

Haslemere Uncovered - *Swan Barn Farm*



Swan Barn Farm

For upwards of twenty years my wife and I have been involved with the Haslemere and District Conservation Volunteers. The National Trust's Swan Barn Farm is one of the many places where our dedicated team works on volunteer projects. One of the great charms of Swan Barn is the fact that this haven of woodland, wildlife and meadow is just a stone's throw away from the High Street: just behind the CAB and also accessible from Collards Lane.

Hunter base camp was named after Sir Robert Hunter, one of the three co-founders of The National Trust, whose home was a mere three hundred yards away, in Three Gates Lane. It provides dormitory accommodation for groups of volunteers on the Trust's 'working holiday' scheme who undertake conservation work on the large countryside estates at Black Down, Marley and Hindhead.

The National Trust recently sought, and was granted planning permission to replace a rather unattractive tool shed and workshop with an environmentally-friendly extension to the existing residential block. The extension, designed by famous local woodsman, Ben Law, will as far as possible be constructed from materials sourced from the local NT estate and has been designed to allow the whole of Hunter base camp to become environmentally friendly and to benefit from new eco-sensitive wood-burning boilers and solar panels. It is also very much more aesthetically pleasing than the building it replaces.

The long-term volunteers will not only be working on these properties but they will also run Swan Barn Farm as a working model of sustainability. There will be two orchards, bee hives, a vegetable garden and a chicken run. These long-term volunteers will mostly be drawn from countryside management graduates seeking to develop their careers. They will also be expected to demonstrate techniques in sustainable living both to the working holiday groups and to local people.

If you would like to find out more about this very worthwhile project, and how you can support and follow all the construction progress, log-on to the Head Warden, Dave Elliott's, webmail blog. **To access this webmail you need to delete the www from the web address before typing in:**

swanbarnfarm.wordpress.com *It is not an email address.*

Local NT notice-boards will have news about demonstration days.

Robert Serman

PS

My last article, about the town's police station, invited information about the architect, Mr Frank Hodgson. I was delighted to be put in touch with his grandson, a fifth generation architect who has a practice in Guildford. The Hodgsons have clearly made a considerable impact on the area and I am very grateful to the person who facilitated this introduction. *RGS*