

Countryfile

At Abbotsholme School

'Countryfile' is a BBC programme with around 7.3 million watchers every Sunday night. The programme reports about rural and environmental issues in the United Kingdom and it is regularly the most watched factual TV programme.

'Countryfile' was interested in our school because of the history around the school's farm. Abbotsholme has had a farm on the school land since Cecil Reddie founded the school in 1889. His 'vision' was that practical skills, such as animal husbandry and carpentry, were integrated into the curriculum. Abbotsholme is one of a very few schools in the whole of England to have a working farm.

Like many, I watch 'Countryfile' on a Sunday night quite regularly and the fact that it was being filmed at Abbotsholme was a big deal. On Friday 5th February I noticed that the 'Countryfile' team was at school. I got into school and one of my friends said she had seen someone that she recognised from the TV programme. After the first lesson a friend came and said Matt Baker had been into her class and she had taken a selfie with him! On Sunday 21st February 'Countryfile', showing parts of Abbotsholme's Farm, was on air.

The programme showed pupils injecting sheep with the help of Robert from Glenthorne Vets and also showed our new sheep race pen. Mr. Fairclough, our headmaster, talked about the history of the school and the farm and there was even footage of a pupil having a tractor driving lesson. Ellie Harrison, one of the presenters, had a go at tractor driving herself. She wasn't too bad!



The sixth form Farm manager, Rachel, said that to begin with she found it slightly weird because she was not used to having all the cameras and sound always around her. She also said it was mentally and physically tiring because they started filming at 8:30 and finished at 4:30. Rachel also said they filmed two long sections, one about the hay the school produce and another an interview with her. "I did not understand why they filmed so much that they were not going to use," Rachel said.

It was pretty odd having celebrities at school filming a TV programme you watch! Two crews were on site throughout the day filming and I tried to look around the corner where they were but sadly I couldn't see anything! One of the sixth formers involved in Agriculture at school, who was also involved in the TV programme, told me that he had to put out some straw then pick it up and then put it back down so they could get all the filming in! 'Countryfile' also used a number of archive images to show that the school has been at the forefront of farming education since it began.