

# WYE

*The Journal  
of  
The Wye College Agricola Club*



*Volume XVIII*

*2016 – 2017*

*Number 7*



# **Wye College Agricola Reunion**

**Saturday 1st July**

**Bottom Farm, Covington,  
Nr Huntingdon, PE28 0RU.**

**Hosted by  
Richard (1963–66) and Mo (1964–67) Brown  
and their son Michael (1997–2000)**

## **Details**

**Gather at 12.00 noon for lunch at 1.00pm**

**Hog roast with salads  
followed by summer fruits dessert  
Pay bar with wine and beer.**

**Relax in a spacious shady barn or  
in a sunny yard.**

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**Viewing of seed cleaning and drying facility  
plus a trailer tour of their 1,500 acre farm  
that grows crops for seed:  
cereals, grass, parsnip and red chard.**

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**Price £20.00 per person,  
Children welcome  
Under 8 free, 8 to 16 years old £10.00**

**Reservations close 15th June.  
Apply to [info@janegardendesign.com](mailto:info@janegardendesign.com)**

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# Editorial

## John Walters – Chairman and Journal Editor

As I write this, I am conscious that UK agriculture is entering one of the most uncertain periods that anyone can remember; since at least the time when we took our first steps into the European Economic Community. The Article 50 letter has been signed, sealed and delivered and the jousting and jockeying has just begun with the future arrangements around Gibraltar taking centre stage for the moment.

Our President, Professor David Leaver, in his address on page 6, takes up the point about future possible changes and emphasises the need for outstanding leadership from within the industry to help guide government policy in a positive direction for agriculture. He also pays tribute to the legions of highly trained and motivated individuals in the industry who are in positions to assist in any adaptations that will be necessary. Many of these folk, he says, will be products of Wye College, either as undergraduates or post graduates.

In his article on Britain's policy agriculture post-Brexit (page 90), Professor Berkeley Hill considers what the UK's agricultural policies beyond 2020 might look like, once the commitment to providing funding at existing levels has run its course. He also strikes an optimistic chord with the possibility that, in the end, the inevitable adjustments and changes that will have to occur should benefit not only the environment but also our international competitiveness and the public purse.

Meanwhile, Horticulture has lost two outstanding ex-Wye figures in the past year. We mentioned the passing of **Dr Tom Wright** in last

year's Journal but were unable to carry any tributes due to timing. I was directed towards his life story, as it appeared in the *Kent Garden Trust Newsletter* a few years ago, penned by the man himself. It is reproduced in full on page 57.

In similar vein, I happened to come across a tribute to the late **Carolyn Hardy**, OBE, (1949–52) in a local parish magazine at my daughter's house in Saltwood. The author, Caroline's cousin Prunella Scarlett, gave me permission to reproduce it for the Journal. It admirably summarises the life and achievements of this remarkable lady who devoted her life to her family and to horticulture through the RHS and the National Gardens Scheme.

Amongst the other bereavement notices is one that brings me, personally, a great sense of loss. For many years, **Betty Matson** (1940–43) had been our eyes and ears on the news and lives of the ex-Swanley contingent. Then, a few years ago, her letters stopped arriving and a colleague of hers suggested that she may have passed on. So I hinted at that in the journal; she wrote in expressing much surprise at this suggestion! Now, sadly, she really has gone; we learnt this via her executors since she has left £1000 to the Memorial Fund in her will. Generous to the last.

Within a number of interesting features, we have an extensive report on one of the biannual expeditions, similar to the Scarcies River (Sierra Leone) and Nepal ones we have covered in the past couple of years. This time it was to The Gambia, in 1968, a country very much in the news in recent months. Of particular interest in this instance is the controversy raised within the

ODA when the group's research findings highlighted the inappropriateness of the type of aid being delivered to the local peasant farmers at that time.

We look forward to receiving reports from the other Expeditions

On the social front, we had a very successful dinner held in Wye at the Free school in September, along with a nostalgic (and probably final) tour of the old college buildings. Both are reported on pages 19.

This year, we are planning a Hog Roast Reunion at **Richard and Mo Brown's** Cambridgeshire Farm near Kimbolton on Saturday July 1st; Please use the application form in the green sheets at the back of the Journal. Sadly, there is a clash that weekend with another gathering

organised on July 2nd by a 'breakaway group' based in the Cotswolds. I just hope we don't dilute each other's efforts too much.

Take a look at the report on page 134 which shows how the students who have signed up to SOAS distance learning programmes intend to use their grant money received from the Agricola Club's Memorial Fund.

And talking of SOAS, **Dr Nigel Poole** (1991–92), who had been the main administrator of the SOAS programme when it was run from Wye, has provided a fascinating insight into Afghanistan, the country and the project work he is involved in, currently funded by UKAid.

And there's a lot more besides, including a fascinating insight into little known Tristan da Cuna (page 86). Carry on reading!



*The Latin School garden taken during the College tour.*

# President's Message

**Professor David Leaver**

When I reflect on the changes that have taken place in agriculture during my lifetime I can only conclude that they are astounding; whether it is changes to the structure of the industry, the technology that has been applied on farms, or the role and influence that agriculture has in the food chain. Admittedly, my perspective is somewhat biased by the influence of my upbringing in the late 1940s and early 1950s on a small farm in the Pennines where I learnt to hand milk at an early age and where we supplied non-pasteurised milk on our milk round to customers directly into their own milk jugs! Milk rounds were often with horse-drawn vehicles (although we did have an old pick-up) and much of the farm outdoor work was still with horse-drawn equipment. Perhaps we were behind the times but, even when you survey the changes more broadly across all sectors of farming, one can only conclude they have been massive.

Living close to Wye, I naturally reflect during my frequent visits there on the demise of Wye College, which had such an influence on my life and which was a major mover of change in rural industries over most of the 20th century. It combined skills and knowledge across the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainability relating to rural land use, and its work in higher education, in research and in training had not only a national perspective, but also a strong European and global perspective. Without doubt, the College would have been in a prime position post-Brexit to aid the delivery of new ways forward.

Nevertheless, the past work of Wye College continues to contribute through its innovations in research and through its former students who

are still active. We see and hear this not only when former students and staff get together for the Agricola Club dinners and hog roasts, and in the excellent articles about the careers and lives of former students in this journal, but also in our day-to-day lives up and down the country and overseas when we meet former students. To listen to what they are doing and achieving through their work highlights the significant contribution that Wye College continues to make across the world.

## **Legacy from post-grads**

Due to their higher numbers these contacts are predominantly with former undergraduates of the College, but we should not forget the legacy from postgraduate students. When I came to Wye in the mid-60s as a research postgrad to study with Professor Bill Holmes and Dr Bob Campling, there were over 50 postgrads from different parts of the world studying for a range of qualifications. Subsequently, this number increased significantly and peaked in the mid-90s at over 300 postgrad students of which about 60% were research and 40% taught masters students, with almost half of the total coming from over 60 overseas countries.

We can add to this number the substantial contribution the Wye External Programme has made (and continues to make under the banner of SOAS) to postgraduate education across the world. This innovative distance learning initiative was providing courses prior to the merger for about 1000 students in 120 different countries. Also the College was very active in the provision of short courses with about 300 students in mid-career attending courses of 3 to 12 weeks each year. One of these courses, the Advanced





Course in Agricultural Business Management of the Worshipful Company of Farmers still continues, and is now based at the Royal Agricultural University at Cirencester.

### **Opportunities post-Brexit**

When we look forward to future possible changes it is important that, in spite of the uncertainties we face, we retain a positive approach to the opportunities arising in the post-Brexit rural economy. Although agriculture is not a major contributor to UK GDP, it manages over 70% of the UK land area and therefore its future success has much wider implications than GDP. However, it will require outstanding leadership from the industry to ensure that government policy changes are positive for those involved in the industry although, inevitably, there will be both winners and losers.

UK rural policies will no doubt attempt to achieve a balance between economic, environmental and social policies for the countryside, but it is likely that the main political parties, the farming industry, other rural

businesses and the rural NGOs that lobby government may well hold a range of differing views on what this balance should be. It is essential, therefore, that the agricultural industry puts forward clear and strong messages to government on future policy developments.

At present we produce about 60% of our food in the UK and this has declined over the past 20 years. The fact that ample food has, in more recent times, always been available for importation from overseas has led economists and governments to dismiss the importance of food self-sufficiency; but the uncertainties now prevailing globally cast some doubt on to what extent we can afford to allow our food self-sufficiency to decline significantly.

The outcome of these post-Brexit policy considerations by the government will strongly influence the success or otherwise of agriculture in the future. The nature of the trade agreements subsequently to be agreed will also challenge the competitiveness of UK farms.

### **Tremendous challenges**

As a consequence, over the next decade or so, we are likely to see the biggest changes to the agricultural sector that we have seen in any 10-year period since the end of the second World War. This will present a tremendous challenge for all businesses in, and connected to, agriculture, but we are fortunate that we have an abundance of outstanding individuals in the industry who hopefully will be capable of adapting positively to the required changes that emerge. Many of these individuals have studied in the past at Wye as undergraduates, postgraduates, or on short courses, and it is pleasing that this important legacy of Wye College is still available to benefit the country.

See page 90 for Prof Berkeley Hill's take on UK agriculture post-Brexit.

# Secretary's Report

## Francis Huntington – Honorary Club Secretary

It was excellent to meet so many of you at the AGM and Dinner last September. We intend to continue holding this event every other year in Wye, as long as it is well supported.

There is a risk that my annual report contains some repeat content and that is indeed the case; nevertheless, I hope that it serves as a reminder about why we exist and what we do.

### Your Committee

We continue to endeavour to bring down the average age of your committee. All organisations need to be concerned about succession planning and in order to remain active we need a steady flow of members prepared to serve on the committee. Do be in touch with me if you would like to join or know a member you would like to propose in order to ensure that the Club continues to function efficiently and with effective representation.

### Club support for various ventures

In the recent past the Club has financially supported Wye Heritage's Exhibitions, 'Wye Hops', 'Louis Wain' and 'Wye in World War I'. This has been an important way in which the Club has been able to foster this emerging organisation. The existence of the Wye Heritage Centre and its future plans are intended to ensure that past students have a permanent point of contact and can easily access the history and heritage of the College and its magnificent historic buildings. Your committee has already indicated its intention to continue supporting Wye Heritage as it develops.

The Trustees of the Memorial Fund are continuing to respond to requests for help and support where those requests meet the Fund's objectives; see our

Treasurer's report and the Memorial Fund accounts and details of grants later in this Journal.

### Annual Journal

Your committee has again reviewed the possibility of making the Journal an 'on-line' only publication: the conclusion was that the print version will remain for the time being but that this policy will be regularly reviewed. **In the meantime, you can certainly request not to receive the printed version of the Journal by writing to us.**

You are reminded that you can access the on-line version via our website:

[www.wyeagricolaclub.org.uk](http://www.wyeagricolaclub.org.uk)

2017 is the alternate year when we do not print the address list: we have only listed email addresses and the names of those whose addresses are out of date and are therefore being treating as 'lost' members – you may know otherwise!

### 2017 Summer gathering – 1st July

We look forward to welcoming you to another hog roast and farm tour. We are being kindly hosted by the Brown family at their farm at Covington, Huntingdon, Cambs. Please complete the form in the green pages at the end of the Journal if you have not already responded to the recent e-newsletter application form.

### 2017 AGM – Friday 29th September

As in 2015, we will not be combining the AGM with a Dinner but will run it on the same day as the autumn committee meeting. We very much look forward to locally based members joining us on that evening at the 6.30pm AGM. See the notice of the meeting on page 67 in this Journal.

## 2018 AGM and Dinner – 29th September

We intend to hold the 66th Annual General Meeting and Dinner at Wye on the last Saturday of September. For those who like to plan ahead, please make a note of the date; for the rest of you we will remind you via the 2018 Journal and our regular e-newsletters.

### The membership database

We have done our best to keep the database as accurate as possible. We do need you to check your entry and to let us know if we have got it wrong or when you change your email or postal address. Our thanks to our database administrator, Vinny Mclean, who lives in Wye and can be contacted by email, should you discover an error in your record, at [database@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk](mailto:database@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk).

Please be aware that unless we are asked not to publish your details in the Journal, including your email address, your information will automatically appear.

### New members

We know that there is a substantial number of Wye College and Imperial College at Wye graduates, postgraduates and staff who for one reason or another have not joined the Club. We will continue to make an effort to recruit those who 'slipped through the net'. If you have friends, colleagues or contemporaries who are not members of the Club do please encourage them to be in touch. If you email us we can send you or them the application form and bank mandate electronically or, of course, a hard copy by post.

