

farming focus



SUMMER 2010



Leading AMC Agent

During the early part of 2010 Rostons has once again proved itself to be one of the leading AMC agents in the North West.

AMC (Agricultural Mortgage Corporation) has been lending to farmers and rural businesses for many years and are very much a "lend and leave" basis of funding.

With up to 30 years available for the term of a loan, and interest only facilities, the AMC have traditionally competed strongly with the banks.

Although part of the Lloyds TSB banking group, you are not required to be with Lloyds TSB and likewise, it not a pre-requisite that you do not bank with Lloyds TSB.

Their range is diverse and recent loans have ranged from refinancing an existing bank borrowing, lending to purchase a farm as sitting tenants, lending for investment in new facilities including cubicles, parlour, NVZ store and slurry store as part of NVZ requirements.

If you are interested in reviewing your financial requirements, then please contact either Tony Rimmer or Johnjo Roberts who will be happy to assist.

Ros Races for Life

Sadly for many of us at Rostons, cancer has been brought to the forefront of our minds with death of a family member and the loss of Murray Smith's much respected Colin Johnson.

It's a sad fact of life that as we get older we are touched by cases of this awful disease among our friends, families and clients.

It's because of this that Ros has decided to run this year's 5k Race for Life to raise funds for research into cancer.

Ros said: "I'm not a runner so this will be a huge challenge for me but it's something I want to do to remember those we have already lost and provide funds to improve treatment and care of cancer patients in the future."



Ros can be sponsored by visiting www.raceforlifesponsors.org/rosrimmer

Meet the team



Tony Rimmer
MRICS, FAAV
Director



Ros Rimmer
Director



Johnjo Roberts
MRICS
Chartered
Surveyor



Robert Browne
Undergraduate
Placement



Jo Stapleton
Undergraduate
Placement



Susan Bramley
Professional
Support



Keighley Stranger
Professional
Support



Sheila Ashdown
Accounts
Manager

The Role of the Modern Chartered Surveyor/Land Agent

With more than a quarter of a century of experience between them, Rostons directors Tony and Ros Rimmer have been reminiscing over the changes that have occurred in auction marts and surveying practices throughout the country.

Marching advances in technology have transformed the working environment - firstly mobile phones mean that even in the car you're never really away from the office and more recently the surge in email usage and emails on the move means clients and professionals alike expect an immediate response.

Rostons has always fully embraced technology because we are committed to ensuring our team of surveyors are contactable and will respond swiftly and efficiently to all queries.

Ros said: "There can be times when heavy workloads mean there might be some delay, but client care is at the forefront of our business ethos."

Not only has technology changed, but also business practices and the way advice is delivered and dealt with.

No longer will farmers and land owners stick with one surveyor for all their work - it is horses for courses.

Competitiveness has increased in all businesses trying to control costs, but in this regard, Tony remembers his grandfather's comment "you pay your money and you take your choice".

He added: "Cheapest is not always best and in today's modern world you need up to the minute advice."

With changing tax legislation and the ever increasing bureaucratic legislation, the team of accountants, solicitors and land agents need to be up to speed and working as a close and responsive team to give the best advice taking into account all factors.

For most, but not all, agents methods of conducting sales have also advanced. It's no longer appropriate just to put property for sale by tender or auction just because that's the way the firm has always done it.

Our recent experience has shown there is no need to even consider publicly advertising blocks of land to get premium values.

Tony said: "If you know your market place and you know what your client's requirements are, the best advice for the client may be to market the property privately to a hand-selected audience.

"Having recently done this on a large parcel of land in South Cheshire, I found this was a quick and efficient way to meet the client's objectives. The client wanted a quick sale to a reliable buyer; he wanted to obtain a premium price and he wanted to know he had the sale. All these objectives were met and no For Sale board was erected on site.

"From the perspective of our business this was not the best for us - a For Sale sign is always a great boost to our profile - but this route was the best method for the client."

So next time you are thinking about picking up the phone to your agent, just consider whether they really are the right one for the job. Are you certain they will put you, the client, first?

Then please give us a call because we always will.



www.rostons.co.uk

Tel: 01829 773000

Email: info@rostons.co.uk

Amended Nitrate Vulnerable Zone Areas

A recent article in the *Farmer's Guardian* highlighted apparent changes that DEFRA have made to Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) across the country following the NVZ Independent Panel rulings, which received approximately 760 appeals from farmers looking to remove their land from NVZs.

