

RURAL & SPORTING

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2025

Keeping you up to date with Rural and Sporting matters

JM Osborne

Rural · Professional · Sporting

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WILLIAM POWELL

The Ultimate **Sporting Agency**

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HOW ARE THE GROUSE FARING?

The winter so far has been pretty good for Grouse health and whilst we would like it to get colder and drier, the Met Office are forecasting that this is going to be a dry over winter period; at the time of writing this, that seems rather unlikely! Grouse like cold dry weather and the strongyle worm does not. As the strongyle worm is perhaps the Grouse's greatest threat, what we do not want is a mild wet winter, which will only increase the worm burden.

Grouse numbers on many Moors improved in 2025 after a disastrous 2024 breeding season. Whilst stock levels are not where they would ideally want to be on some Moors, they are undoubtedly at a better level than we have seen for the last couple of years and that gives us good confidence as to what the potential could be going forward. If you have an even modest stock of Grouse, they over winter well and then we have a really good spring and early summer, the 2026 season could be good to very good. If you already have a really nice stock and the same weather going forward, it could be a great season. There is as a result much more confidence in the air from Moor owners, Managers and Grouse Keepers. We are definitely not back to where we were even four/five years ago, but almost everyone is very much more optimistic.

There is also in England, a much more determined feel in this sector, having been subject to restriction after restriction in recent years (and under the Conservatives as well as the current shower). This more optimistic feel is largely because of much better leadership in the Moorland Association. The legal challenges to further heather burning restrictions on top of many applications being made by Moors wanting to be allowed to burn, has given a spring in many steps; we appear at last to be fighting back. It is absolutely ironic that the Scottish Government who was intending to impose legislation restricting burning, had second thoughts right at the last minute, because of the wildfire in Morayshire which burnt 30,000 acres of Upland. That Natural England just across the border seem incapable of understanding this, is deeply frustrating. Making predictions is always difficult, but it seems very likely that we will see our first 100,000 acres wildfire within only a few years, given increasing fuel load and more prolonged periods of dry weather. The scale of such disaster one would have thought, would have encouraged the Government and Natural England, the organisation that is set up to oversee such matters, to really look at this in a meaningful way, but alas not. They are so fixated on re-wetting and cannot understand how Vegetation Management to include sensible controlled burning, is a vital ingredient to prevent damage from wildfires.

Anyway, enough of the gloom – the Grouse are looking good and from our perspective, we are optimistic for the coming season!



WRITTEN BY
MARK OSBORNE



“Grouse are looking good”

This newsletter has been put together by JM Osborne Rural & Sporting and William Powell Sporting, with the aim to focus on current Rural and Sporting matters. If you would like to discuss any of the topics featured in this publication or find out more about the services provided by either company, please contact us on any of the following details.

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THE MARKET FOR DEAD GAME



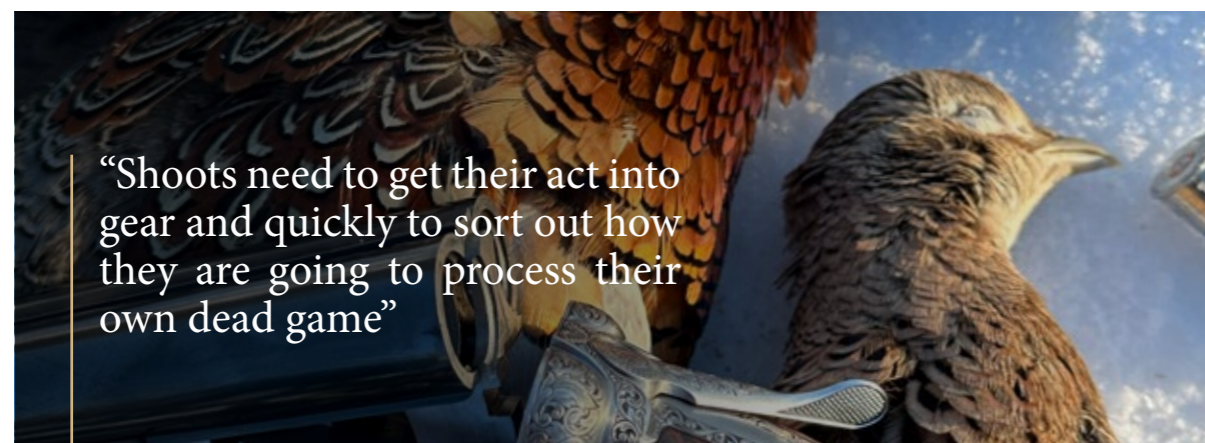
There have been ominous rumblings for several years about the state of the dead game market in the UK. As a result of this, the British Game Alliance was originally formed and out of that developed Eat Wild. The latter is a low cost trade body, working very hard to develop new and expanding markets for game shot on UK Shoots.

However, approximately 85% of all the Pheasants and Partridges shot in England, Scotland and Wales are exported to Europe (and in the main) to France. We have been extremely dependent on that market holding up. Recently, there has been a significant reduction in demand by Europe for our dead game and instead they have bought from elsewhere. The end result is that we now have too little demand for our dead feathered game, although venison is doing extremely well, aided by recent marketing efforts by Eat Wild. The simple truth is that we are shooting too many Pheasants and Partridges (too few Grouse!) for the demand for the end product, that comes from within the UK, now that the European demand for our game has significantly diminished.

So, what do we need to do?

Firstly, we need to be incredibly conscious of this and that includes not only those people running Shoots, but also those Guns shooting on them. It is absolutely essential that all of our dead game goes into the food chain, unless it is so badly damaged that it cannot. This is absolutely critical, for without it, game shooting has no food supply justification, which it absolutely must have.

