photo of a Northamptonshire landscape?**

**Would you like to share it with us?**

We are keen to build up a photographic library of Northamptonshire countryside scenes, current or past, threatened or protected.

Sharing photographs is easy in this digital age – please send any you think might be suitable to [info@CPRENorthants.org](mailto:info@CPRENorthants.org). Copies of slides and prints will also be welcomed by us at PO Box 7939, Market Harborough LE16 9XW.

Please tell us the location and approximate date of the photograph and confirm that you are the copyright owner and that you agree to its use by CPRE for non-commercial purposes.

## THE SUMMER BALL 2009

[Rushton Hall](#) is a beautiful place. It is an elegant old building in the midst of some wonderful Northamptonshire countryside which is being lovingly restored after years of institutional use. That is why it won a CPRE Northants Design Award last year, and also why it became the venue for our Annual Ball 2009.



Over 130 people in their finery enjoyed a champagne reception on the old terracing, which was bathed in evening sunshine.

Despite the midges, they must have been in good-humoured mood, since they went into dinner and proceeded to contribute generously to both the raffle and auction.



Dinner conversation flowed along with the wine, and the dancing was great fun. The cabaret was again Northamptonshire's own Francine – back for an encore after entertaining us so well last year. She has a great repertoire of very danceable classics.

### FARMERS' MARKETS IN NORTHANTS

**BRACKLEY** Market Place  
3rd Saturday of each month  
9:00 am to 1:00 pm

**OUNDLE** The Market Place  
2nd Saturday of each month  
8:30 am to 1:30pm

**DAVENTRY** High Street  
1st Saturday of each month  
9:00 am to 1:30 pm

**TOWCESTER**  
Richmond Road car park  
2nd Friday of each month  
9:00 am to 1:00 pm

**HIGHAM FERRERS**  
Market Square  
Last Saturday of each month  
9:00 am to 2:00 pm

**NORTHAMPTON**  
Market Square  
3rd Thursday of each month  
9:00 am to 1:30 pm

**WELLINGBOROUGH**  
Market Place  
Last Thursday of each month  
9:00 am to 1:30 pm

**KETTERING**  
Wicksteed Park  
3rd Sunday of each month  
8:30 am to 1:30pm

People had dug deeply into their pockets for tickets and there were some very generous auction bids, the consequence of which was a welcome contribution to CPRE Northants funding. But the real dividend was in enjoyment of Rushton Hall, the music and the people.

More photographs are on [CPRENorthants.org](http://CPRENorthants.org).

### Are we on emailing terms?

Please don't forget to respond to the flyer that should have accompanied this edition of *Outlook*

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