

**PRESS RELEASE
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Children learn about the changing seasons at Raveningham Estate

Children from Mile Cross Primary School, Norwich enjoy a fabulous return visit to impressive Raveningham Estate in South Norfolk, to learn how food is produced and see first-hand the changes that happen on the farm at different times of the year.

Earlier this summer, a class of Year 3 children from Mile Cross Primary School enjoyed a visit to Raveningham Estate to learn about food, farming and the Countryside. The visit, organised by national education charity, The Country Trust, was part of their Food Discovery programme which teaches children how to cook, grow and where food comes from. Now, the same children have been invited back this autumn to see the changes that have taken place on the estate and how the different seasons impact on farming and wildlife.

The latest visit on 13th October will again be led by Estate Manager, Jake Fiennes, who freely gives up his time from running the estate to help children connect the dots from “farm to fork”, showing them new things about the natural world and explaining how conservation is important on the farm and for the wider environment. Jake’s tours are always very hands-on, with lots of stimulating interaction and opportunities for the children to ask questions. He says *“There’s not a child who hasn’t taken away something from a visit, whether a happy memory or a positive learning experience.”*

Raveningham Estate has been owned by the Bacon family since 1735 and Lady Bacon joined the children in the kitchen garden during their summer visit to tell them about the different herbs, fruit and vegetables being grown and gave a wonderful sensory tour of the kitchen. The children were really engaged and had plenty of opportunity to smell, touch, see and explore a wide variety of plants up close. For their latest visit, Lady Bacon will once again show the children around the kitchen garden and explain about the seasonal changes taking place, as well as comparing and contrasting how the garden looks now to how it appeared in the summer.

Lady Bacon feels particularly strongly about connecting children to the living world around them *“Urban children don’t always understand the agricultural year and the changes that are happening through the year. These visits are a perfect way to show children first-hand, the seasonal changes that take place and for them to witness the cyclical nature of the seasons.”*

During their latest visit, the children will get a fantastic tractor trailer tour of the estate, which mostly grows arable crops which include oil seed rape, wheat, barley, sugar beet, peas and potatoes, stopping off at different places of interest to learn about the many kinds of farming operations that take place and to see the changes taking place on the land and the effects this has on wildlife.

Rosalind Bacon, Food Discovery Coordinator at The Country Trust said *“We are so grateful to Lady Bacon and Jake Fiennes for providing such wonderful and insightful experiences for our children. These repeat visits are especially important in not only helping young children make connections between the food they see in a supermarket and where it comes from, but also the effect the seasons have on farming and what can be grown at particular times of the year”.*

The relationship between Mile Cross Primary School and Raveningham Estate will continue to blossom even further as it’s planned that Jake and Lady Bacon will pay a reciprocal visit to the school later in the year, so the children can show them what they have been planting and growing in the school garden.

If you are a school wanting to know more about our Food Discovery programmes and farm visits, a farmer interested in becoming a host for the charity or would like to find out how to support the work of The Country Trust, please go to countrytrust.org.uk

Editors' notes

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About The Country Trust

- Founded in 1978, The Country Trust is the leading national educational charity that brings the working countryside alive for those children least able to access it, whether through disadvantage or disability. Every year we support hundreds of volunteer farmers and landowners to welcome thousands of disadvantaged children from all backgrounds and faiths onto their farms.
- The Country Trust has 3 main strands of activities:
 - Farm Discovery - day visits to real working farms
 - Countryside Discovery - residential visits to the countryside
 - Food Discovery - yearlong programmes exploring every aspect of growing, cooking and even selling food
- The Country Trust focuses on working with the following:
 - Primary age children from schools with an above average percentage of children eligible for Free School Meals
 - Schools catering for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
 - Looked After Children and Pupil Referral Units
- In 2016 The Country Trust enabled
 - 18,079 children to go on a farm or estate visit
 - 6,650 children took part in farm led assemblies and food and farming workshops
 - 1,113 children took part in Food Discovery Programmes
 - 918 children went on 29 Residential visits
 - 361 children with Special Educational Needs took part in Countryside Adventure days in Hampshire.
- The Country Trust currently works with schools in and around London, Essex, East Anglia, Hampshire, Birmingham and the East and West Midlands, Yorkshire, the North West, North Wales and Northumberland.

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About Raveningham Estate

- The Raveningham Estate is a traditional rural Estate of some 5,500 acres situated south of Norwich in South Norfolk. It has been home to the Bacon family since 1735.
- The main activity is farming, 3,500 acres is farmed in-hand and the remainder is farmed by agricultural tenants. We grow mostly arable crops which include oil seed rape, wheat, barley, sugar beet, peas and potatoes.
- A pedigree herd of Sussex cattle and a small flock of Norfolk Horn sheep graze the Park surrounding Raveningham Hall. Elsewhere on the Estate we have a large flock of Suffolk ewes. The Estate includes 500 acres of semi ancient natural woodland which provides renewable energy and high quality timber.
- Woodchip from our timber is used to supply 4 bio mass boilers on the Estate and we have recently built a floating PV installation on a reservoir, increasing our PV installations to 4. The Estate is committed to renewable energy. We have a strong emphasis on conservation, biodiversity and creating new habitats whilst improving and enhancing existing ones.
- Raveningham Hall, was built around 1750 by an unknown architect for Sir Edmund Bacon the 8th and 9th Baronet. The Hall is Grade II* listed and home to Sir Nicholas Bacon the 14th and 15th Baronet and his family.
- Raveningham Gardens are open to the public in February and then April to August, Raveningham Hall is open under the Heritage Open Days scheme in September.