We have now checked the amended maps online and it is clear that a large amount of land has been removed from the NVZ, stretching south from Manchester towards Macclesfield with the following surrounding areas affected in places:

- **Stretford**
- **Trafford**
- **Stockport**
- **Adlington**
- **Prestbury**
- **Bollington**
- **Sutton**

It is also apparent that a large area around Wilmslow has been designated for deferred slurry storage. This means that farmers in this area will have an extended period in which to comply with the slurry storage requirements, meaning a new deadline of January 1, 2013.

For further information regarding NVZs, please do not hesitate to contact us on 01829 773000.

Making the most of the Campaign for the Farmed Environment

In order to retain the environmental benefits previously provided by set aside, key leading farming organisations are working to encourage farmers throughout the country to voluntarily adopt important land management practices which will prove beneficial to the environment.



With the current renewal of all ELS applications which started in 2005, the campaign offers future financial incentive through the scheme without regulation.

Tony Rimmer said: "All those within the farming industry have a part to play in ensuring that the campaign is a success.

"The importance is to recognise the most suitable options for different land types and recognising that every farm has environmental value that needs protecting."



All things Legal

With the revolving door at Number 10 and the change in Government, it is apparent that many of us should be reviewing our property assets and the legal basis upon which we hold them, as well as considering tax planning and our Wills.

All too often we come across cases of individuals and businesses whose legal planning structures and arrangements are outdated and not tax efficient.

It is essential if the business and assets are to be maintained that a full review takes place and often an outside pair of eyes can offer a new and unbiased perspective.

Tony Rimmer has been working with a number of different solicitors and accountants throughout the region in providing one-off reviews of the assets and the structures under which they are held.

And with another budget looming, time is definitely of the essence to ensure the best possible plans are in place.

Tony Rimmer suggests we should all ask ourselves a few key questions:

- Do I have a Will?**
- When did I last review my Will?**
- Does it really provide what I think it does?**

If these questions have raised any queries in your mind, please contact Tony Rimmer to discuss further.



Land Values Remain Strong

The market for land has remained strong throughout the first half of this year, both from investors outside of agriculture and those within it.

Rostons have been involved in a number of sales both privately and more publicly and, in particular, Tony Rimmer believes that Rostons unique knowledge of the market place stands them in good stead to achieve premium values.

Our unique position within the agricultural community of this region means that simply knowing who is likely to be interested in the locality and making a few telephone calls can achieve premium values.

Currently the word of Rostons success is leading to more instructions and we have, over recent months, been involved in the sale of the following:

- Farmhouse, buildings and land at Chester (jointly with Savills) where a sale was obtained within 2 weeks of launching it to the market.

- Sale of farmhouse, agricultural workers dwelling and land at Knutsford, (jointly with Wright Manley) where substantial interest has been received after one weeks marketing
- Agriculturally tied property at Monk Heath Chelford
- Buildings and land at Ormskirk Lancashire
- Various parcels of land
- Other sales both privately and publicly of all types of property similar to the above

Tony Rimmer's key question in all sales is: "What is best for the client?"

From a Rostons business perspective, it would have been great for our business to put up a For Sale board and marketing the land. From the clients' perspective, the best result was to get a premium value in as short a time as possible and this was the result that was achieved.

If you are looking to buy or sell land, contact us for advice on the best way to meet your needs.

Entry Level Stewardship - What happens next?

Farmers throughout Cheshire and the North West who went into the ELS scheme in 2005 should be receiving their renewal packs in the coming weeks.

More than 12,000 people entered the scheme nationally five years ago and there will be many in this area looking to renew - but there are some important changes to prepare for.

Those wishing to renew their agreement will not be allowed to simply 'tick a box' to sign up for a further five years.

Applicants will be expected to complete a full new application plus associated maps, which are those agreed with the Rural Payments Agency in December.

The application pack will also include the final claim for the existing agreement. Normally the payment is paid directly but the final payment for the existing agreement

will have to be claimed.

Both this and the new application will have to be submitted to Natural England two months before the new start date to avoid a gap between the current and new agreement.

Those whose agreement is expected to end on July 31 2010 have a new application deadline of June 1, with a new agreement start date of August 1.

Jo Stapleton said: "Those who are renewing their ELS agreements need to be aware that the original management options are no longer available and therefore need to find additional options to meet their point threshold."

Please contact the office if you require further assistance and advice in renewing your application.

It's Show time!



With the summer season fast approaching, Rostons will be exhibiting at the following shows:

Cheshire Show	22/23 June 2010
Newport Show	10 July 2010
Nantwich Show	28 July 2010
Denbigh & Flint Show	19 August 2010
Dairy Event	7/8 September 2010
Cheshire Ploughing Match	29 September 2010

We would like to invite all our clients, or anyone who would like to find out more about us, to come and join us for light refreshments and a chat at any of the above events.

