



# NETWORK NEWS

The newsletter of the National Farm Attractions Network



National Farm Attractions Network

Issue 66 Spring 2016



Photo credit: Vennersys

## CONFERENCE IS A TITANIC SUCCESS

**Farm and rural attractions from around the UK gathered at the Titanic Hotel in Liverpool from 2 to 4 February, for the annual National Farm Attractions Network (NFAN) conference, exhibition and awards, celebrating the best in farm parks and countryside attractions.**

Delegates at the conference heard from Sharon Orrell head of research and insights at Visit England on how the farm attractions sector as a whole is a winner, having outperformed all other attraction types over the last decade with the biggest reported growth in visitors. Tony Sefton from Vision XS focused on the importance of investment to drive growth.

Colin Evans, NFAN chairman said, "This year's annual conference and trade exhibition has been the biggest in the association's 20-year history. During a visit to the Ice Cream Farm in Cheshire as part of the conference we saw at first-hand the spectacular new £5 million redevelopment which is just one example of investments taking place at farm attractions around the country, offering visitors new experiences and creating jobs."

Investment and growth was a key theme for the event. There was also a lively debate on ratings valuation sparked by presentations by Wayne Cox, Govt Valuation Office and Tom Dixon, Independent Rating Surveyor. This is certainly an issue that will remain at the top of the agenda for the next year or so.

Opportunities in the schools' market were discussed by Gary Richardson, Countryside Learning, followed by presentations from Walby Farm Park, Cumbria and Stockley Farm Park, Cheshire regarding their experiences of the education sector.

The NFAN annual awards dinner was sponsored by Lappset Creative with wine sponsored by Timberplay. Liverpool Radio City presenter Rossie hosted the award ceremony. The Winner of the Large Farm Attraction of the Year (over 75,000 visitors pa) was Cannon Hall Farm near Barnsley, South Yorkshire. The winner of the small Farm Attraction of the Year (under 75,000 visitors pa) went to Cantref Adventure Farm in Brecon, South Wales. See the full list on page 3.

NFAN would like to thank gold conference sponsors: S. Gregory & Co, Marsh & Company and Davies & Co; drinks reception sponsors: Innovative Leisure and DigiTickets as well as the award category sponsors.

**Conference presentations can be downloaded from [www.farmattractions.net](http://www.farmattractions.net).**



Best show we have done this year. Great value and fantastic organisers, they helped keep us informed in every way and made us feel part of the NFAN family.

Ian Worthington, Vennersys (First time exhibitor)



Very professional event where I met inspiring, like-minded people who shared fresh ideas and made me think outside of the box. Fabulous!

Rob Copley, Farmer Copleys (First time delegate)



## 2016 diary of events

### Port Lympne Reserve Open Day, Kent

Thursday 5th May

In a break from the usual Farm Park visits, see how a complementary business operates and go on safari to gain an insight into this award winning wildlife attraction.

### North East Roadshow

Monday 13th to  
Wednesday 15th June

All aboard the coach for two days of networking and attraction visits. Go behind the scenes of some of the region's great Farm Attractions and also visit some complimentary attractions such as Beamish and the Alnwick Garden.

### Rand Farm Park open Day, Lincolnshire

Wednesday 5th October

Home to the UK's first Sky Rider, Rand Farm Park is a popular family destination that also specialises in education visits and offers on-site residential programmes for schools and groups.

### Farm Hub Workshops

Thursday 21 April  
Catering Results Booster  
Walby Farm Park, Cumbria

Wednesday 27 April  
Health & Safety Workshop  
Spring Barn Farm, Sussex

Wednesday 28 September  
Health & Safety Workshop  
National Forest Adventure Farm, Staffordshire



**Innovative Leisure scooped the NFAN Best Trade Supplier award for the contribution it has made by helping farm attractions gain more visitors and grow their businesses.**

Phil Pickersgill, managing director of Innovative Leisure which also won the award in 2014 said: "We are delighted to have won this award for a second time in just a few years. We have built up some excellent relationships with farm park operators in the past 10 years and work very closely with many NFAN members to provide them with the right attractions for their target markets."

NFAN chairman Colin Evans said: "Trade members are an integral part of the

NFAN family. A good, supportive supplier is a key part of the success of a farm attraction, and our members regularly recommend suppliers to each other. The Best Trade Supplier award recognises the important role our trade members play and is the only award judged by the Farm Operating Members of the NFAN Committee."

