

Escrick Park Estate has earned a prestigious agricultural award for a range of successful diversification projects and a commitment towards improving the rural environment.

Charles Forbes Adam, owner of the Escrick Park Estate, and Chairman of the Yorkshire branch of the CLA, has received the Royal Agricultural Society of England (RASE)'s Bledisloe Gold Medal for Landowners. The award is made annually to one landowner who has demonstrated outstanding achievement in the successful land management and development of an agricultural estate in England.

CLA North Regional Director Dorothy Fairburn said: "This is one of our industry's most prestigious awards with previous winners including the Duke of Westminster. It is a hotly contested award and I am delighted that Charles and his team have brought it to Yorkshire."

During the judge's visit to Escrick Park they were particularly impressed with not only the breadth of diversification but also the 8,000 acre Estate's ability to maximise the potential of its rural assets whilst enhancing the natural environment.

Since 1990, a great deal of new planting has taken place at Escrick Park resulting in more than 18km of new hedges. In addition, 12 ponds have been created or restored, and nearly 90 hectares of wildlife habitat have been created on arable land. Work is currently underway to create the nine hectare Three Haggas Jubilee Wood - the largest area of new woodland in the district.

A special programme of scrub clearance using rare breed Hebridean sheep, Longhorn cattle and Exmoor ponies to graze has helped to restore open heathland on the estate and ensure the future survival of the diverse wildlife. The 274-hectare Skipwith Common at Escrick Park has National Nature Reserve status, recognising the international importance of its wet and dry heathland.

The Estate has also contributed towards sustainable economic local development through a sensitive £1.4 million renovation of redundant farm buildings, resulting in 24 new eco-friendly offices and 14 light industry units. Hollicarrs – the Estate's 170-pitch, five star holiday park – further reflects Escrick's commitment to the environment having won the David Bellamy Gold Award for conservation five years in a row since the park opened in 2005.

Commenting on the award, Charles Forbes Adam said: "I am absolutely thrilled and delighted to receive this prestigious award. Not only is it recognition of everything we have been working towards for the last twenty years but also it is testament to the great work being done by the fantastic team we have at Escrick Park."

Daniel Curtois

CLA