### Website and e-newsletter

If you have not looked before, do check out [www.wyeagricolaclub.org.uk](http://www.wyeagricolaclub.org.uk). The initial content is modest; however, we will increase the variety and interest in the years ahead. We are very dependent on members to help with content;

please be in touch if you have comments or contributions.

As you will have realised, we are developing electronic communications via the web site and the e-newsletter; however, in order to be able to develop this further, we do need to have your up to date email address; please forward this to us if you have not already done so.

### Annual membership fees

On a number of occasions in the past, your Treasurer, Secretary and our Database Administrator have tried to ensure that all annual members pay the correct membership fee which currently stands at **£10 per annum**. Most members promptly updated their bank mandates; unfortunately a few did not. Your committee has, therefore, reluctantly agreed that those in arrears will no longer receive the Journal. If you have contemporaries who are telling you that they no longer receive the Journal, the chances are that either we do not have their current postal address or, for annual members, that we are not receiving the correct subscription – please encourage them to get up to date!

### 'Lost' members

Please check the 'Lost' list at the back of the Journal. If you know of the whereabouts of a contemporary it would be great if you could be in touch with that person or with us directly. If you notice that we have missed the death of a member, it would be a great assistance if you could let us know of that death, so that our database is kept up to date and an obituary penned, if appropriate. A number of members have been extremely helpful in spotting lost members and putting us in touch, thank you.

### The future of the College campus

For those who wish to be kept informed about the future of the Campus, I have again prepared an update which you will find printed on page 14.

### Club merchandise and publications

I continue to hold all the stocks of Club merchandise and will be pleased to supply these by return – current prices inclusive of postage and packing are as follows:

Ties	£18.00
Bow ties	£22.50
Prints of the front of College (unframed)	£10.00
<i>The Record – factors leading to and consequences of the merger of Wye College and Imperial college</i>	£5.00
<i>The College at Wye – A Historical Guide</i>	£8.00
<i>The History of the Latin School</i>	£4.50

Please make cheques payable to 'Wye College Agricola Club'. As usual I will make sure that these items are on sale at Club events. They will also be shown on the website.

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Please check at the back of the journal that we have your correct email address. We do urgently need this in order to improve the effectiveness of our communications with you – if yours is not listed or needs updating please send it to: [database@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk](mailto:database@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk)



**New Flying Horse.** Still one of four pubs in the village (the George has gone and the Old Fly went ages ago but the Barbers Arms has opened up) and It remains extremely popular...although funnily enough in the '60s we used to avoid it like the plague: the beer was poorly maintained and we always used to get headaches after a visit there!

# Wye Heritage to become a charity

On the 14th January 2017 the Committee of Wye Heritage met and signed the Charity Commission Documents which set in train the application for the organisation to become a Registered Charity. The date was chosen to coincide with the 570th Anniversary of the signing of the original College Statutes.

A prerequisite to the creation of a permanent Heritage Centre within the Wye College buildings is to change Wye Heritage from a Members Association to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) – hence the signing.

The event was also timed to launch a major exhibition charting the History of the Latin School from 1447 to the present day; the comprehensive display is illustrated with all known material

relating to the Latin School and its history. Highlighted is the unique attribute of having been almost continuously used for education for 570 years. Michael Payne prepared the exhibition and has drawn upon many sources; he has added some suggestions about the history and architecture not previously documented.

On the table is a copy of the seals of Cardinal Kempe and Wye College together with a copy of the booklet which was prepared for the 500th anniversary in 1947. Behind is the large version of the first page of the Statutes, a print of the Cardinal and his seal.

The celebratory cake was baked and iced by Michael Payne's wife Anne. Tom Hill, as the senior member of the team, was invited to cut the cake.



*The photograph shows the assembled Committee, without John Walters who was travelling and Don Thake, absent through illness. From l to r: Lucy Huntington (Hon. Treasurer), Francis Huntington (Hon. Sec.), Karen Warden (Chairman), Maureen DeSaxe, Tom Hill, Michael Payne.*

# The Wye Heritage Centre

## “Our past shapes out future”

**Francis Huntington – Honorary Secretary, Committee of Management**

Wye Heritage was launched in 2009 on the closure of the College, with the official opening of the Wye Heritage Centre in the Latin School following on 15th October 2011. Since then the Centre has been open to the general public on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month. The Saturday morning openings have become very popular with a steady stream of visitors enjoying coffee and home-made cake and becoming immersed in Wye's and Wye College's history, collections and regular displays and exhibitions. We were also able to host the Club for tea on the occasion of the AGM and Dinner in 2014 and 2016, and fully intend to do so again in 2018.

### **The Centre**

As reported last year, Telereal Trillium (TT) purchased the College buildings in October 2015 and has now produced plans to convert the Medieval and Edwardian buildings to 41 houses, flats and apartments. Wye Heritage has been working with TT and their architects to ensure that the Wye Heritage Centre has a permanent home within the College buildings. Together we have developed the plans for the Centre based in the old JCR (adjacent to the Wheel Room) and the rooms behind. This accommodation will provide entry from the High Street, a small courtyard, entrance foyer, a main exhibition room, kitchen and servery, accessible toilet and an archive store. The expectation is that the space will be made available to us on a long lease with a peppercorn rent. This will provide the long-term facilities to which we have been aspiring for the last six years. TT's current plans show the Latin School being a

part of the principal house, so no longer available to us.

### **Wye Heritage constitution and funding**

We are currently operating as a Members Association and anticipate becoming a Registered Charity as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) very shortly. Assuming that TT obtains the planning permissions for which they are likely to apply in the next few months, we should be in a position to sign a long lease fairly soon. Once we know that this can be achieved we will embark upon major fund raising in order to 'fit out' the Centre. We very much hope that Agricola Club members will become involved and provide a significant contribution to the funding. This whole Heritage project is fundamental in retaining, in part, the history and heritage of the College. We know that we will not be able to achieve this without the alumni involvement and we are counting on your support.

### **The physical and digital archive**

Anticipating the existence of a purpose-built archive store and exhibition space, we continue to collect together photographs, documents and memorabilia from a wide range of sources, in particular from Club members and their families. If you have material relating to the College and your time as an undergraduate, postgraduate or member of staff and would be prepared to share it with us, do please be in touch with [admin@wyeheritage.org.uk](mailto:admin@wyeheritage.org.uk).

The Centre is equipped with computers, scanning, photographic and recording equipment to enable

images and documents to be copied and held on a catalogued and searchable database. Along with many other important documents, we plan that eventually the Journals of the Agricola Club and the South Eastern Agricultural College will be digitised and be available on line.

An oral archive is also envisaged; we are still seeking to recruit past student volunteers to join the Oral Archive project – please contact us if you would like to help. [contact@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk](mailto:contact@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk)

### **Wye Treasures**

Most of the 'Wye Treasures', namely pictures, documents and artefacts are currently held in store by Imperial College in London. In order to inform members of the Club about these Treasures we have published a list on the Club website, under the title Wye Treasures. The Heritage Centre continues to arrange with Imperial College the loan of portraits and other artefacts. Eventually we hope that key material will be housed in Wye rather than in South Kensington. In the world of history and heritage we are reminded that 'context' is of huge importance. Much of this material's 'context' is, of course, Wye.

As well as cataloguing the items above, the late Donald Sykes made a well researched listing of all the fixtures and fittings within the College. These have now been photographed and a database is in preparation covering all these items. As the buildings are listed, there is every reason to be confident that TT will take the appropriate care of the historic buildings, as determined by the local authority in consultation with Heritage England. However, as has already been demonstrated by the temporary loss of the Jacobean Statues, it is vital that TT are made aware of all of the fixtures and fittings, whether in the 'listing' or not, together with a record of their significance. The database we are preparing will provide TT, their

architects and the local authority, with a ready reference. Those of you who are on Facebook will already have seen some of the photographs and descriptions on the Agricola Club's Facebook site. Do take a look if you have not done so before.

### **The way forward with your involvement**

The activities during the period 2009 to 2017 have demonstrated both the need for the Centre and the enthusiasm of those connected with the Village of Wye and Wye College to preserve and make available the history and heritage of both.

We intend to expand our hard working and dedicated band of volunteers to run the Centre and to collect and preserve the history, heritage and life blood of Wye College. It was an institution that, throughout the twentieth century, made a unique contribution to the development of Agriculture, Horticulture and the Environment across the globe. Much of that work continues today elsewhere; however, it is vital that the original thinking, research and experiences which underpin today's work is properly recorded and honoured.

**Wye Heritage is the organisation which will ensure that the above is achieved and the Wye College Agricola Club and its members have a vital role to play.**

**We think that our logo says it all - 'Our past shapes our future'**

**PLEASE BECOME A PART OF THIS IMPORTANT AND EXCITING PROJECT BY BECOMING A 'WYE HERITAGE' SUBSCRIBING MEMBER.**

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# The future of the Wye Campus

**Francis Huntington – Honorary Secretary of the Wye College Agrícola Club and Wye Village resident**

As explained in the last Journal, Telereal Trillium (TT) as the new owners of the College Campus has embarked upon developing its plans for the future of the College.

Firstly, I should clarify the ownership situation: Imperial College has retained ownership of the tenanted farm land, farm buildings and a small amount of domestic housing. Imperial has also signed a long lease on Withersdane Hall and its grounds, now being run as a drug and alcohol treatment centre by Promis.

In order to update Club members on the approach being taken by TT, I have set out the current 'stage of play' for each part of the property that they now own where plans are in the public domain. Where there are gaps, it is assumed that the plans for these areas will be declared once the master plan is delivered. If you are interested in keeping track of the various applications, the best place to go is the Parish Council website: [www.wyeparish.info](http://www.wyeparish.info) where the applications are listed on the Home page.

## **Squires Hostel (opposite Leppers) 1**

TT has been granted planning permission to convert Squires to four individual cottages with associated parking.

## **Wolfson Student Hostel 2**

Planning permission has been submitted to demolish this building and replace it with a terrace of six houses. Representation has been made by the Parish Council and local residents expressing concern over the building density, roof heights and the provision of parking. Some adjustments to the planning application have been made and the Borough Council's response to the revised application is awaited

## **Nos 26–32 High Street, Wolfson Lecture Theatre and Car Park to the rear 3**

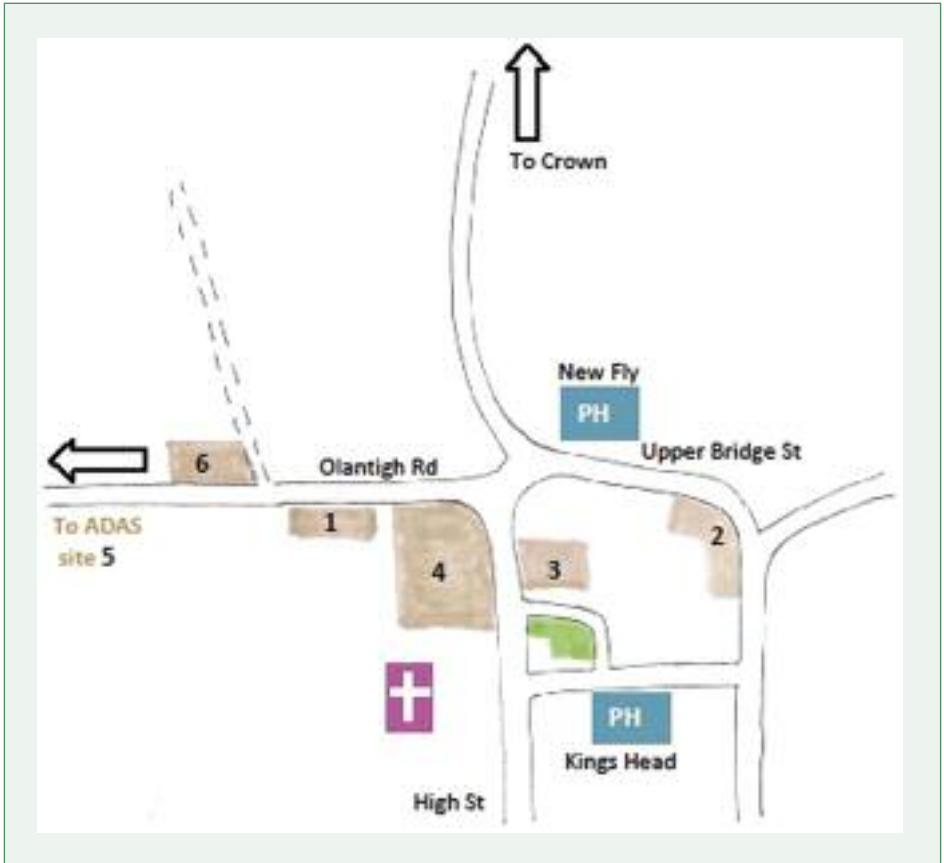
TT has submitted a planning application to demolish the Wolfson Lecture Theatre, refurbish Nos 26–32 and to add four houses to create a total of seven dwellings. The Parish Council and Wye residents have expressed concern over the density of the housing and the perennial problem of adequate parking. Some adjustments to the planning application have been made and the Borough Council's response to the revised application is awaited.