Secondly, Shoots must make much more effort to supply their local market with dead feathered game (and venison too). Processing their dead game as is required by their end users is going to be key. Many Shoots are already doing this fantastically well, but many more Shoots have just been reliant on their



“Shoots need to get their act into gear and quickly to sort out how they are going to process their own dead game”



WRITTEN BY
MARK OSBORNE

Game Dealer turning up to take their game away at the end of the day. This is not now an option for very many Shoots up and down the country (and we had a real meltdown due to a very sudden and massive drop off in demand in early November), and this is likely to stay the same for next season in many areas. Therefore, Shoots need to get their act into gear and quickly to sort out how they are going to process their own dead game so that it can go into their local market. People love good game products, and we have got to satiate that demand. This cannot be done Nationally but can be done locally and must now be started if you have not already done so. Eat Wild are a valuable source for ideas and it is **OUR** responsibility to get on and do this and make sure that the Shoots we shoot on are also doing this.

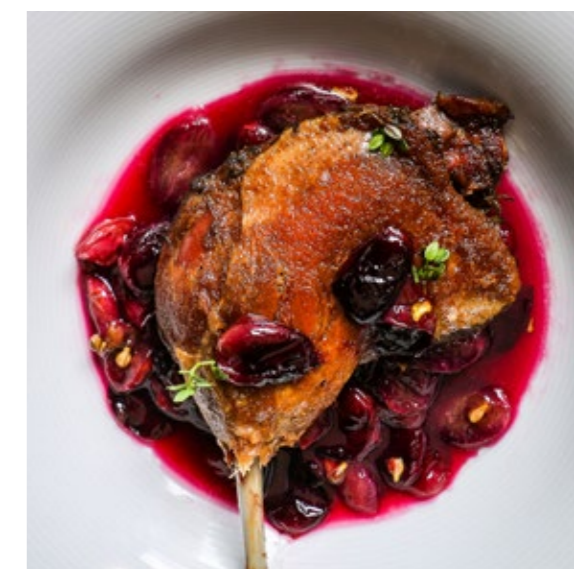
Thirdly, we need to significantly increase our support for Eat Wild, so that they can scale up the demand on National terms. We can never do that locally, but they can get contracts for large quantities of game from big end consumers. This is made much more challenging by concerns over lead shot, but we are where we are with that now.

So **EVERYONE**, please take a keen interest in this and really do your bit. If you do not, we are going to have major problems going forward and it is probably not being over dramatic, to say that the future of shooting is very much at stake.



VISIT EAT WILD

To find out more about Eat Wild, to find your local wild meat stockist or to discover some new recipes visit eatwild.co or click on the QR code above.



UK Farming Prospects for 2026

Amid the IHT decisions and debates (that you now have little influence over other than to speak to your accountant), don't forget what pays the daily bills and focus on the technical performance of your business that **YOU** can influence.



Be clear on what you 'really want and need' from your farm or estate.

BEEF: Stable but Structural Change Needed

- **Prices:** 2025 was a phenomenal year for beef prices and GB deadweight cattle values remain firm at 630-650ppkg, following 2025 highs above 700ppkg. Gross margins per head now being seen in excess of £900/ head.
- **Supply:** UK suckler herd down -12% in five years, keeping supply tight.
- **Action:** Use current buoyancy to tighten calving windows (and cull out unproductive animals), adopt EBVs (Estimated Breeding Value) and improve efficiency rather than relying on cyclical highs.

SHEEP: Strong Margins Amid Lower Flock

- **Prices:** Lamb and cull ewe prices are at a historic high, supported by EU flock contraction and export demand. Lamb prices are currently above £7/kg.
- **Supply:** UK breeding ewe numbers fell -5% to 13.1m; drought may reduce lambing percentages going into lambing season 2026.
- **Action:** Technical efficiency improvements within your sheep flock have never paid better with top performing flocks reporting margins of £150/head +, further strengthening the position of producers with an eye on the detail.

ARABLE: Precision Over Expansion

- **Prices:** Forward grain prices uninspiring with wheat futures at £174/t (November 2026)
- Wheat cost of production about £168/t (Andersons Outlook 2026)
- The ample global supply of wheat is putting downward pressure on prices
- **Action:** Avoid 'busy fool' syndrome and do not associate more acres with increased profit. With the removal of BPS support in England, this lays bare the profitability of each enterprise. Drop loss-making land and restructure (scale) fixed costs accordingly, target inputs, and reduce 'insurance agronomy' if the yield potential does not justify. Consider habitat options for marginal blocks.



POLICY LANDSCAPE:

- **England:** BPS almost gone (max £600 in 2026-27); SFI closure creates uncertainty. Expect leaner budgets and limited scheme access.
- **Scotland:** In contrast, current support regimes remain in place for 2026. Support stable (but budget unknown) going forward under Four-Tier system; Enhanced Greening (EFA 5% rising to 7%) and AECS (environmental scheme) reopening through to 2030 giving an opportunity to add an additional income stream to your business.
- **Wales:** The Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) will replace Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) payments and begins on 1st January 2026. BPS will reduce each year with a final claim in 2028. The SFS is a whole farm scheme. One of the non-regulatory requirements is for at least 10% of each farm to be actively managed as habitat to benefit biodiversity alongside food production.

KEY PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS:

- **Be clear** on what you 'really want and need' from your farm or estate. This will form the basis of all other decisions.
- **Lock in margins:** Know your cost of production and lock in forward contracts where suitable.
- **Integrate conservation:** Combine land sharing & sparing-best land for food and production, marginal land for biodiversity.
- **Plan cashflow:** Rising labour and finance costs coupled with changes in support schemes puts increasing pressure on the cashflow. Plan ahead.
- **Adopt farm technology** to drive efficiencies in your system. Established systems such as 'Yokit' now provide a real and user friendly opportunity to remove paperwork burdens (timesheets, holiday tracking, 3rd party invoicing) whilst providing powerful live data analysis of your costings to allow informed decisions yokit.co.uk



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STEWART
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LAND MANAGEMENT



WILLIAM POWELL
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Access the 'Best of the Best' as a single Gun with the WPS Syndicates

William Powell Sporting is delighted to announce the launch of two new Roving Syndicates, created in response to a clear and growing demand for individual pegs, for both UK and overseas sport. Over recent seasons, we have seen an increasing appetite from Guns who wish to access exceptional days without committing to a full team of Guns. These new Syndicates have been carefully developed to meet that demand, offering access to outstanding shooting opportunities that would otherwise be difficult for an individual Gun to enjoy.