The judges praised Innovative Leisure for being truly innovative. Over the last decade they have worked with the industry to bring new attractions to UK farm parks, including a Traversing Wall (pictured) at Walby Farm Park, Sky Tykes Ropes Courses at Mead Open Farm and Downpour Derby at Crealy, Cornwall.

## New members

### Farm parks

Croxteth Park Farm  
Maggie's Mini Farm  
Old Hall Farm, Bouth  
Solway Holiday Village  
Tapnell Farm Park  
Tropical Butterfly House

## NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The AGM, held at the annual conference in Liverpool, saw the election of NFAN's management committee. Neil Milbourn from Walby Farm Park has stepped down and two new members have joined the committee: Robert Nicholson from Cannon Hall Farm and Tom Robinson from National Forest Adventure Farm.

### Trade members

Colour Heroes  
Haven Systems  
Mashfield Farm Ice Cream  
Planning Solutions Consultancy  
PlayScheme  
Shoot Systems  
SPI Global Play  
TYG Tickets  
Walker Associates Architects  
Zoopla



## FACEBOOK NETWORKING GROUP

Don't forget to join the NFAN Facebook Group and share news, experiences and advice with fellow members. Send your personal email address to [info@farmattractions.net](mailto:info@farmattractions.net) and we will invite you to join the group.

## The Winners

**Jim Keetch Farm Attraction of the Year Award (Over 75,000 visitors). Sponsored by Regency Purchasing**

Winner – Cannon Hall Farm  
Runner up - Mead Open Farm  
Highly Commended - Farmer Ted's Farm Park

**Jim Keetch Farm Attraction of the Year Award (Under 75,000 visitors). Sponsored by Rupert Oliver's Ideas Factory**

Winner – Cantref Adventure Farm, Brecon  
Runner Up – Hall Hill Farm

**New Innovation Award Sponsored by Marsh & Co Insurance**

Winner – Noah's Ark Zoo Farm  
Runner Up – Lee Valley Park Farms

**Lifetime Achievement Award Sponsored by David Taylor Design**

Awarded to – Joe Henson, Cotswold Farm Park

**Best Trade Supplier Sponsored by NFAN**

Winner – Innovative Leisure  
Highly Commended – Marsh & Co Insurance

**Best Food and Beverage Award. Sponsored by Booker Wholesale**

Winner – The Pink Pig  
Runner up – Adam Henson's Cotswold Farm Park  
Highly Commended – Farmer Ted's Farm Park

**Best in Education Sponsored by Colour Heroes**

Winner – Park Hall The Countryside Experience  
Runner up – Hall Hill Farm  
Highly Commended – Kent Life

**Best Digital Presence Sponsored by Partners Leisure**

Winner – Odds Farm Park  
Runner Up – Cannon Hall Farm

**And an early Christmas present...**

Rosemary Brown from Bluebell Dairy in Derbyshire was thrilled to be drawn as the winner of the VIP trip for two to Lapland to meet Santa courtesy of Lappset Creative.

## Lifetime Achievement Award for Joe Henson

There was a standing ovation as the late Joe Henson from Cotswold Farm Park was named recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award at the annual awards dinner.

A short BBC Countryfile tribute piece was played to the room and his son, Countryfile presenter Adam Henson, paid a touching tribute to his late father in a video message saying: "As many of you know my dear father Joe Henson passed away in October 2015, but before he died he was aware and absolutely delighted that he'd received the National Farm Attractions Network Lifetime Achievement Award. The Cotswold Farm Park was the first of its kind in the country and I know that dad was very proud that there are now hundreds of open farms all over the country educating the general public."



**Congratulations to Adam Henson** and the BBC Countryfile team, who won the Outstanding Contribution to Tourism award at the recent VisitEngland Awards for Excellence. Countryfile was recognised for the fantastic job it does in showcasing the beauty and diversity of the British countryside which promotes rural tourism.



**Large Farm Attraction Winner Cannon Hall Farm (l-r):** Martin Renwick award sponsor Regency Purchasing Group, Robert Nicholson and his father Roger Nicholson from Cannon Hall Farm, Colin Evans chairman of NFAN. Photo credit Shoot Systems.