## **Medieval and Edwardian Buildings ('The College') 4**

TT has prepared detailed plans for the conversion of these buildings into a total of 41 dwellings; it has shared these plans with the community via an exhibition showing how the houses, apartments and flats have been fitted into the buildings with due regard for the limitations placed upon them by the Grade I and Grade II status. Parking is to be accommodated in a large new car park to the North.

The Old Hall, Old Lecture Theatre, Jacobean Staircase and the Chapel are likely to be designated as 'community spaces'. The plans have been generally well received, but reservations have been expressed about the Latin School being designated as residential (as an adjunct to the principal house) and the adequacy of visitor parking. Restricted public access to the 'community spaces' has been indicated by TT but details of how this might work have yet to be developed. The plans do show the provision of space for the Wye Heritage Centre within the Edwardian buildings with access from the High





Street; this has been well received by Wye Heritage and detailed designs are being developed. TT has indicated that it wishes to lodge its planning application as soon as possible. In the interim, preliminary work to remove all asbestos has now been completed.

### **ADAS Site 5**

As many of you will know, this site has become derelict and has been progressively vandalised. Over the last few months, TT's contractors have cleared the site of asbestos, glass and other debris. They have also boarded up the remaining buildings to make them safe and secure. The conversion of

the buildings from offices into approximately 50 flats has been prepared in outline and is being treated by the Borough Council as permitted development under central government's regulations allowing redundant offices to be converted to residential accommodation. The Wye Neighbourhood Plan establishes that this development would lie outside the concept of a 'walkable village' and it is currently unclear how this will be resolved. In the short term it is anticipated that the site will be used as the building contractor's depot during construction of additional buildings for Wye School.

## Wye School 6

TT has leased the site, including the old hop garden, to the new secondary school that is currently accommodated in the Kempe Centre and adjacent temporary classrooms. Pupil numbers have now reached 360 and, in order to accommodate the target number of 600 (including the sixth form), additional buildings are planned. United Learning, who run the School, working in collaboration with the Education Funding Agency, have now submitted a planning application covering three phases.

**Phase I** – installation of a multi-use games area (MUGA) on the western end of the old hop garden.

**Phase II** – construction of a large building accommodating a sports hall, assembly hall, classrooms and changing facilities. Outside school hours, community use of the sports and assembly halls is envisaged.

**Phase III** – refurbishment of the Kempe Centre and the removal of the temporary classrooms.

Local concerns have been expressed about the cramped nature of the site, the provision of car and coach parking and the visual impact of the substantial new building. Some modifications have been made as a result of consultations with stakeholders. The School Governors are becoming very anxious about the risks and costs associated with any delay in their building programme to

accommodate the target numbers of 600 pupils for academic year 2019–2020.

### Telereal's Master Plan

Telereal Trillium is not progressing with Imperial's Master Plan but has embarked upon its own. The campus-wide master planning is underway with TT's architects developing a new plan which fits with TT's aspirations as property owners, property developers and property managers.

As can be seen by the above site-by-site report, a number of significant elements to the master plan are at an advanced stage. In January, an invited group of stakeholders attended an all-day workshop as a part of the master planning process. The summary of those deliberations have now been released by Ashford Borough Council. The next step will be for TT to develop the master plan with the Borough Council, hopefully taking account of the views expressed.

### The next 12 months

It is unclear at present if any further site work will proceed before the master plan is agreed. As many have remarked, the deterioration of the buildings is clear for all to see and is of real concern.

For some, any additional development of Wye is to be resisted; however, for others, including the author of this review, the imaginative re-purposing of the College campus will open up new opportunities and benefits for a vibrant village with a history of constant change.

# The Latin School –

## 570 years of teaching with barely a break

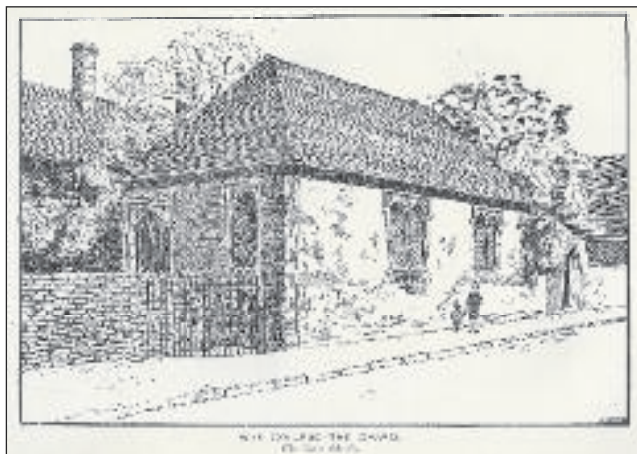
*"If there is a single room in Kent, or perhaps even England, that encapsulates educational use and change from the medieval period through to the present day then it must surely be the Latin School at Wye. That its very history is inextricably linked to the College of which it forms part is well known; it is perhaps its independent standing that is not so well understood. The intention is to rectify this omission."*

So begins a new history of the Latin school recently penned by Wye graduate Michael Payne (1978–81) and published a few months ago. This scholarly work, tracing its development from its origins in 1447 to the present day, is a powerful reminder of the fact that the Latin School has been associated education for well over 500 years. Indeed, it is this history and its foundation of Wye College that substantiates London University's claim to be amongst the oldest Universities in the country, rubbing shoulders alongside Oxford and Cambridge. The final paragraphs of the publication sum up the importance of this unique building to Wye College.

*"The Latin School has retained an educational role since it was first constructed, commissioned and*

*governed by Statutes in 1447. Despite its varying fortunes, the College's tradition as a centre of learning is perhaps best illustrated by this building. The fact that it has served a link between "Town & Gown" from its first use as a medieval College for Secular Priests and through its transformation into the Grammar School until the end of the nineteenth century, and then as the hub to the agricultural outpost of one of the country's leading research Universities is in itself no mean feat. That it continues to inspire future generations by its past history in order to maintain an educational role worthy of its original charters, as well as forming an ongoing link with the town in which it is still situated after five hundred and seventy years, is indeed truly remarkable.*

*Hence for all those who have lived, worked or studied at Wye, whilst they might not have been aware of their privilege at the time, the Latin School remains a uniquely historical building. In the words of the Wye Heritage Trust, "our past shapes our future". In the context of the Latin School this should surely read: "praeteritis futura conformat".*



*Town & gown: The Latin school, Wye College, 1447–2017, which takes the form of a description of the contents of an exhibition at the Latin School is now available from the Wye Heritage Centre at £4.50 including postage and packing (see page 10)*

# The Latin School, 1447 – 2017 timeline

## **27 February 1431**

Cardinal Kempe obtains a Royal Licence from Henry VI for the Foundation fo Wye College.

## **14 January 1447**

The Statutes of Wye College are confirmed under Cardinal Kempe's Great Seal and first mention is made of the Latin School as the then Chapel as well as the Seal of Wye College itself together with the requirement for a Master of Grammar and a Master of Music.

## **19 January 1545**

The Provost and Fellows surrender the College to Henry VIII under the Common Seal of the College of Saints Gregory & Martin at Wye.

## **12 March 1545**

King Henry VIII grants Wye College to Walter Bucler provided that a Grammar School is retained.

## **23 October 1553**

Mention is made of the Chapel at the entry of the gate with seats and altar of wainscot.

## **1610–1621**

A fireplace is inserted in the north wall of the Grammar or Latin School.

## **1724**

A codicil to the will of Sir G. Wheler gave the half of the College with the garden next the street for the use of the Master of Grammar

## **1744**

A Survey of the College Estate lists the School, formerly the Chapel, as measuring 0 acres, 0 rods 3 polls or perches.

## **1892**

Wye College was purchased by Kent and Surrey Councils and restoration work takes place to the eastern elevation of the Latin School.

## **1894**

The South Eastern Agricultural College is opened at Wye College.

## **1898**

Wye College becomes the School of Agriculture within the University of London.

## **1903**

An extension is made along the northern elevation of the Latin School and the fireplace, complete with a new chimney, is relocated.

## **January 1946**

The Latin School became the boardroom when Wye College reopened after the War and Swanley College was also incorporated.

## **13 June 1947**

The Quincentenary Celebrations of the foundation of Wye College and the Latin School.

## **5 October 1948**

Wye College is incorporated by Charter of King George VI.

## **1 August 2000**

Wye College ceases to be part of the University of London to become Imperial College at Wye.

## **29 June 2009**

Wye College is closed by Imperial College.

## **1 May 2010**

Wye Heritage is founded and holds an official launch celebration on 17 September.

## **15 October 2011**

The Wye Heritage Centre is officially opened in the Latin School.

## **25 November 2015**

Wye College including the Latin School is sold by Imperial College to Telereal Trillium.

## **14 January 2017**

Wye Heritage celebrates 570 years since the foundation of the College of Saints Gregory and Martin at Wye in the original Chapel and now The Latin School at Wye College.

© MDP 8 February 2017

# 2016 Agricola reunion

On 24th September, around 100 Agricolae descended on Wye for the annual reunion. During the afternoon Francis Huntington had organised an exhibition in the Latin School entitled 'Wye College Around the World' plus a display of Telereal Trillum's plans for the College. Lucy Huntington and Vinny McLean laid on tea and cakes that were much enjoyed by all.

A good number of past students joined Francis on a tour of some of the old College buildings, where Dr. Paul Burnham provided historical information. There is sadly an air of neglect about the place which is to be expected, but happily the College Chapel is still used once a month and the Latin school is well used by the Heritage Centre and other village clubs.

After the formalities of the AGM, the Reunion Dinner was held once again at the Wye Free School (originally the new College library on Olantigh Road).

We were treated to canapés and bubbly downstairs, whilst Marina Robinson (daughter of Susan Atkinson (1983–86) played to us from the floor above.

There were good representations from mid to late 50's students plus groups from 1963–66 and 1983–86. Nearly 100 of us sat down to an excellent dinner served upstairs for us by Chartwell Catering. I'm left wondering where all the mid-'70s & '90s students were?

After the meal we were entertained by the Rev. Ravi Holy, vicar of Wye. Definitely an unusual vicar it has to be said – dropped out of Eton, went seriously off the rails, and was briefly a punk rocker before turning to the church. Comedy turns are a speciality as well as after-dinner speaking and he

did not disappoint those who were in the mood for entertainment.

This was followed by a musical interlude with Susan Atkinson and Chris Waters playing cornets (both 1983–86) to accompany the assembled guests in a rousing rendition of The Farmer's Boy. It was discovered during the course of the meal that we had two ex-choirboys with us, so Sam Kent and Chris Baines were pressed into vocalising on the microphone, although Chris appeared to be playing 'the spoons' for part of it! All good fun and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

This year the Reunion will take the form of a BBQ at Richard & Mo Brown's farm in Cambridgeshire on Saturday, July 1st, so the next formal dinner will not be until September 2018. We shall no doubt return once again to Wye for this but if anyone has any better ideas, please let the committee know.