1208 SYNDICATE

The 1208 Syndicate is our UK-based offering and takes its name from the date on which the UK Game Season re opens each year with the most sought after of Game, the Grouse. It is built firmly on the values that have underpinned our firm: quality sport, considered Estate management and a hugely enjoyable and well-run day out in the field. The Syndicate brings together a hand-selected portfolio of some of the country's finest Sporting Estates and Moors, each chosen for the standard of shooting, strength of presentation and the overall experience they offer. Designed with flexibility in mind, the 1208 Syndicate allows Guns to take a single peg or enjoy multiple days across the season, shooting alongside like-minded Guns on Estates that would traditionally only be accessible to full teams.



OFFBEAT SYNDICATE

The Offbeat Syndicate, created to meet growing interest in experience-led overseas shooting and more unconventional sporting destinations. Offbeat offers access to a carefully created programme of international trips, ranging from high partridges over Morocco's dramatic, lunar-like landscapes; to fast and testing days in Spain, and rock pigeons skimming across the sunflower fields of South Africa. These represent just a handful of the destinations available for the 2026/2027 season.

Operating overseas inevitably presents additional complexity, but it is here that William Powell Sporting's extensive International experience provides reassurance. Each opportunity is personally selected to ensure it meets the standard, not only in terms of the shooting itself, but also accommodation, hospitality and overall logistics. As with our UK Syndicates, the Offbeat Syndicate offers access to exclusive Estates/areas and long-standing relationships that would be difficult for an individual to access independently.

Together, these syndicates reflect a natural evolution of our sporting offering and we are delighted to share some examples for next seasons below.

Quarry	Date	Location	Bag	Guns Available
Driven Grouse	14 th August 2026	North Pennines	120 Brace	8/9
Driven Grouse	19 th September 2026	North York Moors	90 Brace	6/9
Pheasant & Partridge	10 th October 2026	Cotswolds	175 Birds	9/9
Rock Pigeons	17 th - 22 nd May 2026	Johannesburg - South Africa	Unlimited	6/6
Ibex	30 th July - 8 th August 2026	Altai Mountains - Kazakhstan	-	4/7
Barbary Partridge	5 th & 6 th October 2026	El Koudia - Morocco	2,500 shots / 250 Birds	8/8
Barbary Partridge	18 th & 19 th December 2026	El Koudia - Morocco	2,500 shots / 250 Birds	8/8
Spanish Partridges	9 th - 11 th February 2027	El Crespo - Spain	175 Birds per Gun	8/8

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR SINGLE GUN SYNDICATES OR FULL TEAM DAYS, PLEASE CLICK ON THE QR CODE OR VISIT WILLIAMPOWELLSPORTING.CO.UK



The Adventure of a Lifetime KAZAKHSTAN

For many, Kazakhstan is not the first destination that springs to mind. Yet for those with a passion for true wilderness and mountain hunting, it more than likely is at the very top of the bucket list. I was certainly one of those people; for years the mid-Asian Ibex had occupied my mind as a “one day” trip.

Kazakhstan’s appeal is simple: it offers some of the most dramatic, remote, beautiful and culturally unique mountain hunting anywhere in the world, at a fraction of the cost of North America or equivalents. The scale of the country, its ruggedness and its sheer sense of remoteness combine to deliver an experience that is becoming increasingly rare, an honest, unfiltered adventure crafted by landscape, weather and endurance as much as by the quarry itself.



“the horses; small, tough, impossibly sure-footed animals that would carry us between 20km and 45km per day”



WRITTEN BY
OLLIE SEVERN

Our team of four met at Heathrow Terminal 5, rifles and kit in tow, with enough time to navigate the necessary firearm formalities. Provided the paperwork aligned with the airline’s expectations, the process proved relatively straightforward. Within no time at all we were airside seated in Gordon Ramsay’s restaurant enjoying what we joked would be our last “posh meal” for some time. A short connection in Istanbul, where the airport alone feels like a city, delivered us into Almaty in the early hours and we were soon boarding a minibus for the six-hour journey to the foothills.

Kazakhstan’s service stations offered a cultural experience all of their own, and the drive, filled with anticipation, gave us our first glimpse of the landscapes, largely barren sweeping planes until we approached the foothills. At the edge of the foothills, an old Soviet army truck awaited us, our transport for the final hour into base camp. “Camp” in this part of the world means something quite different from what many imagine: simple, functional accommodation, a dining room, running water, and a group of wonderfully good-humoured people who seemed genuinely delighted to have us there.

Before dawn the following morning we were back into the army truck for the ascent into the mountains. It was here we met our guides and just as importantly, the horses; small, tough, impossibly sure-footed animals that would carry us between 20km and 45km per day. Anyone familiar with mountain hunting in these areas will know that the horse is as integral to the expedition as the rifle itself; these Kazakh horses were exceptional and contributed enormously to what followed.

What unfolded over the next five days was some of the most staggering hunting I have ever participated in. Each ridge revealed a new valley, a new skyline, and often a new herd of Ibex. We glassed constantly; spotting scopes saved miles



of unnecessary walking as we sieved through the Ibex. The wildlife was unexpectedly varied. We saw Maral, chukar partridge, eagles and a surprising number of smaller birds thriving in the high, windswept terrain. At one point, we even encountered a large bear at no more than 40 yards!

Our fly camps, small, temporary tented caps, were pitched where most suitable, close to the game but not too close. Evenings were spent around a simple meal, the mountains cast in the last light of day, and the kind of silence, other than snoring, that only true wilderness provides.

By the fourth morning, after long climbs and equally long descents, we finally found what we were after: a herd with a mature billy bedded high on a sunlit spine. The group had begun to sense our presence and were becoming restless. When the opportunity presented itself, it was at a challenging 525 metres across the valley. We set up quickly. I dialled the scope, steadied the client, and within seconds the shot broke, controlled and perfectly executed. The Ibex crumpled instantly and fell from the ridge. A wave of elation, relief and gratitude washed over all of us simultaneously, non-more so than the guide. He was likely most relieved!

