

Friday, March 28. 2008

Game to Eat

We would like to introduce courses for our guests under the [Game To Eat](#) campaign which is a [Countryside Alliance](#) initiative.

We are trying to promote the eating of local in season Game. Charles loves nothing more than taking people shooting, fishing, beating or maybe just a day observing in the Countryside. We have found that many of our visitors would love to go beating for the day, learn all about it and finish with a real Country Pub lunch and all the banter that goes with it!! We have some great Characters for you to meet and we hope as the weather gets better we may organize picnic days by the river with a BBQ of hopefully Fish! You can learn how to catch or if you prefer how to Cook game. We can prepare it for you to have in the Cottages or to take home and can supply you with Fish or Game to take back to your freezer. Or you can enjoy preparing it yourself, the idea is for it all to be enjoyable and informative but most of all fun, and for all ages too! Keep an eye on the "Game To Eat" logo on our Home Page and click on to keep up to date with all new events. We are happy to try and tailor make a days activities for you- if we can we will!!

Posted by Charles & Dee in Dee's diary, Southlands Farm News at 17:20

Going Green

Going Going Green.....

When we started converting the Barns into Cottages it was at the forefront of our thoughts to incorporate as many green policies as we could. Now a year on it is constantly evolving.

Last year saw the development of the new Vegetable garden which I love. A fantastic place to be and we were lucky enough with our produce to still be eating our onions and potatoes now and the abundance of sweet peas were an added bonus! They filled the cottage vases thought the summer and smelt divine.

This year we have seen the arrival of the Pigs and Cows and we are now planning Chickens to be next! I am surrounded by copies of Smallholder and Country Living Magazines Easter "Hot chick pin up" trying to decide what sort ,how many, what kind of house..... We will keep you posted!

We have expanded the herbaceous cottage garden borders and I wait with baited breath to see what will appear. Already small red Peony shoots are visible through my heavy layers of good organic muck! And the delicate fury buds of the Magnolias stand waiting to steel the show!

We have planted hundreds of trees on the Farm and we hope as they mature hope to welcome even more bird life. For the last eight years we have ben in a Higher Level Stewardship scheme. This is an initiative to encourage and improve the flora and fauna. We have introduced a much less intensive grazing regime, and also a programme of capital works which include the planting of native trees and hedges that include Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Crab Apple, Dog Rose, field Maple, Guelder Rose ,Hazel and Oak. I have spent several hours with my secateurs walking the hedgerows trimming the tops in the hope we will get nice fat hedges. We have also been working on the restoration of our dry stone walls. We also made a wildfowl scrape and this month we have sighted a pair of ducks there! We have started to see if guests can add any new sighting to our list of birds that live here at Southlands and around Gunnerton. There is nothing quite like the arrival of spring and with it the dawn chorus.

Posted by Charles & Dee in Dee's diary, Southlands Farm News at 23:32

Spring at last

I just wanted to share my enthusiasm for Spring!!!! Recently we have had storms, gales, snow, power cuts etc. And today it was beautiful! Earlier in the year I found a bargain job lot of Tet-a-Tet daffodils and we planted them around some of the trees in the first field and they are wonderful-tiny golden yellow heads making quite a show after the snowdrops. Only snag is that the pigs have been showing quite an interest in them so I may need to move some for next year (little swines!)

On the subject of the Pigs I have to note that it is totally untrue that Kune Kune pigs do not dig the ground up, they do!!! However as with all animals once you have got them we tend to not dwell on the bad points... so I shall instead tell you how hysterically funny they are and what defiant Characters. Ruby being the bigger bossy one and Poppy is the social one. We have laughed as Charles can now get Poppy to sit! When the

Dexters arrived they became jealous pacing up and down the fence line until they got some attention. We had a visitor who said "so who lives in that little house" and there face was a picture when we called "Ruby, Pops" and within second these two pigs were racing towards us ears flapping squeaking with delight. Digging or no digging they are truly adorable...well as long as they don't touch the daffodils!!!!

Posted by Charles & Dee in Dee's diary, Southlands Farm News at 22:57

Our Dexter Cows

I now need to introduce you to the latest editions to the Farm.....Valentine. Celtic and Mini (because she really is mini!) -Our lovely new Dexter cows. After several fun weeks of searching we found them just near Carlisle and they arrived in late February. We also took delivery of a huge round bale of Straw and one of Hay from our very helpful neighbour. To start with we kept them in the stable - there they stood these tiny black yearling heifers knee deep in a thick bed of straw staring straight at me it was a great sight. I have discovered there is nothing nicer than going out after dark to say hello quietly and having a chat with our new friends. They have settled in very well and are slowly getting used to being halter trained!!!

Charles decided to let them out for the first time I was a bit miffed as I had wanted to be there on this momentous occasion!! When I got back there they were happily grazing in the fields it just looked so right to at last have cows on the fields. They are loving the freedom and spring grass....just think maybe calfs in a year or so!!!!

Posted by Charles & Dee in Dee's diary, Southlands Farm News at 22:31

Sunday, January 20, 2008

The pigs

Pig ark:

For Christmas Dee and I gave each other a small heap of timber with which to build an ark. Everyone pitched in and worked very hard, and the pigs mooved in on New Years Day.

We used insulation left over from the cottages, and made a very cozy home for them. Though interestnigly they have removed insulation from roof on the lee side of the prevailing wind, which gives them better ventilation. I should reinstate it to see if they do it again.

Posted by Charles & Dee in Charles' rants, Southlands Farm News at 13:10

Friday, December 21. 2007

The pigs

On November the 11th I was conned by my daughter Rosie; she asked if we could get two Kune Kune pigs, I agreed for one day only, thinking that a movement licence could not be got on a Sunday. I was wrong she found pigs and licence in Yorkshire, we are now the proud owners of Poppy and Ruby, we collected them on Remembrance Sunday, and they have taken over the stable while their ark is being built, which will probably happen over the Christmas Holidays.

Posted by Charles & Dee in Charles' rants, Southlands Farm News at 23:27