*Marina Robinson provided a welcoming atmosphere while the guests assembled.*

## 2016 Agricola reunion –



*Pre-dinner reception accompanied by piano music.*



*The school gym transformed into a banqueting suite.*



## dinner at Wye again



*A group from the 60s enjoying the music – in centre field is Chris Gibbs.*



*Tucking into the sweet course.*



*The diners were entertained by Susan Atkinson and Chris Waters on cornets, with Sam Kent vocalising when needed.*



*A good-looking group of relative youngsters.*



# Dinner guests

## 1950s

48-51	Buster Humphrey
47-50	Joyce Woodham
50-53	John Hosking
50-53	David Filmer
51-54	Rosemary Nicholson
51-55	Jennifer Eager
52-55	Richard Eager
53-56	Anne Evans
54-57	Frank Thompson
	Janet Thompson
54-58	Mike Anderson-Upcott
55-58	Ken Crundwell
55-58	Margo Crundwell
56-59	Brian Howard
56-59	Rosslyn Howard
56-59	David Hart

	Enid Hart
57-62	Michael Pash
58-94	Dr. Gerry Flack

## 1960s

60-63	Jeremy Selby
60-63	Glenn Allison
60-63	Gaby Allison
61-64	Francis Huntington
61-64	Lucy Huntington
61-65	John Crozier
61-77	Dr. Graham Milbourn

	Louise Milbourn
62-65	Alison Crozier
62-68	Prof. Geoff Dixon

	Kathy Dixon
63-66	Ian Mitchell
63-66	Jilly Mitchell
63-66	Jeremy Burden
63-66	Chris Warn
63-66	Shirley Warn
64-70	John Walters

	Jane Walters
63-66	David Gore
	Patricia Gore

62-66	Peter Ranson
63-66	Christopher Gibbs
63-66	Wendy Gibbs
63-66	Malcolm Ogilvy
63-66	Richard Long

	Eileen Long
63-67	Malcolm Alexander
	Deirdre Alexander

64-67 & 87-02	Prof. David Leaver
	Sally Leaver
	Margaret Williams

64-67	Gill Bond
64-05	Prof. Paul Webster
	Dr. Amanda Webster

65-68	Sue Hunter
66-	Cliff Martindale
	Betty Martindale
66-69	Shirley Goldwin

66-69	Tom Cusack
66-69	Gil Cusack
66-69	Libby Scott
66-69	Chris Baines
68-69	Chris Reynolds
68-73	Dr. Rex Walters

	Nicola Walters
	Rev. Ravi Holy
	Nikki Holy

## 1970s

70-73	Sam Kent
73-76	Jane Reynolds
73-03	Ivan Warboys
	Pamela Warboys
74-75	Peter Gerrard
76-79	David Simmons
	Rosemary Simmons
77-88	Prof. Ian Lucas
78-81	Michael Payne
78-81	Keith Franklin

## 1980s

81-84	Ian Johnstone
83-86	Chris Waters
83-86	Derek Shurvell
83-86	Lynley Riley
83-86	Steve Barrow
83-86	Tamara Strapp
83-86	Tony Drake
83-86	Susie Drake
83-86	Martin Coward
83-86	Jo Coward
83-86	Sue Atkinson
83-86	David Hoy
83-86	Peter Massini
	Sarah Massini
85-88	Martine Matthews

## 1990s/2000s

90-93	Richard Bartley
92-93	Tatiana Cant
93-96	Dr Angus Selby
2004-2007	Abdullah Sharf El Maghraby

## Wye reunion College Tour 2016

### **Michael Payne (1978–81) gives an account of the well-attended tour of the old college buildings**

The glorious September weather contributed to the atmosphere for the assembled members of the Agricola Club in the Latin School garden on the afternoon of 24th September. As part of the annual reunion celebrations a tour of the old College buildings had been laid on by Francis Huntingdon, with the kind permission of the new owners, Telereal Trillium.

After an introduction to the history from Paul Burnham (Staff 1969 – 97) we entered the southern range of the Medieval College buildings via its front door, complete with the gabled porch supported by oak barley-twist columns. Passing through the hallway and past the doorway to the

Northbourne Room, we entered into the familiar Cloister Quad and thence to the Old Hall. There, resplendent in the shafting sunlight, were all the familiar features; close studded beams (one of the oldest examples of close studding in Kent!), ancient Britons in the gallery, the fireplace with its fireback dated 1610, a tablet commemorating the inception of the South Eastern Agricultural College in 1894 and the stained glass window in memory of Dunstan Skilbeck.

From the very heart of the original College, the original refectory and one-time library, we entered the Parlour.



Visitors enjoy the Parlour, with its magnificent panelling.



The Cloister Quad, so reminiscent of the Oxbridge colleges.



The window at the end of the Cloister Quad, commemorating 500 years since the founding in 1447.



The tour leader, Paul Burnham, extolling the features of the Grand Jacobean Staircase.



The old hall with its close studded walls and the minstrels gallery where the 'Ancient Britons' are displayed.

Another fine Jacobean fireplace and the bookcases that once housed the Crundale Parish Library now empty allowed the panelling to be seen in all its glory. We were then led through the Inner Parlour and into the north range. At the foot of the great stairway we were again regaled about its history by Paul Burnham. Apparently such is its significance the only comparable staircase in Kent is the one at Knowle.

Some former members of B block took the opportunity to take in the West Quad beyond before repairing to join the tour in the College Chapel. Here regular services are still permitted and indeed Telereal Trillium must again be thanked for permitting this to continue. The stained glass windows in the Chapel contain portraits of Wye's founder, Cardinal Kempe, his patron King Henry VI and, in the centre, the Arms of the University of London.

Returning to the Cloister Quad Francis Huntington addressed the future and reminded us of just how lucky we were to once again glimpse familiar features before any changes are made. Another deviation was made by some into the Middle Quad with its memories of Archimedes (the college mascot – a tortoise) and Dining Hall beyond before we all returned to the Latin School garden, where we were treated to tea, cakes and scones courtesy of Wye Heritage.

A selection of other photographs taken on this tour are displayed throughout this issue as a record of parts of the college that may no longer be accessible once the buildings have been developed. .



Window in memory of Evelyn Dunbar, a War artist whose work was shown on page 126 of last year's (2015/16) Journal.



Swanley College prayer.



The stained glass windows in the Chapel with portraits of Wye's founder, Cardinal Kempfe, his patron King Henry VI and, in the centre, the Arms of the University of London.



# We can't keep meeting like this – yet another reunion meeting of the 1957–60 cohort

From Gordon Rae & John McInerney

On October 2nd 1957, a diverse group of 85 individuals came together for the first time at Wye. They were that year's intake – the largest ever at the time – to the Agric Honours (24 students), Agric General (33 students) and Hortic (28 students) degrees. It is a testament to the special magic of the Wye experience that the connections and friendships created over the subsequent three years have endured and remained nostalgically valued ever since – so much so that many of us leapt at the opportunity to get together again and enjoy each other's company, 59 years later!

We are all now pushing towards 80, have accumulated a lifetime of other experiences and personal relationships in our subsequent careers; and yet those three short years together at Wye remain central to our lives and offer a collection of memories we so readily indulge in whenever the opportunity arises. It is interesting to reflect on just what it was that we hold, deep within ourselves, that makes these bonds to each other and to the shared experience so powerful, to ponder exactly what it was Wye gave us that figures so strongly in our social framework. It's not exactly a comfy blanket, more like a familiar smooth pebble we carry in our back pocket that we can turn over in our hands and feel the warm sensations of our earlier lives.

Anyway, enough of the lyricism; what's the story? A group of us had gathered together at the Agricola Club dinner at Cirencester in 2010; for nearly all of us it was the first time we had met since we had graduated 50 years earlier (see *Wye Journal* 2010/11, vol XVIII, No. 1). That was a great success, characterised by the ease with which we picked up together almost as though we had never been away, and leaving everyone wanting to do it again before we got much older. That

chance came in 2015 when a number of us met up for dinner and then a larger gathering at the Agricola Club hog roast at the Janaway's farm (*Journal* vol XVIII, No. 6). Yet again there was a widely expressed feeling "that was bloody good, we must do it again soon". On each of these occasions the connections were picked up easily and the craic was evident – so unsurprisingly people asked "What about next year?"

Despite original intentions it proved impossible to arrange to gather at the 2016 Agricola Club dinner in Wye because so many of us would be unable to attend. So the suggestion was made that we meet up instead in November for lunch at the Farmers' Club in London (Dunstan would approve of our social connections with the elite of agriculture). To make this happen **Gordon Rae** set to work again on the Agricola Club's superb database of email addresses and an initial list of about 30 of our year group was contacted. Inevitably a number could not make it for some reason or other and in the event **David** and **Sue Collinge**, **Ruth Gasson**, **Dick Grimshaw** (in USA), **David Gooday** (in Swaziland), **Mike Pash**, **Mike Price** and **Liz Walker** were ultimately not able to follow through. But still a keen group of reuniterers wanted to make it happen, so Gordon (being a member) arranged a date, dining room, menu and meeting facilities with the Farmers' Club and set up what became the third post-50-years reunion of our year group.

Of course, the best laid plans... and all that, meant that over the final days a few more sadly had to drop out – essentially for health reasons – and this led to us not being able to welcome **John** and **Avril** (née **Wilkins**) **Bennett**, **Tony Gardener**, **Doreen** (née **Griffiths**) **Maitre** and **Lewis Wallis** after all. Typical of his leadership position as President of the Student Union, Bennett sent us a generous



*Left (front to back): John Usher, Valerie Mitchell, David Evans*

*Right (front to back): Jane Usher, Anthony Mitchell, Tessa Evans, Angus Golightly*

financial contribution with an instruction to drink it, but the advancing years have obviously impaired too many of our youthful capacities and our only option was to consider putting it aside in the start-up fund for the next time.

But that still left a group of 25 of us (including spouses) to meet up for lunch and it was again remarkable to see the way everyone just slipped into easy conversation as though the previous decades had vanished. We were particularly pleased to see **Nat Gent** and Alison. Although having been wheelchair bound for many years, Nat just sailed into our midst and carried on where he left off in 1960 – the last time that most of us had seen him. **John McInerney** did his professorial bit in the toast to 'absent friends', reminding us of the particular bonds of friendship we created in the Wye environment and which are still strong enough to bring us back together again after all these years. He also invited us to reflect on the memories of those who were no longer with us (we could think of at least 10 of our number who we have lost) and otherwise to send our best wishes to all those who we would

like to join us at some future gathering. That may well be this year, so watch this space!

The reassembling group in 2016 was:

**Colin Ames**

**Michael and Rosemary (née Cooper) Clark**

**Ken and Betty Drake**

**David and Christine Evans**

**Tony and Tessa Evers**

**Nat and Alison Gent**

**Angus and Sheila Golightly**

**Ted and Bridget Martin**

**John McInerney**

**Tony and Valerie Mitchell**

**Gordon and Judith Rae**

**Martin and Jenny Roberts**

**Caroline Thompson**

**John and Jane Usher**

2017 will see the 60th anniversary of our entry in to Wye College. What better reason is there for having another reunion? Getting together again in this way is such an easy and rewarding thing to do that we intend to do it again.

## Selected '66 graduates seen at the 2016 reunion

Photos of the B Block Coffee Group provided by Chris Warn (1963–66)



**At the Dinner:** *Left to right:* Richard and Eileen Long, Chris and Wendy Gibbs, Malcolm and Deidre Alexander, Malcolm Ogilvy, David Gore and Jerry Selby.



Chris Warn,  
David Gore,  
Ian Mitchell,  
Jeremy Burden  
and Chris Gibbs – the  
B Block Coffee Group.



The fare in the Flying Horse evidently pleased this Band of Brothers (and Sisters!)



Chris Warn looking very relaxed in the Flying Horse; growing macadamia nuts in Australia clearly suits him.

## A self-styled autumn reunion

**Kate Harris (née Adam) paints a joyful, if a little melancholic, picture of a gathering in Wye of 1992/3 graduates, many meeting for the first time since they left 'home'.**

On the 8th October 2016, a motley group of 45+ year olds gathered at Wye for a 20 year-ish reunion to reminisce our student days. Spearheaded by Mark Daniels through the power of Facebook, 18 of us, all graduates of the years 1989 to 1993 traipsed in from various corners of the country – all a little intrigued (if not dubious) about what on earth we were doing there. Some of us hadn't been back in 25 years and totally blanked on the road into Wye; the Tickled Trout being the first definitive proof that we were 'home.'

John Walters, Chairman of the Agricola Club, was an exceptional host in opening up the Latin School for us (of which nobody seemed to have any particular recollection whatsoever) and joining us for a perfect autumn evening in the Latin School gardens. Champagne and canapés were provided by the New Flying Horse.

### The steely resolution to get inside

Sadly of course, the College itself is now in private hands; locked up and very much out of bounds. Nonetheless, there was a quiet and steely resolution to somehow 'get inside' – preferably legally. It took a little persuading of an obliging security guard to allow one or two of us into the Porters' Lodge with a camera. Of course, the Wye herd mentality was strong, and suddenly we were a throng.

Each of us stood in awed silence by the manicured lawn of the main quad, gazing up at the library as in a time warp. It felt like we'd gate-crashed an empty film set. We walked past the notice boards of the 'Wind Tunnel' in hushed whispers – a rising swell of fond emotion – with every stone mullion

window, every gargoyle demanding a photograph. There was such a haunting quietness of faded glory – of decaying sills and broken panes succumbing to the forces of nature. It seemed profoundly melancholic, and we were all aware of the privilege of being perhaps the last students to see Wye College as it had been.