Crossing the valley with the horses took time, and when we reached the Ibex the guides immediately set to work. Nothing was wasted. In this part of the world, protein is precious, and the respect they showed for the animal was humbling. With heavy saddle bags we made our way back to base camp, where we waited for news of the remainder of the team. Communication in the mountains is almost non-existent, so the sudden appearance of two Ibex on the fifth afternoon, carried proudly into camp by our other clients and their guides, triggered a wave of celebration.

That final night at altitude was spent sharing stories, comparing photographs, and reflecting on what we had just enjoyed. The following morning we descended to civilisation, returned to Almaty for a well-earned night of comfort, and then boarded our flight home to the UK.

We are delighted to have secured the equivalent week again this coming season, with only a handful of spaces remaining for this trip. If you are interested, we would be delighted to hear from you.





GUEST ARTICLE

SETTING UP FOR THE SEASON: THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD GAME FARM.

As we look ahead to another season, I am often asked what makes the greatest difference to how a shoot ultimately performs. There are many moving parts in the build-up to a season, but if I had to single out one, it would, as perhaps expected, be the choice of Game Farm and just as importantly, the relationship you have with it.

In recent years, circumstances beyond anyone's control have reinforced just how vital trust, transparency and consistency are within the supply chain. A strong relationship between shoot and game farmer allows challenges to be dealt with quickly and sensibly, rather than reactively. Open communication, shared responsibility and a long-term outlook are what I believe underpin success, particularly in seasons where pressures are higher than usual. At Central Game, based in the Cotswolds, we operate a strictly closed flock. This is fundamental. By maintaining full control of our breeding stock, we significantly reduce the risk of disease introduction and ensure consistency in the quality of our poults year after year. It is a system that requires discipline and investment, but we believe it pays dividends for the Shoots we supply.

The quality of the poult is absolutely critical. Strong, well-reared birds that are correctly developed, well-feathered and accustomed to good early husbandry, are far more likely to go on to thrive once released and eventually offer a truly sporting bird. Everything we do at Central Game is geared towards producing poults that are not only healthy on the day they leave us, but resilient enough to adapt to their new environment. Disease control sits at the heart of that process. We are fortunate to have a vet on site twice a week throughout the rearing period, monitoring health, development and biosecurity. Every batch of birds is checked thoroughly prior to despatch, ensuring that only poults meeting our standards leave the Farm. This level of scrutiny gives our clients confidence and gives us accountability for what we supply. Importantly, our responsibility does not end at the gate. Follow-up is something we place huge value on. Our vet will visit Shoots within the first week or two of release if required, offering reassurance, guidance and practical support where needed. That early oversight can make a real difference and often helps to identify and resolve small issues before they become larger problems.

In my view, choosing the right Game Farm is not simply a transaction, it is more of a Partnership. When that Partnership is built on trust, consistency and shared standards, it sets the season up on the strongest possible footing. The birds are better, the outcomes are more reliable, and everyone involved can approach the season with greater confidence. It is all well and good spending vast money on ensuring everything else on the Shoot is set up and running as you wish, but ultimately, the birds are the most fundamentally important part of any Shoot, so it simply is not worth taking shortcuts here.

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WRITTEN BY
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CENTRAL GAME

POLITICS OVERVIEW WHERE ON EARTH ARE WE?

At times momentous changes to the general order of things occur, sometimes these are fairly instantaneous and sometimes they take a period of time to come to fruition. We are almost certainly getting close to that happening now, both in terms of Farming in the UK, but also in terms of the Country overall, with the primary driver being financial. Much has been written about the Budget (and the previous one), but apart from the Government, left of centre Think Tanks, Trade Unions, the barmy Greens and the like, few intelligent and realistic people are expecting any significant change in our current decline in terms of both the finances of the Country itself and also of much of its population. Perhaps nowhere is this better exemplified than with Farming; whilst there are a few bright spots, in the main we have seen a gradual decline in Farm incomes over a number of years and more recently, a much more significant decline for a variety of reasons. Kevin Stewart has given his thoughts on the industry elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Perhaps the biggest problem that the population at large faces and farming definitely has fallen into that category over the last 50 plus years, is an expectation that the Government will provide. We have become incredibly reliant on either Government directly or indirectly, funding either our businesses or our own livelihoods.

We in Farming are now facing a world with far, far less support

This has become the norm for far too big a share of the population. However, that funding has come at a price and in the main, that has been a move away, by the population at large, from the concept that our economy is dependent on the capitalist system and unless that performs to a high standard in terms of productivity and profitability, all of us as a result will suffer. In short, we have significantly changed from a society which in the main has understood the absolute necessity for endeavour and enterprise being rewarded by profit, to a society which far too big a part of, at best is completely disassociated from private enterprise (even if they are in large part dependent on it) and at its worst, believes that the profit motive is unacceptable in this day and age.

Running parallel to this has been the extraordinary growth of Not for Profit Enterprises, either regulatory, advisory, lobbyists or even charities, who are all now involved in almost every aspect of our working lives and even more worrying, in almost every aspect of our lives at large. We only have to look at the involvement of the RSPB, Natural England, the National Trust, Wildlife Trusts and the plethora of regulatory entities

(almost none of whom existed 30/40 years ago) in the Rural sector, to appreciate how our country has fundamentally changed.

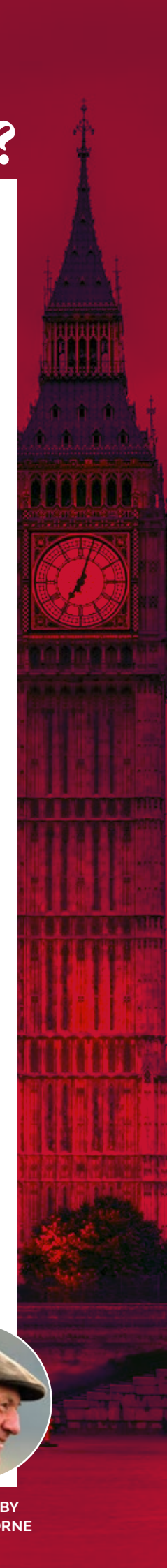
In addition, as an increasingly large sector of the population has become dependent on the Government for their livelihood and with the phenomenal increase in the size of the State Sector, the latter becomes more and more detached from the workings of industry, whether it be farming, manufacturing, building or whatever. This disconnect then filters down to the majority of the population, so we have the bizarre situation of a dependency still (and always will have) on the for profit motive, but an increasing detachment from it by so many organisations and people.

