



Harrowing Times

March - April 2016

**Competition to win one of 5 Family Tickets
To The East Anglian Game & Country Fair!**

See page 11 for the full details for what you have to do.

In this issue we have two entries in the Classified Ads from people researching Smallholders in modern Britain. One is an Academic at Hull University (retained by Defra) and the other is a Student from East Anglia. Both are asking for your assistance in their studies and hopefully some of you will be able to help.

In This EASTER Issue:

- TENth Annual Show - Come & Help, or prepare to take part!
- A page and a half of Classified Ads! Something for everyone
- Please help the Researches into UK Smallholding.
- Smallholder Sid: a new series of articles by Richard Barr.
- Courses involving Dry felting, Ex Bat Chickens, and Sheep.
- Hungry mouths grateful for last summer's Haymaking!
- Course report on Bread making - looks tasty in the photo!
- Recipe - 1st catch your Porcupine! (see the competition too!)
- Liaison with our neighbouring groups - this issue: Suffolk.
- Advertisers - Thank you to those renewing and ...
- Please Check that you have renewed your advertisement.
- An item about the East Anglian Game & Country Fair.
- Children's Page - Colour in and Cut out a Butterfly.

Next Print Deadline is: 16th April 2016

Visit our website at: WWW.NSTG.ORG.UK

Smallholder Sid and the chicken feed.

Introducing Smallholder Sid who knows it all!

They were all in their usual spot in the snug of the Cowpat & Fly Public House. Holding forth as usual was Smallholder Sid, red faced, slightly stout and with a pipe in his mouth. The pipe was not lit because even at the Cowpat & Fly they no longer allow smoking (it took them a whole year after the anti-smoking legislation was introduced to persuade all their customers to desist from the weedy habit). Next to Smallholder Sid was Farmer Fred and the trio was completed by Allotment Holder Alice.

They met regularly in the snug to discuss the fickle ways of the weather, the price of turnips and of course those bloody bureaucrats in Brussels that make our lives a misery. Tonight was no exception save that it was not so much a discussion as a diatribe from Smallholder Sid.

Taking a big sip from his pint of Old Fart and grasping his pipe by the bowl to use as a pointer he started to stab the air as he launched into the evils of 'them regulations' relating to feeding of chickens. He has 13 Buff Orpingtons and a Bantam. They all lay eggs obediently for most of the year and (as Sid pointed out proudly) they are very economical because they are fed mainly on scraps from the kitchen. But, he grumbled, he has now heard that 'them lot' in Brussels have made that illegal and he now has to buy expensive poultry food.

The others politely sipped their Old Farts as Sid ranted on declaring that no one was going to tell him what to feed his chickens and he would if necessary take the matter to the highest court in the land. Unobserved by Sid (but closely observing Sid) a man with a pencil moustache was sitting on the other side of the snug. He was alone apart from the expensive mobile phone on the table in front of him and a half empty glass of orange juice. Compared to our friendly little group he cut a dapper figure in his smart pinstripe suit, white shirt and a tie that indicated that he had belonged to an exclusive club or public school.

An hour and a half later Sid was still in full flow. By then Farmer Fred had had his fill of Old Fart and was sound asleep, and Allotment Holder Alice had announced that she had to go home and water her geraniums (even though in fact she did not have any).

Deprived of an audience Smallholder Sid downed his last pint and made to leave, nearly knocking over the dapper little man in the corner.

A few weeks later Smallholder Sid was serving up to his hens a delicious

Smallholder Sid and the chicken feed - cont.

combination of fatty pieces of beef, pork crackling and the trimmings from lamb chops along with potato peelings, carrot tops and a quantity of unmentionable soggy vegetables all swimming in gravy. The hens were delighted but took fright when they heard an ominous buzzing overhead. To Smallholder Sid's surprise a large drone was hovering over him and his hens. Its camera was pointing first at him, then at the feast for the hens and finally at the hens which were beating a retreat to their henhouse. Smallholder Sid swore and waved at it vigorously. He tried to grab it but it danced away from him. Jumping was out of the question for Sid, given his weight and the force of gravity.

He dashed inside to grab his shotgun but by the time he returned, it had disappeared from sight. Several days later there was a knock on his door and there standing with a clipboard in his hand and pencil moustache on his face was the dapper little man. He informed Smallholder Sid that he was from the Hen Diet Enforcement Unit of OffCluck (the body set up to ensure the welfare of fowl everywhere) and that he had irrefutable photographic evidence that Sid had been feeding scraps from his kitchen to his hens. At first Smallholder Sid denied it all but when confronted with the evidence from the drone he had to admit it. He was given a sharp warning by the dapper little man that should even the smallest morsel from their kitchen table pass into the beak of any of his hens then next time he would be prosecuted to the full force of the law.

It was a very chastened Smallholder Sid who sat in the snug of the Cowpat & Fly the following week. Not once did he say anything about hens.

Serious legal note. If you keep hens you should not feed them any scraps that contain meat or meat products. Whether you really would get prosecuted for breaching the rules I cannot say but if you see a drone in the distance while you are carrying a bucket of kitchen scraps I suggest you eat the scraps and head for your shed and hide.

See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/supplying-and-using-animal-by-products-as-farm-animal-feed>

By Richard Barr

For more of what he writes log onto www.richardbarr.org

Watch out for "*Smallholder Sid and Whose Ditch is that?*" in the next May June 2016 edition of The Harrowing Times!