And so, for a brief and poignant hour, we wandered through the medieval cloisters, and filled them with laughter as the memories began flooding back. Amnesia was clearly an issue; none of us seemed capable of getting our bearings with H, I, J and K blocks. Nick recalled the infamous First Year Review (1988), when Archimedes the tortoise was swapped for a papier maché and spaghetti lookalike which was then hurled from the second floor to the ground below – to an almighty splat



Old lecture Theatre mugshts.



Latin School Garden; *top row* – Patrick Kane, Mark Daniels, Nick Rickett, Richard (Tricks) Harris, Naomi Pendleton. *Bottom row* – Kate Harris, Louise MacLennan, Fiona Howell, Abby Willings, Maxine Gittus.

and violent shrieks. Annabel was dead set on finding some sort of weed (*Mentha requienii*) which she knew used to grow among the cobblestones. And to this day, I'm not sure if the College nurse really did have a huge tank of piranhas in her lounge to which she fed Maltesers, or if I dreamt it.

The light was fading fast. Perhaps our greatest achievement was managing to bypass the huge Jacobean staircase and gather in the Old Lecture Theatre – so much smaller and steeper than we remembered; the long green curtains having faded and ivy now creeping in through the windows. We sat laughing as Patrick wrote a roll call of all present on the huge, grey rotating blackboard. And then it was time to turn out the lights and leave. The challenge was in not falling through the woodworm.

### The common factor – Wye

There's an ease in relationships that go back a long time, even if all communication has since been lost. It didn't matter that some of us had never actually met before; we had a common factor and that was Wye. And everybody was so *nice*. We were grownups now; older and wiser and less highly strung – and it made for a wonderful atmosphere. Some of us were much saggier and wrinklier of course (except for Maxine, who still looked positively radiant). But there was no competitiveness, no tension. No trying to outshine each other with incredible successes or brilliant children... we were simply a very mixed bag, all still trying to muddle our way along through life.

The New Fly proved an excellent gathering point for our evening meal; and they coped admirably with our loud and rather disorderly behaviour –



Outside the church; Mark Daniels, Kate Harris, Patrick Kane, Richard (Tricks) Harris, Susie Meanley, Annabel Jacklin, Nick Rickett.

punctuated by Andy Foxpit's late arrival (still unreservedly the ladies' man). Patrick made a gallant effort of trying to fit into a luminous green mankini, to present Tricks with a 50th happy birthday surprise he'd never forget. Thankfully, decorum (i.e. Annabel) won the day.

### **Happy days recalled**

Rolled up year-end photographs were passed around and there were squeals of hilarity as we tried to identify lost faces. And then there were the tales of Druid BBQs in the Quarry, rehearsals for *Grease the Musical*, the great storms of '87. How we jacked cars onto beer barrels, and managed to get Julian Shaw's mini clubman estate into the NLT overnight – but the porters had miraculously removed it by breakfast.

We wondered at the number of flourishing marriages that have been borne out of Wye over the years. We marvelled at how we'd coped without mobile phones. How it was a miracle that

we'd escaped injuries driving on Wye's country lanes. We growled into our wine glasses about Imperial College. We experienced overwhelming nostalgia for a time when our only responsibility was to show up to lectures on time.

Next morning in drizzling rain, a few of us stragglers took a wander around the village and down Olantigh Road; the College sealed off with metal link fencing – desolate and empty of life. We skirted the allotments, and stood in the churchyard of St Gregory & St Martin, a bunch of nearly 50 somethings, still rather trying to find our bearings. Along the College wall are memorial plaques to some of the staff we remembered so well – with a beautiful little view over the stone wall, right into the Latin School Gardens. A tiny corner of remarkable beauty.

Afterwards, we finished with a long lunch at the Five Bells in Brabourne. Some old habits die hard.

### Attendees, and specifics as recorded over dinner

Mark Daniels	<i>Commodities trader in Geneva</i>
Hugh Davies	<i>NFU Mutual, Mid Wales</i>
Maxine Gittus (née Hill-Archer)	<i>Property developer/interior designer</i>
Andrew Fox-Pitt	<i>Bowie lookalike and gamekeeper (and not an Olympian show jumper)</i>
Kate Harris (née Adam)	<i>International author and tropical tree guru</i>
Richard (Tricks) Harris	<i>Global head of project finance, Tidal Lagoons</i>
Fiona Howell (née Holland)	<i>Sports Coordinator, Wellington School</i>
Annabel Jacklin	<i>High-powered thingy, EMEA mobilization lead, Accenture</i>
Patrick Kane	<i>International stand-up comedian and property tycoon (Bournemouth)</i>
Louis MacLennan (née Murray)	<i>Drug dealer from Bodmin</i>
Andy 'Mac' Mckenzie	<i>Chicken magnet/magnate</i>
Susie Meanley	<i>Chilli pepper tycoon</i>
Naomi Pendleton (née Hill-Archer)	<i>Head of Technical, Muñoz Group</i>
Nick Rickett	<i>Olympic Torch Bearer and senior land agent for East of England</i>
Mirja Summers (née Heasman)	<i>Small animal veterinarian/pet doctor extraordinaire</i>
Abby Willings (née Kersley)	<i>Retired, from what we know not.</i>
Jo Wilson (née Fenton)	<i>Head of Dulwich Prep Sports &amp; owner of the only curling ice rink in England</i>
Stevie Wilson	<i>Fruitie importer and Senior Beer tester at Faversham breweries</i>



Close up in the OLT; Mark Daniels and Nick Rickett, with Patrick Kane by the blackboard.



John Walters and Mark Daniels.

Our next reunion is now set for Saturday October 13th, 2019 – though the college will likely be a retirement complex by then. If you graduated between 1988 and 1993, please save the date – it will be wonderful to see you!



## News of members

### Births, marriages, deaths and general updates, obituaries and lives remembered

#### Deaths

**Kenneth John Bowyer** (1958–62) died in October 2016.

**Keith Cowling** (1955–58) died in 2016 aged 79. See *Obituaries*.

**Kathleen Deebank** (1950s) passed away after a long illness recently. She was a technician at Wye from the late 1950s to the 1990s. (From Dr Julian Hill, Melbourne Polytechnic).

**John Evan Davies** (post grad 1968), married **Diane Rodwell** (1964–67), died 29th November 2016.

**John Downie** (1960–63). **Tim Day** (67–70) wrote: "I was leafing through the 2015–16 Journal and saw that under Turkey there is a listing for C J Downie (1960–63). John was for many years employed by British American Tobacco in a variety of locations but retired around 1995/6. He then went on to work in Zambia but sadly suffered a heart attack whilst there and passed away a few years ago.

**John Edward Duckworth** (1956–69) died on 3rd March 2016. See *Obituaries*.

**Carolyn Hardy** (née **Evanson** 1949–52) died September 23rd 2016. See *Obituaries*.

**Rachel Hill** (née **Gaddum**, 1951–54) died peacefully on 3rd January 2016 after a long illness with Parkinson's disease. She devoted her life to the welfare of her two girls and two boys, four grandchildren, her garden and her Skye terriers. From her husband **Mark Hill** (1951–54).

**Max Hooper** (Staff) died on 10th February 2017. We hope to include an *Obituary* in the next issue.

**Mark Henry Inman** (S1950–53) died on 8th November 2015. See *Obituaries*.

**Robert Ellis James-Robertson** (1947–50) died in 2015. Information provided by his daughter Louisa Nicholls. According to our records he had a relative **Struan James-Robertson** who attended college 1948–51 and a **Fiona Catherine James-Robertson** who attended from 1975–78.

**David George 'Mac' McEwen** (1949–52) died on July 16th 2016, aged 86, following a period of illness. See *Obituaries*.

**Sally Matthes** (1974–77) died on 1st January, 2017. Provided by a friend, **Trish Gower**.

*I met Sally on the first day in Withersdane and we soon became firm friends. She arrived from Ealing, west London, so gave much sparkle and metropolitan buzz to others as most of us were from farming backgrounds. She was a true people person, much admired as a popular and enthusiastic student, and keen to contribute to life at college.*

*We soon reserved Ripple Farm for our second and third year's accommodation and spent many happy terms and holidays there, growing veg and looking after her animals rather than being in London. She kept and showed rare breeds of poultry, exercised horses at Crundale, and played squash in between lectures.*

*As Social Secretary she brought live bands from London to our College Union building for Saturday night gigs and Commem. Ball. Remember the Strangers, Joanne Kelly and Ultravox?! She urged us all to spend more time having fun in the bar and dancing.*

*After Wye, Sally moved to Shrewsbury, and worked at Severn Trent Water as an analyst for many years, and again had a wide circle of friends inside and outside of work. She moved west to the Welsh*

borders at Trefnanney and spent 15 happy years fulfilling her dream of owning a farm with Paul. She bred Welsh ponies, enjoyed riding and driving competitions, and kept a menagerie of cats and dogs and rescued more ponies and goats. She took up flying and skiing, loved travel and continued her zest for new ventures in the community, holding music festivals at the farm.

She was an enthusiastic supporter of Wye reunions of **John Magnay's** 1974–77 era and encouraged us to attend. She always arrived early and left late to 'catch up' with many old friends and acquaintances.

**Adrian Powell, Lucy Macfarlane** and myself were fortunate to continue to share fun and friendship with Sally over the years, her kind easy-going nature, generosity, love for friends and animals shone through to the end.

**Betty Nora Matson** (1940–43) died on 11th January 2017. We will have a tribute next year – Ed.

**Sarah Scott** (née **Richardson**, 1983–88); her husband **Alister Scott** said: "I am writing with the tragic news that my dear wife Sarah died peacefully on 16th July 2016. We met at Wye – Sarah graduated in 1988 – and we married in 1993. She gave me two wonderful children, Joe now 19 and May now 16.

Sarah grew up near the market town of Ampthill and was the youngest of five. She studied Agricultural Business Management where she increased the knowledge and practical understanding she needed to complement her own natural gift for animal husbandry. It was there that she met **Alister**. In her 20s she became the manager of Newham City Farm and East Ham Zoo in London. The job required guts and determination – qualities associated with Sarah. Having moved to Berwick, East Sussex, in 1995, she began an animal care business, 'Animal Magic', which played to her strengths and gave her the chance to spend time



Sarah Scott with her children, May and Jo.

with people and animals. She also later made cheese at the local highly acclaimed Golden Cross Cheese Company.

Later she worked with the local Carriage Driving for the Disabled charity and saw how much joy it gave to people – she trained and qualified to be one of the 'whips'; horses and carriage driving were very much a big passion in Sarah's life. Joy was the quality of Sarah's character that so many appreciated and benefited from. She was lively and vivacious, passionate in her views – not least for the environment – and not afraid to challenge the status quo. She was nearly always positive in her outlook. She was accepting of others, quick to encourage and to motivate people in pursuing their dreams. Though she lived with cancer for a number of years one never felt that she ever lived in its shadow. Her way of responding to her illness and her holistic understanding was an inspiration. At the centre of her life was her family Alister and her two children Joe (20) and May (16). She was a person who was full of life, and her death is a great loss to the many who knew and loved her. Do be in touch with Alister via [scott.alister@gmail.com](mailto:scott.alister@gmail.com) if you wish.

**John Smith** (1952–56) died in March 2017. **John Robinson** (1952–55) writes: "I lost touch with him for 50 years or so after Wye, but have seen him

occasionally over the last few years when, as ever, he was good company. I am afraid I know very little about his life or career”.

**Elizabeth Thomas** (née **Emmerson** 1954–59) one-time lecturer in Decorative Horticulture, died in 2016. She was the wife of the late Dr Graham Thomas: they were joint life members of the Club. See *Lives Remembered*, page 59.

**David Thorburn** (1958–62) died on the 20th January 2017. At Wye he had been University swimming captain (1962), a ‘great mate’ of **Roger Hobcraft** (1958–62), who informed us of the sad news and had been best man at his wedding.

“I’ve been in contact with some ex BAT managers who knew him to try and ascertain his various exotic postings with the Leaf Department. I knew John for a brief time when we both worked at the Woking HQ of the Leaf Department in 1995. He was a very pleasant character and had a vast knowledge of tobacco types and growing conditions having pioneered small scale farmer schemes in various BAT locations around the world.”

**Thomas ‘Tom’ Wright** (1942–52 and Staff 1978–90) died on May 15th 2016 aged 88. He left a wife, Hillary, and one daughter. Their other daughter pre-deceased him. See *Obituaries*, page 55, and *Lives Remembered*, page 57.

It has come to our attention that the following members have passed away, but we have only recently been notified.