The problem with this disconnect is that we now have two societies operating in parallel rather than cohesively. The private sector has almost no understanding of the public sector, but in the main does not really need to. However, the fact that the public sector and all of its associated entities have no experience nor understanding of the private sector and this very much includes Government as well as its Agencies, and how business in general and in this instance Farming in particular works, has led to this massive disconnect. This is incredibly damaging both for individual businesses, but also for the country at large. It is best exemplified by almost all Government Ministers having no experience of how the dominant part of the economy, being the private sector, operates. However, they and the Civil Service (which equally has neither knowledge nor experience), increase regulation which stifles initiative and prevents the very aim of what the Government says it wants to achieve, being growth. In reality, until and unless there is a fundamentally different approach, the decline of enterprise in the UK at large will continue, which will have massive adverse effects on all involved, to include UK Plc and most of the population at large.

You do not have to be a member of Reform (and I am still Blue!) to appreciate how damaging this disconnect is and the very real worry that it will only get worse – until the money really does run out. That is then going to be one of the seismic moments. I suspect that until then, an increasingly dependent population, believing that the Government should (and indeed must) be responsible for everything, will never vote for any change which reduces that pipeline of support. We in Farming are now facing a world with far far less support. I suspect that this will be analogous for much of the rest of the country somewhere down the road and probably quite soon. What a depressing thought for the New Year!



WRITTEN BY
MARK OSBORNE



SCOTTISH ESTATES: LAND MANAGEMENT PLANS



WRITTEN BY
STEPHEN WHALE

Stephen is a consultant to JM Osborne Rural and Sporting, and a practising Barrister. Stephen and the team at JM Osborne Rural and Sporting are well-placed to assist applicable Scottish landowners and managers with the production of Land Management Plans.

Do you own or manage land in Scotland comprising a single or composite holding that exceeds 1,000 hectares in area?

If so, The Land Reform (Scotland) Bill (“the Bill”), is coming for you.

Fundamental to the Bill is the proposition that too few people own the land in rural Scotland (although no-one ever articulates the “correct” number of owners). As the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands, Mairi Gougeon MSP, put it: “Scotland’s concentrated patterns of ownership developed over centuries, with ownership and control of our nation’s land in the hands of the few for too long...This [Bill] is an important step in our land reform journey...” Cheerleaders for the Bill include the Chair of the Scottish Land Commission (“SLC”) and the REVIVE Coalition (“RC”). Given that the Bill will establish a new Land and Communities Commissioner (“LCC”), within the SLC, the omens are obvious. As for RC, which includes the League Against Cruel Sports Scotland, it campaigns for major grouse moor reform.

Readers should be in no doubt that the Bill is far from being “finished business” in terms of Scottish land reform, at least in the minds of land reform advocates. But the precise shape of any further Scottish land reform is of course unknown. In the meantime, this article discusses one aspect of the Bill: Land Management Plans (“LMPs”).

Land Management Plans

Technically, much of the Bill modifies the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016. For example, it inserts a new section 44A into the 2016 Act, giving Scottish Ministers power, by regulations, to impose obligations on landowners “for the purpose of promoting community engagement in relation to the land.”

This rather nebulous purpose is made clearer in the new sections which follow. Section 44B makes it plain that any regulations made under section 44A must require the owner of land to ensure that there is a publicly available LMP in relation to the land.

Moreover, the owner of land must engage with communities and tenants (including any crofters) on the development of the LMP as well as any significant changes to it. It does not stop there. Every LMP must be reviewed (and, where appropriate, revised) no later than five years after being made publicly available.

But the regulations (which will almost inevitably follow enactment of the Bill) will not be limited to the imposition of these obligations. They must also set out the information that a LMP is to contain. This information will include, at the very least: details of the land in question; the ownership structure; the owner’s long-term vision and objectives for managing the land (including its potential sale); the steps taken by the owner to engage with communities and tenants in relation to the development of the LMP (and how that influenced it); how the owner is complying with or intends to comply with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and any operative deer management plan; how the owner is managing or intends to manage the land in a way that contributes towards achieving the specified net-zero emissions target, adapting to climate change and increasing biodiversity; and how the owner is having regard to, or intends to have regard to, any registered local place plan in relation to the land.

Quite a list. What is more, the new section 44B(4)(a) clearly foreshadows an obligation whereby all LMPs are ultimately published on a single website.

There will be statutory guidance about the obligations imposed by the regulations. The Scottish Ministers must consult the LCC before issuing the guidance (pause here to recall that the LCC will be within the SLC, whose Chair enthusiastically welcomed the Bill) and, additionally, any report of an alleged breach of an obligation imposed by the regulations is to be submitted to the LCC. A whole raft of bodies and persons (including local authorities, National Park authorities, the Crofting Commission, grazings committees, grazings constables, community councils, Historic Environment Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage) are empowered to submit such reports, not all of whom must have a connection with the area of the land in question.

The LCC’s ultimate sanction for a breach of an obligation imposed by the regulations is the imposition of a fine of up to £40,000 on the person that committed the breach (backed by a power to serve an enforcement notice and impose a further fine of up to £40,000). There are provisions for appeals to the Lands Tribunal for Scotland.