**Small Farm Attraction Winner Cantref Adventure Farm (l-r):** Lesley Knight award sponsor Rupert Oliver's Ideas Factory, Colin Evans and his wife Gwen Evans from Cantref Adventure Farm, Rupert Oliver award sponsor Rupert Oliver's Ideas Factory. Photo credit Shoot Systems.

## 2017 Award Categories

This year we are introducing a NEW AWARD – The Day Maker Award, which recognises a member of your team who has gone out of their way to make a visitor's day - a Day Maker. The awards are free to enter and the deadline is 30th June 2016. Award categories are:

- Innovation Award
- Best Trade Supplier
- Best Food and Beverage
- Best Digital Presence
- Best in Education
- Day Maker Award
- Jim Keetch Farm Attraction of the Year – Small less than 75k vis pa
- Jim Keetch Farm Attraction of the Year – Large 75k visitors pa

Download your entry form at [www.farmattractions.net](http://www.farmattractions.net).

## HOW'S BUSINESS SURVEY

We are currently reviewing the NFAN business plan and are conducting a membership survey to find out more about what matters to you and how we can support you further. The survey has been emailed to you and it was also available in the delegate packs at the conference. If you have not received your copy please email

[info@farmattractions.net](mailto:info@farmattractions.net) and we'll send you a link to the survey. Many thanks for your participation.

## NFAN Committee

<b>Chairman</b> Colin Evans Cantref Adventure Farm	Tel: 07977 120533	Robert Nicholson, Cannon Hall Farm	Tel: 01226 790427
<b>Vice-Chair</b> Richard Powell Park Hall Countryside Experience	Tel: 01691 671123	Phil Pickersgill Innovative Leisure	Tel: 07860 868104
<b>Treasurer</b> Richard Waring Rand Farm Park	Tel: 01673 858904	Louise Possegger Spring Barn Farm	Tel: 01273 488450
Barry Davies Davies & Co	Tel: 01536 524808	Tom Robinson, National Forest Adventure Farm	Tel: 01283 533933
Matthew Heast Mead Open Farm	Tel: 01525 852954	Steve Vinden Odds Farm Park	Tel: 07841 562559
Lesley Knight Rupert Oliver's Ideas Factory	Tel: 07762 124325	Andrew Wolfe Willows Activity Farm	Tel: 01727 822106

All general enquiries should be directed to the NFAN office - tel: 01904 615059, email [info@farmattractions.net](mailto:info@farmattractions.net).

## Helpline – free advice for NFAN members

As a NFAN member you are entitled to free advice from the following experts. Please limit your free calls to one per annum. The experts can advise you further, subject to their terms of business. You will find them all prepared to offer special rates for NFAN members.

### Planning legislation and business rates

Barry Davies, Davies & Co. (Chartered Surveyors)  
Tel: 01536 524808  
Email: [info@daviesandco.co.uk](mailto:info@daviesandco.co.uk)  
[www.daviesandco.co.uk](http://www.daviesandco.co.uk)

Specialising in planning legislation including change of use, enforcement notices, advertising boards and business rates appeals.

### Health & Safety/Environmental Health Guidance

Ray Hipkin, Health & Safety Practitioner  
Tel: 01844 353407  
Email: [randkhipkin@btinternet.com](mailto:randkhipkin@btinternet.com)  
[www.rayhipkin.co.uk](http://www.rayhipkin.co.uk)

### Exclusive insurance scheme for NFAN members

Steve Taylor, Marsh and Company Insurance Brokers  
Tel: 0116 204 3400  
Email: [staylor@marshcompany.co.uk](mailto:staylor@marshcompany.co.uk)  
[www.marshcompany.co.uk](http://www.marshcompany.co.uk)

Providers of competitive, specialist insurance including unique cover extensions for E.coli outbreaks. We offer a site survey and full insurance needs assessment.

### Catering

Chris Brown, Turpin Smale Catering Consultants  
Tel: 020 7620 0011  
Email: [chris.brown@turpinsmale.co.uk](mailto:chris.brown@turpinsmale.co.uk)  
[www.turpinsmale.co.uk](http://www.turpinsmale.co.uk)

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### Accountancy, taxation and financial services

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[www.hwca.com](http://www.hwca.com)

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