**Keith Martin Browne** (1959–62) died on 8th May 2016.

**Kay Collins** (née **Joshua**) (1964–67) died in 2012.

**Elizabeth C Emmerson** (1952–55) died on 5th August 2016.

**Michael David Leese** (1973–76) died in January 2016.

**Graham Melville Leeves** (1957–60) died on 5th July 2016.

**Jenny Jill Livingston** (née Amos) (1984–85) died in 2011.

**C Mistri** (1934–38) died early in 2017.

**Keith Paisley** (1933–36) died in 2016.

**A B Poston** (1950–53) died on 9th April 2016.

## News

### 1940s

**Ann and Stepen Carr** (1948–51) wrote: Last year we went back to our old home in South West Uganda to share in the 50th Anniversary celebration of the selling of the first smallholder tea from the plants which we had helped the farmers to establish. I duly attended and had a wonderful three days surrounded by old friends and their families who enveloped me with their affection. Now the farmers have their own factory, run and managed entirely by themselves, and sell an average of 198,000 pounds of leaf to it each day for six days of the week. When we left Nyakashaka in 1966, we had helped farmers to establish the first 200 acres of tea; now there are 6,500 acres, all developed by the farmers themselves.

The celebrations lasted three days, culminating in an eight hour service led by the diocesan bishop. This took place in a huge new church which the farmers had built and the service started with the consecration of the building. Luckily my Runyankore remains good enough for me to have been able to follow the whole service.

The farmers had been extremely nervous about the weather. It had rained every single day for the previous five weeks and they were scared that we would be washed out. In the event we had three beautiful clear, cool days. I stayed in the small house of one of our first farmers. His sons, daughters and grandchildren had all gathered for the event so 42 of us settled down each night.



Africans have a great gift for sleeping well and I woke up at 2 a.m. on my first night and kept myself awake for almost half an hour. There was not a single snore, no child stirred and it was difficult to believe that every inch of the surrounding floor was covered with sleeping people of all ages.

The constant rain which had caused anxiety in Uganda was the result of El Niño which brought flooding to Eastern Africa and drier than usual weather to the centre and south. In Malawi, the lake and river levels have fallen and this has greatly reduced the output of electricity, all of it derived from hydro power. The great majority of the population has no access to electricity but the urban minority and industries and institutions have been badly hit by hours of power cuts every day. The impact for rural people has been the drying of streams and springs, which involves them in longer walks for water.

So far our own stream has held up and the trickle is enough to meet our needs. As far as the maize crop was concerned, the lack of water-logging and the abundance of sunshine led to bumper harvests in neighbouring Zambia and Northern Mozambique and for wealthier Malawian farmers who had healthy, well fed plants. Unfortunately, the government had drastically cut the amount of subsidized fertilizer made available to farmers and so many had weakly plants which succumbed to a couple of weeks of hot dry weather. In consequence, while neighbouring countries struggle with the storage of large surpluses, Malawi has 6.5 million people on famine relief. The tragedy is that the cut in the fertilizer subsidy was made to save money. The cost of the famine relief is estimated at 380 million dollars. Half of that would have provided farmers with enough fertilizer to put us into the same surplus position as our neighbours. Famine relief attracts gifts, fertilizer subsidies attract opposition.

*(Extracted by the Editor from their annual letter to friends and family)*

### 1940's People remembered

**Tony Orchard** (1947–50) *scoured the 'Lost and Overseas Members' lists at the back of last year's Journal and was inspired to put pen to paper with some recollections.*

p. 239, **E.A. (Ted) McLaughlin** (1946–49). We agreed that he was the person on Reg Older's farm with me and was written about in my article on p. 54. That makes sense – I wonder if Reg's son, Chris Older, has any family records of that period? He and I were at school together and I see him from time to time.

p.242, **J.M. Adams** (1947–82!). John Adams was in my year and was a bit laid back– but surely he didn't take 35 years to get his degree! (*I feel sure it should have been 1947–50 – Ed*). In our second year, I was Sec. to the Rugby Club and one of my tasks was to get the players fit by running them up and down the pitch up to a dozen times to get them fitter to take on the opposing teams. John did not take kindly to this at all, particularly when tripping in any of the cowpats garnishing the pitch from the summer grazing. I think that he quit the course before the year ended and we heard that he had gone tea planting in Assam, which was a strange thing to do when the British were in the process of quitting India. If, and it is a big IF, he did return in 1982, this can only be compared to a Second Coming!

p. 194, **J.P.A. Wall** (1948–51) of Stone Court Farm, Frittenden. Jim and I joined the Royal Navy on the same day in August 1944 at the Butlins holiday camp at Skegness on the Wash (Oh Gawd!) and shared a hut with one other chap for several weeks. We then went on for further training after which we parted for our

respective postings. As I wrote in my book when I returned from the Pacific, my father in Calcutta had lined me up for an interview at Wye, where for some reason I hit it off with the Prin, or he was short of numbers; as a result he applied for me to be demobbed in August 1947 in time for October start ahead of my true release date in February 1948. So I left the destroyer that I was in and headed for Portsmouth in early August to collect my demob clothes and get signed off.

On the last afternoon, having nothing better to do, I went to Southsea to be entertained by the only show in town, namely 'The Dancing Years', a somewhat syrupy musical that included the immortal song "We'll gather lilacs" and other similarly soppy, nostalgic ones for a pre-war England. I thought that I recognised a voice in the queue behind me and turned round to find Jim there with one of his mates. He asked me where I had been, to which I replied 'out in the Pacific', to which he responded that so had he, but in a proper warship, the battleship HMS Anson (not like mine, a modified merchant ship). To his next question I told him that I was being demobbed early to go up to Wye College, part of London University, to which he replied that so was he, but one year later in 1948. Amazing. So I was best man at his wedding; we kept in touch until he suddenly died about five years or more ago. I went to his funeral. Small World.

p. 238. Under Zimbabwe. **Ione Benedicta (Dickie) Graves** (née **Marten** (1946–49). Dickie was a lovely, lively young student, whose parents lived in an iconic converted oast house somewhere near Chilham. Just before we graduated in 1950, she got engaged to Maurice Graves, my regular Rugby club and Squash partner. He was determined to go farming, could not afford to do it on his own and

decided to emigrate to the then Southern Rhodesia. I warned him that I had seen how, when my parents had recently retired from Shell in India, that far-seeing company was immediately replacing expatriates with indigenous management, and that the rolling up of the Empire was proceeding apace into Africa. There was even the experience of the ill-fated 1948 Ground Nuts Scheme in Tanganyika, where an already bankrupt Britain had sunk without trace what was then the huge sum of £8 million. Of the advisory board of eight that approved it, Dunstan Skilbeck was the only dissenter. Huge ploughs and other equipment were imported from the prairies of Canada, totally unsuitable for the shallow soils of East Africa and the skills, or lack thereof, of the native labour. Someone said that Churchill's call to the America government was "give us the tools and we'll finish the job!", while the groundnuts experience was "give us the job and we'll finish the tools!" And so Maurice wrote within six months out there. I met him at a Wye reunion in about the 1970s, by which time they had two grown up sons; but Maurice is no longer with us. So I will try e-mailing Dickie and see if she receives anything in that benighted country and if indeed she is still alive. If she is trapped there on her own it must be dire.

That's my lot. I am afraid that since I wrote weekly letters to my parents from the age of 4 to 18, except for 18 months when I lived with them in Calcutta in 1940–41, I became a bit of a compulsive communicator, so I trust that you have managed to get this far. I turned 90 mid June so most of my lot have gone before me, but I am still in touch with **John Barham** (1949–52) who lives just on the end of our rail line to Marylebone. We both have Danish wives; maybe they are good at keeping us alive.

All the best, and keep up the good work.

## 1950s

**Olive Aburrow** (1950–53) writes, "Connections with Wye are unexpected. While in my local hospital, The Royal Berkshire in Reading, following a stroke, I was tended by a pleasant doctor. It transpired that his grandfather and I were contemporary undergraduates at Wye – his grandfather is **Alan Cockman** (1951–52)!" She adds that her vision is still impaired.

**Patrick J. Dobbs** (1954–57) writes to say that he is still farming, more or less. He has given up lambing, calving, sheep shearing and breaking colts. However, he still buys and sells a few cattle now and then.

### An overdue debt

**Gordon Rae** (1957–60) wrote: "I was sitting quietly, not answering any of the questions on 'University Challenge' when the phone rang. My wife said it was someone called Paul Latham.

I do not think that either of us had heard from each other in 57 years since Paul left Wye in 1959.

We had adjoining rooms in D corridor. My room was D5, the slightly larger one, which was more suited to and was commandeered for those horrible student 'beer fests'. Paul, next door, was an active member of The Salvation Army, but we still remained good friends.

Paul and his wife spent their working lives in The Salvation Army, living in many different countries in Africa. We overlapped in Kenya in the early 1960s but never met up.

Paul rang me because his wife had been re-reading some letters. In one letter he told her that I had loaned him 3/6 (old money) to buy lunch and he phoned, 57 years later, to tell me that he did not think he had paid me back! Taking into account inflation from 1959 to 2016 (2013.3%) and an interest payment of 5%/annum on the debt, I reckon Paul now owes me about £6.52.

Paul, as you are now 81 and I am 78, please do not delay any longer in sending me your cheque from Scotland!"

**Graham Melville Leeves** (1957–60) died on 5th July 2013, aged 77. **Christopher Whitmey** (1958–61) wrote: "In 2011 when staying at a farm B&B in North Devon, I had a chance conversation with the farmer who knew Graham and where he farmed. Graham had moved from Picked Stones Farm and had taken a farm tenancy on the National Trust Holnicote Estate in the Exmoor National Park. We contacted and visited him and met his wife Hazel. They also did B&B. Though I had whipped in to Graham when he was Master of the College Beagles, the passing of years meant he did not remember me. Despite that we were made most welcome and had a good chat.

## 1960s

**Ewen M Wilson** (1962–65) writes: "The 2015–16 Journal was excellent. Compliments to you (Francis H.) and John Walters! Also, I greatly appreciate and enjoy your email updates on the Agricola Club and the Wye Heritage Centre. Many thanks for you good work!" See Ewen's *'Life After' piece on page 74*.

**John Littleford** (1967–70) wrote: "I would like to say it was good to see the article in the Journal written by my colleagues and myself about our trip to the top of the world (Nepal) in 1969. It has brought back many happy memories!

For myself, I am still working part-time at the Defence Industry as they asked me to stay on and even told me about a project to start in April 2017! I will continue there as the team are a good crew to work with and it keeps me occupied. It is somewhat different to my previous 35 years in development agriculture! I thought I was the only agric. there out of 5000+ but I found out that there is an engineer who did a PhD on mechanical harvesting of raspberries, but I have still to meet him!!

Very best wishes and please tell John Walters he is doing a good job!"

**Robert Montgomery** (1968–69) wrote to say the he is no longer at Monkton Farm in Birchington, Kent but has moved to Waterush Farm on the Isle of Skye.

## 1970s

**Peter Davies** (1970–73) writes: After I left Wye I worked producing plants for a pot plant company in Surrey. A firm called Thompson (sadly, no more). I then worked for a seed company, Tozers, in Surrey, where I worked in the glasshouses producing the stock seed for new varieties. I met my wife Sally (a teaching assistant) in 1978 and we have two children, Paul and Ian.

We moved to Northamptonshire in 1979 when I was employed by Social Services to develop a gardening scheme for adults with learning difficulties in Northampton. We had a plant nursery and grew shrubs and bedding plants that we sold and used in garden maintenance. We maintained and upgraded County Council gardens and private ones.

In 1991 I moved to Wellingborough and developed a similar garden scheme for Social Services there. In 2007, I took voluntary redundancy as Social Services cut back and stopped being involved with such schemes. Sadly, the one I was involved with was stopped. I then got a job with a charity in Wellingborough called Teamwork. This provides contract work such as packing, assembly work, and labelling for adults with learning difficulties and mental health issues. We also have education tutors and are involved with activities in the community. In 2013 I went part time and I am still working at Teamwork.

In 2014 I made a 'pilgrimage' back to Wye to look at the college. It was a sad experience seeing the science block deserted and surrounded by builder's fences.



*Having become a liability on the cricket field, two farmers take to river exploration instead. Tales of wildlife, adventure and mischief ensue. Barely believable (but true) journeys on the waterways of Britain and France are an antidote to their meandering descent into middle age.*

I remembered all the good times I had there. I enjoy reading the club magazine each year. Thank you for producing it.