Applicable land

The context for all the above is a less than straightforward definition of land in relation to which the various LMP obligations may be imposed. In short, they apply to “a single or composite holding that exceeds 1,000 hectares”. But the legislation includes a range of nuances as to this definition, including contiguous land, ownership by a “set of persons”, connected owners, a holding boundary within 250m of another holding boundary, foreshore and land covered by water (except the seabed). Any landowner pondering whether the obligations will apply to their own land may be forgiven for reaching for some combination of an OS map, a ruler, a dictionary, their lawyer’s telephone number or a stiff drink (or all five). The complexities help account for the “junk law” description given to the Bill by Sarah-Jane Laing, Chief Executive of Scottish Land & Estates. As for LMPs, Ms Laing is reported as having said that, “no other business type is being asked to justify its activities in such a way.”

LMP implications

Once the legal niceties have been attended to, LMPs will become obligatory for Scottish land in question. Owners will have to engage with communities and tenants in the process of producing, reviewing and revising LMPs. The LMPs will doubtless be publicly available. Matters which many owners of large land holdings have hitherto regarded as private and personal matters, such as the ownership structure, how exactly the land is being managed and any future sale potential will soon be exposed to the glare of publicity. It is not difficult to envisage friction during the community engagement process, heightened monitoring of large land holdings by members of the local community and reports of alleged breaches of the obligations imposed by the legislation once in force. It is likewise not difficult to imagine the reaction in some quarters if and when large fines for breaches are imposed.

Other

The Bill ranges far and wide. As well as LMPs, it includes provisions covering such matters as community right to buy, lotting of large land holdings, model leases, small holdings and agricultural holdings. Section 20 modifies the Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act 1991, whereby the provision governing “compensation for damage by game” becomes a provision governing “compensation for damage by game or game management” as well as widening the range of circumstances in which compensation is payable. All those owning or managing land in Scotland would be well-advised to familiarise themselves with the Bill and its implications.

Conclusion

The day when owners of large land holdings in Scotland are obliged to make public their structures, management operations and intentions is nigh. LMPs are an integral aspect of this obligation. It is to be hoped that this article will alert those not presently alerted, and that it further enlightens the semi-enlightened as to the nature of LMPs and the potential risks of non-compliance.

*At the time of writing, 17th November 2025, Royal Assent and the consequential regulations/guidance are awaited.



WRITTEN BY
OLLIE SEVERN

BUILDING MOMENTUM IN MOROCCO

Anyone who has discussed shooting with me over the past few years will know how often El Koudia has featured in my conversations. Our newsletters, marketing articles and countless discussions have all circled back to it, and with good reason. It remains one of the most exciting and unusual developments to enter the driven “wing shooting” world for a very long time, and I thought it only right to share an update on how the Shoot has progressed since I last wrote about it.

A huge amount of time and investment has gone into the Shoot of late, most notably the construction of its own dedicated rearing field. While the majority of the game continues to be supplied by the Royal family’s exceptional rearing operation, and this is a relationship of course of paramount importance, the team also recognises the benefits of becoming increasingly self-sufficient. As with any new undertaking, especially in a country where driven shooting is still in its infancy, the rearing season brought a few early challenges. Even so, the team on the ground produced a strong crop of poults which were released in good time ahead of the season and shortly after the arrival of Les, the English Headkeeper.

Alongside the rearing field, significant work has taken place to buy additional land which was previously leased and broaden the range of drives across the Estate. Interestingly, in the UK we are always looking to create higher, more difficult drives; in Morocco, the opposite seems to be true. El Koudia already offers a wealth of wonderfully challenging high-bird drives, and what we needed were a handful of more “traditional”

drives to round out the offering. Although we did not manage to complete all five new drives we had originally planned as negotiating access and rights across multiple parcels of land does of course take time. However, the drives we did develop have been extremely well received, bringing variety and enjoyment to teams throughout this season.



The team on the ground produced a strong crop of poults which were released in good time ahead of the Season

The off-season also presented one unexpected obstacle: heat. It was uncharacteristically hot and extremely dry, with almost no rainfall for several months. The already limited groundcover struggled to recover, and in places the lack of leaf caused shade to be far more limited than usual. Thankfully, conditions have since returned to normal, with temperatures settling back into the mid-20s. Looking ahead, we have already begun planning for additional artificial shading should next summer prove equally challenging.

Teams from across the world so far this season, include Guns from Iceland, America, France, Sweden, Portugal, England and Scotland, to name just a few.

Our season began immediately after the Moroccan game season opened, after the first weekend in October, with a team from one of our Roving Syndicates enjoying two wonderful, if rather hot days, to start things off. Since then, we have had a superb and varied run of shooting. One memorable day saw over 2,000 cartridges fired, and the quality of the birds continues to exceed expectations. We did experience a short period of nightly disturbance from local Poachers early in the season, but with Les and his team of eight Underkeepers on the ground, this was swiftly dealt with and the game has again settled well.

It has been a pleasure to welcome teams from across the world so far this season, including Guns from Iceland, America, France, Sweden, Portugal, England and Scotland,

to name just a few. For the vast majority of visitors, other than our regular returning teams, this has been their first time shooting in Morocco, and it is enormously rewarding to play a small part in their first experience of the country, the landscape and of course, the birds.

We are now finalising the terms, conditions and pricing structure for the 2026/27 season and also assembling the shooting calendar. If you, or anyone you know, might be interested in joining us, whether as a full team or an individual Gun, we would be delighted to hear from you and assist in any way we can.

El Koudia continues to grow, evolve and surprise, and it is immensely exciting to be part of its journey. We look forward to sharing more over the coming months.



To find out more about the shooting at El Koudia, Morocco or any of our other overseas destinations please visit our website williampowellsporting.co.uk





RENTERS RIGHTS ACT

WRITTEN BY
JACK LAWRENCE

The Renters Rights Act, formally introduced by Michael Gove in 2023 as the Renters (Reform) Bill, received Royal Assent on 27th October 2025. This is the most significant change in the Private Rented Sector since the Housing Act 1988. Its gradual three-phase implementation begins on 1st May 2026 and will introduce the following changes; the abolishment of Section 21 “no-fault evictions”, replacing fixed-term assured Shorthold Tenancies with open-ended Periodic Tenancies, updated grounds for possession, limiting rent increases to once per annum, banning rental bidding and reducing the Tenant paying rent in advance to a maximum of one month’s rent, making it illegal to discriminate against renters with children or those receiving benefits, requiring landlords to consider Tenant pet requests, and strengthening Local Council enforcement and rent repayment orders.