**George Hosford** (1978–81) wrote in response to a question from the Editor: There is no particular story behind my Uncle's tale of combining after the War (see feature on page 68). It is just that he has done quite a lot of writing in a similar vein in the last 10 years, and since reading this one I felt strongly it would be a good contender for the Agricola Journal. I have only recently managed to remember to ask him if he would agree to it, and he did! His eyesight is not too good now, so I think it unlikely he will manage to write any more. He

looks back on his Wye days much as I, many friends, and so many other generations do as well: halcyon days full of fun, and the forging of many lifelong friendships.

I have just spent two wonderful days canoeing with **John Dinnis** (1978–81 like me) and **Martin Hole**, (1982–85) in north Wales. A canoeing trip has become an annual event, often with other old Wye colleagues, and John and Martin have even written a book about their adventures, which I strongly feel many Wye folk would enjoy. I have tried to persuade Martin to send you a blurb describing it, a few paragraphs is merited, plus perhaps a small advertisement!

*A Hole in My canoe, (life after cricket with the Rustics)*, by **Martin Hole** and **John Dinnis** <http://www.blurb.co.uk/b/6668690-a-hole-in-my-canoe>.

## 1980s

**Lord Christopher Apsley, the 9th Earl Bathurst** (1981–84) made headlines in *The Times* and *The Telegraph* in December 2016 for all the wrong reasons. It was suspected that a bite from either a deer fly or a blandford fly had resulted in a severe case of septicaemia leading to multi organ failure. He spent eight days in an induced coma to allow his system to fight the septicaemia, had six operations and was in hospital for four months. His wife **Lady Jane Apsley** (1981–84) is High Sheriff of Gloucestershire. In September 2012, the Agricola Club had the privilege of a farm walk on the Bathurst's 15,000 acre Cirencester Park estate, followed by an excellent cream tea in their beautiful home, prior to holding our reunion dinner at Cirencester College in the evening. Lord Bathurst was guest of honour. The Agricola Club wishes Lord Apsley good health.



*The Latin School garden in spring, featuring white Camassia and Wisteria.*

## Letters

### In Appreciation.....

*Dear John*

Well done! The improved layout makes the Journal much nicer to handle, and the content is a great improvement. I particularly liked *From the cutting floor* on page 38. The critique was both pertinent and well written. Back in about 1980 (but it could have been a decade later) I read a book called *The Money Trap* which compared the activities of the World Bank and IMF in developing countries with the performances of Taiwan and South Korea, which did not fall into the clutches of Washington agencies. I took the matter up with **Roger Harris** (1953–57) who, as you know, spent his entire career in overseas aid, mainly with FAO. His arguments that there was nothing wrong with traditional aid were unconvincing.

**David Bennet** (1953–56)

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*I had some communication with Clare De Whalley over a lost member – Ed; then he wrote:*

Dear John

I feel I must use this opportunity to say how grateful I am to you and your team for keeping me up to date in the excellent publication. It is wonderful to know that the spirit of Wye is being kept so much alive – I regret I have done so little towards it. Am I right in believing that your house is opposite the college entrance?

My sister **Daphne Chapman** (1946–48) is 93 and we frequently enjoy happy memories of our days at Wye – 10 years apart.

Yours sincerely

**Clare de Whalley** (1955–58)

Dear Editor

It's such a shame that the college was closed...silly really. I am kind of retired now: nobody is paying me!

But I continue an interest in food...in 2013 we produced a book *Food security in Australia*; it sold well but people are really not interested and local Universities are not interested in any follow up. Yet poor diet is a factor in 56% of all deaths in Australia and I suspect it is in the same ball park in the UK.

Regards

**Quentin Farmar-Bowers** (1965–68)

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**In search of Ione Mary Benedicta (Dickie) Graves** (1946–49)

Dear Francis,

I have now had a couple of replies from Angela Graves who, I think, is the younger daughter, and said that she would take my message to her mother. Apparently, there were two daughters and two sons. She also referred to another Wye couple who graduated in 1949 but are no longer alive; he was an ex-Army officer who was so patriotic and so instilled with what was correct that if we were sitting in the Junior Common Room listening to a radio (or rather wireless, before TV and your time maybe!) and for some reason the National Anthem was played, he would stand to attention with his thumbs pressed close to the seams of his trousers, to the frank amazement of the rest of us ex-Service men! No names, no pack drill.

I feel for those who thought they were going off to a wide open colonial farming life and ended up under Mugabe. Angela said nothing about their life there now, but on last night's TV news Africans were being interviewed on how they were failing



to cope with the Weimar-type hyper-inflation that has now engulfed them. I cannot see how it will end since the Chinese will keep him and his spendthrift (or mega greedy) wife in power for the mineral riches that are there.

All the best,

**Tony Orchard** (1947–50)

(See also News from the 1940s sent in by Tony Orchard – Ed.)

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**Letter from John Palmer (1953–56) to Liam Murray (1955–56)**

Dear Liam

I read with great interest your article in the Wye Journal which I got about a fortnight ago.

We had a good look at the photograph (the 1956 Rugby Team on page 60, Journal No. 6, Vol XVIII 2015–16) and can add a few names.

I am the linesman and to my left is **Lear** who I believe is deceased. In front of him is **TJ Calcutt (Tim)** who is also deceased. Going along the same row is **Ian Stratford** and then **Peter Stotter (Stotter)** followed by **Brian Lovelidge (Boris)** and then **Jo Johnson**. My wife **Shirley** (née **Cureton**) identified Jo. (See photo below - Ed.)



Before going to Wye, I played for three years at Maidstone GS 1st XV and occasionally for Maidstone — believe they now have five teams. Must have played against Tim and Stotter who played for Tonbridge. I also played one season for Guildford and Godalming 1st XV. However, I was outclassed by yourself and Stotter at Wye!

I well remember the green beastie (the 1931 Morris 10) — it looks so small now and the tyres were not very wide at all. The only car of the same ilk was driven very erratically by a lecturer, Ross. The depreciation of the green beastie was minimal!

I also received a begging letter from Imperial (which was promptly thrown away) who are great asset strippers and whilst good academically have simply no idea of the Wye spirit (well put by **John McInerney**) and the response by 'Regular Giving Assistant Advancement Division' is typical.

Shirley and I have lived in the same house for nearly 40 years (seems impossible) near the meeting point of Lincs, Notts and Leics. We were fortunate to buy an old farmhouse previously owned by The Belvoir Estate. Currently, there are four grandchildren, two at Harper Adams University and Durham. The third is thinking of a legal career at Bangor I think. Harper is a great place and in some ways similar to Wye.

All best wishes

**John Palmer and Shirley**



# Obituaries

## Carolyn Hardy (née Evanson), OBE, VMH\*

(Wye, 1949–52)

Described in her *Daily Telegraph* Obituary as "a grand dame of British Horticulture"

*Eulogy delivered by her niece, Prunella Scarlett*

It is a great honour to be asked to speak about Carolyn, but it is also a considerable worry to know how to pay a proper tribute to such a special person. But, in a way, I am glad to have the opportunity to thank her publicly because she has been a major influence in my life, as she was for so many other people.

She had, I know, a happy childhood and family life with her parents, General and Mrs Evanson, and her sister Janet. She was always interested in gardening and studied at Wye Agricultural College, gaining a BA in Horticulture, and enjoying every sporting activity that she could fit in, and with considerable success.

### The move from Wye to Sandling Park

I first met Carolyn when I was 11 and she became engaged to my uncle Alan. She became my only aunt and what an aunt! I was one of her bridesmaids and still remember the excitement in 1953 of the celebrations at the church and her parent's home at Hougham – and the flowers. From then on she encouraged me, even giving me my first lipstick, which in those days was not at all popular with my parents. In more recent years it was she who involved me in the Royal Horticultural Society, which has given me such interest and pleasure over the years, including ten on the RHS Council.

But the centre of her life was Alan. They were truly a couple, supporting each other in every

way and rarely ever apart. She devoted herself to him and everything to do with the Sandling Park estate and gardens, (near Hythe), which they both loved so much, carrying on the heritage of Alan's grandfather Laurence. Family was what mattered most to her, especially her two daughters, Sarah and Jane, and, through time, her son-in-law Will and the three granddaughters, Katie, Susie and Lucy. Her life revolved around them all and she was so proud of them. But somehow she managed to find time for much more.

### Sandling an NGS founder opener

She became involved with the National Gardens Scheme – Sandling was one of the NGS founder openers in 1927 – and she was County Organiser for Kent for 19 years, always helping and supporting those who opened their gardens. For instance, she always sent a postcard of encouragement just before the opening date. She became Chairman of the NGS in 1979, a post she held until 1986. During that period it became an independent charity, previously having been administered as part of the Queens Nursing Institute, which founded the Scheme in 1927. As Chairman, Carolyn skilfully led the establishment of the new charity in 1980 – an important development in the Scheme's history. She was also Chairman at the time of the NGS's most significant addition, that of Macmillan Cancer Support as an annual beneficiary in 1983. When she retired as Chairman she was made an Honorary Life Vice President, which kept her still involved to her delight.

*\*Carolyn and her husband Alan are one of only two married couples to have both received the prestigious Victoria Medal of Honour from the RHS since its foundation in 1901.*



### First woman Vice Chair of RHS

Inevitably the Royal Horticultural Society spotted her ability, with the encouragement of Alan and her parents-in-law, Arthur and Nancy Hardy, who were already judges. She became a Council member in 1985 and served until 1997. She was not the first woman to join the Council but she was the first to be elected Vice-Chairman, serving for ten years. One who served with her wrote "Her contribution was immense in bringing a unique contribution of charm and a sharp mind to a Council that was often in need of both as it struggled to lay the foundations of the new RHS. Her horticultural knowledge, coupled with an unusual sympathy for those who felt more left out, was a powerful combination for good."

She chaired the Working Party on Committee Structure in 1991 and also served on or chaired the Chrysanthemum Committee, Floral A, Gardens, Financial and General Purposes, Awards, and Affiliated Societies. On retiring, she became a Vice-President. She was awarded the Victoria Medal of Honour – the Society's most distinguished award and was made an OBE for her services to horticulture.

### No airs and graces

Another vignette of Carolyn appeared this year in Jim Buttress's autobiography *The People's Gardener*. Jim is now one of the most experienced judges for the RHS and for Britain in Bloom – he is the man in the bowler hat that you see in all the opening sequences of the BBC's television coverage of the RHS shows such as Chelsea – and it was Carolyn who spotted his talent years ago when he was building the Royal Parks stand for Chelsea. He describes the RHS old guard as "not all a bunch of uppity snobs – I am glad to say the Society has changed – for there was a lovely lady named Carolyn Hardy, the RHS's Vice President and a big hitter who always made a point of coming over and making a big fuss of the apprentices. There were no airs and graces with Carolyn, she was just a good old-fashioned gardener and an absolute diamond."

### Always leading by example

Another person who knew her well, Alice Boyd, who succeeded her as Chairman of Floral A, now the Herbaceous Plant Committee, was also grateful to Carolyn for her care and advice and writes, "She was a true Committee woman, knowing how to get the best out of her members while appreciating their idiosyncrasies. And of course, always leading by example, working extremely hard herself and making it fun." Thank goodness Carolyn and Alan were able to relax each year during their fishing trips to Scotland with their friends, which they both enjoyed so much.

On top of all of this, in 1987 the hurricane hit and the garden at Sandling was devastated. Over 400 trees blew down, crushing everything underneath, removing the top cover, ruining the drainage and leaving the problem of huge trunks and vast root balls everywhere. Somehow, Alan



*The family home at Sandling Park has many specimen trees and some stunning displays of rhododendrons.*

and Carolyn found the strength to start the restoration, supported to a marvellous degree by the horticultural community who donated hundreds of plants and trees, many of which were new to this country..These are thriving today – some as national Champion Trees – as is the garden with its enhanced collection of interesting and beautiful material.

### **Tragedies in later life**

Alas, the last years of her life were fraught with tragedies. Her beloved Alan died, just as he was building his dream house at Sandling (he saw the roof go on but that was all) then their elder daughter Sarah died, also after a major fight against cancer (*Obituary in Wye, Volume XV11*,

*No 5, 2006–07*; **Sarah** née Hardy had also graduated from Wye, in 1980, with a degree in Agriculture and diploma in farm management; she was secretary of the Wye College Beagles and married a former student **William Hurley** (1972–75), who had graduated a few years earlier). We were all devastated. And the final tragedy was that Carolyn gradually developed Alzheimers over a long period. But thanks to her remaining daughter Jane, who gave up her own life to her mother's care, Carolyn was able to remain at home until the end, with the assistance of a band of carers.