Phase Two, due “from late 2026”, will see the introduction of the Private Rented Sector Database and the new Landlord Ombudsman. The third and final phase has not been given a timeframe (at the time of writing) and will follow consultation. This phase will introduce a Decent Homes Standard and extend Awaab’s Law to the Private Rented Sector.

This legislation is very tenant-orientated, and we believe it will have a significant detrimental effect on the Private Rented Sector and the wider property market.

In a previous Newsletter we expressed amazement that a Conservative Minister could try to fundamentally change the Freedom of Contract from residential lettings, which Mrs Thatcher had first introduced in 1980.

The increased bureaucracy which this new Act will impose on small Landlords may be the final nail in the

coffin for many, particularly those who do not wish to continue letting without any guarantee of being able to regain possession when they reasonably need to. Tenants may surrender their agreement with two months’ notice, yet Landlords must now meet strict possession criteria. Labour have made their stance towards the “wealthy” clear on many occasions during their time in office and this Act appears to be yet another hit on the so-called middle class.

Apprehension around the impact of this legislation has already been felt. January 2025 saw 7.3% more properties listed for sale compared with January 2024. Data from TwentyEA also shows that in the final three months of 2024, 12.2% of all new sale instructions were properties that had been rented at some point in the previous three years. While the Labour Government claims these changes will “give renters much greater security and stability so they can stay in their homes for longer”, we fear the opposite will occur, with many more Landlords exiting the sector than perhaps expected. We expect to see a reduced supply of rental homes, particularly from small-scale Landlords, as a direct result of this legislation. A direct consequence of this will likely be an increase in rent as supply reduces and landlords weigh up the increased time, risk, and capital required to continue letting residential property.

So where do we go from here? The legislation is here to stay, and compliance is now essential. Our recommendation is to seek professional advice when letting your property to ensure you remain fully compliant with every stage of implementation. A breach of this legislation may result in a civil penalty of up to £7,000, while an offence may lead to a Civil Penalty of up to £40,000 or prosecution by the Local Authority, so it is essential that you comply.

If you need advice on your property portfolio or guidance on the upcoming changes, please contact us at info@jmosborne.co.uk, where we would be delighted to assist.



El Crespo

The Finest Spanish Partridge

Spain is a well-established and much-loved destination for those already familiar with shooting abroad. However, we recognise that for many of our clients it remains relatively unexplored, and it is for this reason that there is significant value in working with a sporting agency when considering shooting in Spain.

In most cases, the “cost” of the sporting agency’s expertise is covered by the shoot itself, meaning there is often no additional cost to the client for our services. That said, there can be a real cost in not using an experienced agent. Spain, like many overseas destinations, can be a little bit of a minefield when it comes to identifying the right estate to suit your specific requirements. Having spent a considerable amount of time as an agency operating in Spain over the past decades, we like to think we have developed a strong understanding of the country, its regions, and what the various shoots can genuinely offer.

It is rare to find a single estate capable of accommodating such a wide range of expectations, but El Crespo is very much one of those. We began working with El Crespo relatively recently, and I had the great pleasure of spending a good lot of time on the estate this season. It is, in our view, one of the most authentic and traditional Spanish partridge shoots, both in terms of its principal house and the quality and variety of shooting across the estate. The drives are diverse and thoughtfully designed to suit differing preferences, while the house itself is truly beautiful, offering a comfortable and thoroughly authentic atmosphere.

Given how strongly we feel about El Crespo and all that it offers, we took Jonny Carter and his videographer, Sasha, to the estate in early October to capture it at its very best. We are delighted to include a QR code below linking to the TGS channel which will shortly host the resulting film, providing an excellent insight into El Crespo and the experience it offers.

Should shooting at El Crespo be of interest, please do let me know. We have a good range of availability for full teams, as well as a selection of single-peg dates for those who may wish to explore that option.

“It is rare to find a single estate capable of accommodating such a wide range of expectations!”



CLICK ON THE QR CODE TO VISIT THE TGS OUTDOORS YOUTUBE CHANNEL



SHOULD YOU INVEST IN WINES?

Well it depends really on what you are wanting to achieve by doing so...

If you want to buy wine and then sell all of it after a few years, then the market is difficult at the moment and not that buoyant in the traditional areas, some very small niche wines sold on allocation are still performing quite well, but the majority are not. The other matter to consider is that selling your investment incurs quite a few costs, commission by auction houses and also selling into the trade achieves a lower price than the market price. The fine wines market has a lot of stock and many wines can be bought now for a similar price to the price which they were released at.

On the other hand, if you wish to “invest” in wine so that you build up a good cellar for your own and your family’s enjoyment, this is still a good route. Careful buying every year of a few choice wines can build up a very nice collection to enjoy over many years. If by some chance you have bought a gem that has rocketed in price, then sell that, and that will help to subsidise a few other bottles you have bought.

Port is a long-term keeper and the secondary market is fairly slow, so not the best returns. The world of whisky investment has been tarnished by a few not so reputable brokers. The market was very bullish a few years ago, driven by a very strong Asian market, where very expensive bottles of malt Whisky were bought by the barrel and used as gifts. This market has now totally collapsed. If you are insistent on investing in wine, the very top Bordeaux wines still perform; these are generally the first growth wines. Red Burgundies from a few top Domaines sold on allocation can achieve very good returns. Very top Italian red wines from Piemonte and Tuscany can do well. But really only the very best and in the best vintages.

Champagne can produce a return, but with all of these investments, remember the selling costs can take the cream off the top.

In summary, the best answer for investment in wine, is to set an annual budget and buy that amount every year and in not too many years, you will have a sizable stock and significant value. With our friendly government taxes go up on everything but wine sold up to £6,000 per year is excluded.

Wine is for drinking and enjoying, probably in the market as it is at the moment, it is not the very best of investments.



WRITTEN BY
ANDREW FIRTH



GUEST
ARTICLE



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“We will be pursuing an impressive variety of wild game, including black and grey francolin, more species of duck than you could sensibly count (Mallard, pintail, gadwall, marbled teal, common teal, shoveler, shelduck, pochard, red crested pochard and wigeon), driven wild boar, and possibly hog deer and snipe.”



Is Pakistan a Wild Wing-Shooting Paradise?

There is unfairly, a rather well-established image of the sporting agent: swanning about the world, gun under one arm, glass of something cold in the other, all against a backdrop of effortless luxury. The reality more often involves spreadsheets, endless hours on the M6, WhatsApp messages at ungodly hours and an intimate knowledge of airline baggage policies. Fascinating I am sure, but hardly the stuff of a good newsletter. So instead, this piece focuses on something that I am confident will sit at the top of my 2025/2026 season sporting highlight reel!

It is rarer than one might imagine for us to find ourselves behind the gun rather than cheerleading from behind the line, but when those opportunities do arise, they tend to be properly exciting. It is even rarer for me to write about a trip before it has happened, but the anticipation in this case is so high that I simply could not resist. After all, anticipation is a large part of what makes these trips so special, and frankly, a big part of why we do what we do.

In our ongoing quest to uncover the most exciting and genuinely “off-beat” sporting adventures, I have been invited to Pakistan for what can only be described as a wild wing-shooting extravaganza. I thought it might be rather entertaining to provide a “before and after” account of the trip and see whether such an unusual destination lives up to expectations, or indeed spectacularly exceeds them.

On 12th January, I will be flying into southern Pakistan, where I will be met by my extremely generous hosts, who will look after me until my return to England on

20th January. During that time, we will be pursuing an impressive variety of wild game, including black and grey francolin, more species of duck than you could sensibly count (Mallard, pintail, gadwall, marbled teal, common teal, shoveler, shelduck, pochard, red crested pochard and wigeon), driven wild boar, and possibly hog deer and snipe. In short, a trip that reads very much like a sportsman’s wish list.

While the UK still offers some exceptional Wild Game Shooting, it is perhaps not quite what it was eighty years ago, when wild grey partridge was abundant and a regular feature of the gamebook. This trip to Pakistan may well offer parallels into what shooting once was or perhaps even further back, before modern agriculture and today’s vermin pressures began to ravage our wild game populations.

As dreamy as this all sounds, there is, as ever an edge to it. We are genuinely excited about exploring the viability of offering a very small number of highly selective trips to Pakistan each year, opening this remarkable opportunity to those seeking something truly off-piste. It promises not only exceptional shooting, but also a rich and immersive cultural experience alongside it.

I have not previously spent time in this part of the world, but I am hugely looking forward to discovering all that it has to offer and will very much enjoy reporting back on the successes, or otherwise, of my time in Pakistan.

And yes, I appreciate that this may do little to dispel the myth of the Sporting Agent endlessly “swanning around the world shooting and fishing”, but from time to time, we do this and I can assure you, no one enjoys it or appreciates it more!

If an adventure like this might be of interest to you, please do get in touch. We would be delighted to keep you in mind should Pakistan become a destination we formally open in the future.





GROUSE SHOOTING OPPORTUNITIES

It is very seldom that good opportunities to shoot Grouse come along, this being a very finite market. Because of the poor to modest performance of most Moors over the last two/three years and with demand having remained high, there has been a significant shortage of opportunity.

However, we are delighted that William Powell Sporting has been entrusted with being asked to find parties who might be interested in the following Grouse shooting syndicate opportunities;

NORTH YORKS SYNDICATE

A new Grouse Shooting Syndicate is being established on a small Moor in North Yorkshire with expected bags of 40-75 brace per day and shooting four to up to eight days a season, over an anticipated seven year term. This is very much a fun Moor, with an existing team of keen sportsmen who took on the Lease of this Moor, which is being fully kept. They are looking for another couple of Guns to join them. There is not a lot of walking to the butts, so perhaps ideal for the older Gun! It is absolutely essential that whoever joins the Syndicate will be like minded sportsmen (or women), safe shots, not greedy and wanting to enjoy most enjoyable days on a lovely small Moor. Some "outside" walked up shooting will also be available. There is good hotel accommodation nearby where the team stay.

TWO GUNS IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

The second opportunity we have is a wonderful (and very productive) Grouse Moor in the Scottish Borders. This is a two-Beat Moor (thereby capable of shooting two consecutive days) and is really humming having had a fantastic 2025 season and all looking very good for 2026 and beyond. The quality of the shooting is exceptional. This is very much a "gents" Moor and we are looking for two Guns to join a family and friends Syndicate for a seven year term. Accommodation is on site and the above requirements also apply here. If you are a greedy or dangerous shot (or both!), please do not apply!

A TEN YEAR LEASE ON A WONDERFUL HIGHLANDS MOOR

The third proposition we have been asked to assist with is unique and will be awesome. We are looking either for an individual or perhaps a group of friends wanting to take on a 10 year Lease, of a wonderful Moor in the Highlands of Scotland, capable of shooting three successive days and maybe 20 plus days in a good season (excess shooting can of course be let). We are managing the adjoining Moors, which are now showing excellent promise and this Moor has until the last few years, shot a really nice lot of Grouse and will again. It just needs the right input but is now very much in an up and coming Grouse area. Wonderful Highlands topography but well roaded and with excellent accommodation locally. Close enough to both Aberdeen airport and mainline train stations (with the Sleeper). The owners are thoroughly on side to make this again a premier Moor, but this is not a project which will need years of investment before it again shoots lots of Grouse. Within a couple of years, it will with the right management be flying. Having been involved in over 50 moorland projects over the years (and in total involved one way or the other in nearly 100 Moors, out of less than 250 in total), we feel we can confidently predict this.

If any of these opportunities (and they are as rare as hen's teeth now), are of interest to you, then please be in touch with Mark Osborne, Will Southall or Ollie Severn.

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Rural · Professional · Sporting

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CLICK ON THE QR CODE TO FIND OUT MORE
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