### **Enhanced the lives of everyone around her**

But that is not how we should remember her,

particularly in this church which she helped to clean and decorated with her wonderful flower arrangements. She did the same at Pedlinge Chapel which she cherished so much. She really was someone who enhanced the lives of everyone around her. There are so many memories. The fun had with friends who took the cottage at Sandling. The warmth of the welcome at Hillhurst then Sandling, aided by her wonderful cooking, always presented with great style – and let us not forget the famed cream and butter she produced. We will all remember her, as her granddaughters do, as an inspiration and tremendous fun, providing endless memories of laughter and happiness and of course of her parties on every possible occasion.

I love the story of how she taught table manners to her granddaughters by pretending they were having tea with The Queen, with Carolyn, of course, playing the major role.

I shall finish by yet again using someone else's words. Years ago I was standing in a queue, waiting to enter the Hampton Court Palace Flower Show, when a couple came past me in the opposite direction. The woman was bubbling with enthusiasm, "I did enjoy meeting that nice Mrs Hardy" she said." She is such a LOVELY lady."

I think that is a very appropriate epitaph for Carolyn. Let us all be grateful that she was part of our lives.



*At Wye, Carolyn Hardy was an all-round sportswoman; In the 1952 Sports Day, she came first in the following events: the 100 and 220 yard sprints, long jump, javelin and weightlifting. She is pictured here third from right. Can anyone identify her fellow champions?*



## David 'Mac' McEwen (Wye 1949–52)

*With thanks to **Malcolm Withnall** (1962–64) who originally wrote this obituary for the Fruit Grower.*

Born in 1929, 'Mac' spent his entire career with Highland Investment Company, Kent. He died on 16th July 2016.

Initially working with Walter Whigham, he subsequently worked with Walter's son-in-law, Ian Johnston, and later became a Director of Highland Investment Company. 'Mac' graduated from Wye in 1952 and built up Highland Court's investment in fruit growing, later establishing or restructuring several fruit farms around East Kent under his management. He was an authority on apple production, being a leading supplier of Cox into East Kent Packers at Faversham, at that time Europe's largest fruit marketing co-operative.

Also in his field of expertise were blackcurrants, plums, pears and field-grown strawberries, as well as cereal crops. He developed Highland's considerable storage facilities at Highland Court Farm at Bridge, near Canterbury, and was instrumental in a series of changes in fruit production over his long career, including the change from fruit trays to bulk bins, drastically re-modelling older Cox trees and introducing intensive systems, being one of the industry's leaders and most progressive growers.

Mac was involved in the early days of the Ash &

District Fruit Show in Canterbury, and was a founder of the East Kent Fruit Society, being it's Chairman at one stage and later it's President.

Never living too far from the sea, he was an enthusiastic sailor, a former Commodore of the Sandwich Sailing Club and persuaded innumerable friends to crew for him. His horticulture never left him, serving his garden and local horticultural society in equal measures.

The McEwen family tree has grown considerably from his five children and their children, who are his living legacy. For fruit growers, the loss of his knowhow is immeasurable.

He had happy memories of his time at Wye.

## Keith Cowling (Wye 1955–58)

*This tribute was prepared by his friend and former pupil, **Professor Phil Tomlinson**, University of Bath, and first published in The Guardian in September 2016*

My friend and former tutor, Keith Cowling, who has died aged 79, was one of Europe's leading industrial economists and an adviser to the Labour leader John Smith. Keith was part of an informal think-tank set up by Smith on which he worked closely with an ambitious young politician called Gordon Brown.

Born in Scunthorpe in 1936, the son of George Cowling, a train driver, and his wife Nellie, he went to the local grammar school and showed great prowess at football – he was a triallist in his teens at Scunthorpe United before studying Agricultural Sciences at Wye College. It was there that his interests moved away from agricultural science towards economics.

After completing a doctorate in agricultural economics at the University of Illinois in Chicago, Keith began his academic career in 1961 at the University of Manchester. He quickly progressed, and was promoted to Senior Lecturer only four years later. It was at Manchester where Keith met his future wife, Barbara Lees, who worked as a research





assistant. In nearby Stockport, persuasive on the doorstep, he became a Labour councillor in a hitherto Conservative ward.

In 1966, Keith moved to the new University of Warwick and it was here that he switched his research interests towards the developing field of industrial economics and was appointed the Clarkson Chair in Industrial Economics at 33. As head of department from 1975 to 1978 he was instrumental in persuading the university to invest in new professorships.

His own research career was also flourishing, to the extent that he became an early President (1987–89) of the European Association for Research in Industrial Economics (EARIE) and founding editor of the *International Journal of Industrial Organization*. In the early 1980s, he had foreseen that more and more transnational corporations would relocate production offshore, leading to de-industrialisation and undermining local development. Keith was always keen to look at alternative possibilities for industrial development. He co-founded the European Union Network for Industrial Policy in the mid-90s, exploring the potential of more co-operative modes on production

Charismatic and forceful, he was always engaging and open to new ideas. Despite retiring in 2003, Keith continued to conduct research, recently co-editing a book investigating new possibilities for British industrial policy.

He is survived by Barbara, his son Marc and his daughters, Lee and Lucy.

Paul Webster adds: *Keith Cowling studied under Prof Wibberley who directed him to Illinois University (where Wib himself studied). He was one of a stream of Wib's economists who went on to populate senior ranks of the UK's agricultural econ depts. But Keith 'escaped' and made a name for himself in industrial economics.*

## Mark Henry Stuart Inman (Wye 1950–53)

*A tribute sent in by his wife, Pat*

Mark Henry Stuart Inman died of leukaemia on 8th November 2015. He was 84 and very fit, still running cross country with his Jack Russell until his last illness.

A horticulture student from 1950–53, he went on to National Service and then to work as a teacher and later principal of a rural training centre in Nigeria. Mark stayed in Nigeria through most of the Biafran civil war, part of the time under house arrest as the fighting swept over the Niger from east to west and back. Finally returning to England on an empty Portuguese arms plane.

Mark married fellow student Pat in 1958. They had four children, three born in the Nigeria years and a last arrival in Suffolk. It was not easy to settle back in England and the family moved to Suffolk where Mark taught in Hollesley Bay Centre for young offenders until his ordination in 1982 when he became Chaplain. Retirement at 60 did not suit Mark and he moved into parish work. Pat and Mark lived in Shottisham Rectory for the next ten years; it was a very happy time in a beautiful part of Suffolk. All the parishes in the benefice were on the River Deben, a few miles from Woodbridge and only two miles from their home in Hollesley. In 2001 they retired at last to Norfolk.

Mark's life was never dull. At his funeral the family realised how many lives he had touched with humour, understanding and unshakeable faith.

Such happy memories of Wye – it left its own special impression on all our lives in those unhurried years after the War, for which we have been immensely grateful.

## John Orr-Ewing (Wye 1966–85)

*A tribute from Professor Ephraim O. Lucas (1971–75)*

I got my copy of Wye, the journal of Wye College Agricola Club (2015–2016) yesterday (4/11/2016) and I was deeply pained to read about the death of Mr John Eric Hugh Orr-Ewing at the ripe age of 95 years. I am, however, consoled that Mr. Orr-Ewing lived a fulfilled life devoted to service to God, his country and to humanity.

As the Registrar of Wye College, which had a high proportion of foreign students during my time there, Mr. Orr-Ewing showed love, care, understanding and attention to the foreign students. He was always available to help and give advice to any foreign student who came to his office.

I recall with happy memory that my first Christmas in UK in 1971 was spent in his house when he invited me unexpectedly to stay during the Christmas season of that year. That gave me the opportunity to meet his wife Kathleen and his two daughters who made me to feel at home in their house without any pretensions. I will forever remember this gesture of the late Mr. Orr-Ewing and his Christian family.

My sincere condolence to his family and may his friendly soul rest in perfect peace.

## John Edward Duckworth (1956–69)

Died on March 3rd 2016 at home after a long illness.

Born on the 31st January 1928 at Read in Lancashire, he moved very quickly with the family to Roacher Hall Farm, Samlesbury, Lancashire, a mixed dairy farm, where he and his two sisters Margaret and Kathleen grew up and spent their formative years.

He attended Preston Grammar School and from there went on to King's College Newcastle, then a part of Durham University. There, he gained his degree in Agriculture followed by a PhD in Animal Behaviour. On completion of his PhD he joined the faculty as a lecturer and also temporarily ran Nafferton, which was one of the University farms, before moving to Wye College, Kent, in 1956.

At Wye he became a lecturer in animal production. He was in charge of the pig research unit. At this time he travelled widely in the USA visiting research stations there to learn what they were doing before deciding on the direction of research at Wye. With help from George Harrison, the unit manager, they then toured various pig farms in the UK to acquire the stock required for their progeny testing of bacon pigs. He was also was a college student warden.

It was at Wye that he met **Molly**, herself a PhD student at the college (1951–53). On getting married, Molly had to leave Wye College and follow a career elsewhere as, at that time, married couples weren't allowed in the Senior Common Room. With many Wye friends they spent happy days playing cricket in the pretty villages of East Kent. He had formed and managed his own cricket team, called 'The Ducklings' whilst at Newcastle and followed on this passion at Wye – he was



playing cricket on the day Gill was born! Their Wye house even backed on to the College sports ground, complete with its own private gate.

John and Molly were blessed with two daughters, Gill and Jane, who were both born during their years in Wye. Although they left for Aspley Guise in 1969, Wye held, and still holds, an important place in all their hearts. Gill later went back to Wye as a student (1978–81) and whilst there met **Tom Mellor** (1978–81, like her parents, meeting and marrying at Wye.

John and Molly moved to Aspley Guise when he became Scientific Secretary to the Meat and Livestock Commission in Bletchley. Here he commissioned and monitored a research programme for the MLC at various universities and research centres, liaising throughout the meat industry with both production and research teams.

He was made redundant in 1984 and after leaving the MLC he enjoyed working at Frost's Garden Centre, where he ran the machinery department and swimming pools. Knowing his love of – or should we say obsession with – lawns and lawn care this was a well-matched position, although the swimming pools were a very steep learning curve! Interestingly Gill started her career there and John finished his.

Golf became the most important hobby for both John and Molly, and membership of Aspley Guise and later Woburn brought many friends and happy memories. John was very active with the Aspley Guise golf course and the state of the greens and fairways were his pride. He was also President of the Woburn Sands and District Society – amusingly very recently some of the tree preservation orders he put in place were coming back to haunt him.

John loved the fact that Gill married Tom, a farmer,

keeping him in touch with his agricultural roots. He was always both knowledgeable and interested in how farming was changing.

When his two Yorkshire granddaughters, Kate and Jenni, arrived he became a very happy and doting Poppa John. His other daughter, Jane, and Trent's children Jolly, Lionheart and Edmund made his joy complete and these five have been the lynchpin of John and Molly's later years. For any parent the loss of a child is devastating but the love of the family has sustained them through the sad loss of Jane, her spirit living on in her three children.

### **Peter Askew (Wye 1952–62)**

*A tribute from **Frank Thompson** (1954–57), a former student of Peter Askew at Wye who was helped by him at Newcastle.*

I was saddened to learn of the recent death of Peter Askew on 7th April 2016; his wife died a few days later. I and many others will remember him as lecturer in Soil Science during our time at Wye. I was an undergraduate from 1954 to '57 and found him to be an excellent lecturer (I still have my lecture notes and practical books). He took us on some brilliant geological field trips in the first year, and in the third for soil science; he also joined us on our second year Agric Tour. Each weekend, residents in J block composed a song for the geology field trip coach ride the following day, some with a geological theme, others more scurrilous. In the third year we had pedological excursions that involved the digging of pits and describing the soil profile. At Wye, Peter managed to instill in me an interest in soils that has stayed with me, and his training has been the foundation of my professional career.

### **Soil surveying in Pakistan**

On leaving Wye, Peter's training even made my next soil pit digging group exercise more interesting and instructive. It was in the Aldershot



*Here is my only photograph of Peter (in the front row fourth from right) taken at the College sports day in 1956 watching the rugby club tug-of-war team.*

area in a sandy podzol to make a large, non-academic but state-of-the-art 'Four man atomic warfare weapons pit' as part of my nine-month training to be a combat engineer. Following my two years national service, I was recruited for a six months stint by Hunting Technical Services to be a soil surveyor in the Sind of Pakistan. Peter was probably directly instrumental in this. The work consisted of a systematic survey of the vast irrigated area on both banks of the Indus, with one 14 feet deep borehole per two square miles. Here 200 acres of irrigated land were being lost each week due to salinity and water logging. Here his soils lectures and field training were invaluable.

### **We meet again at Newcastle**

I met Peter again at Newcastle University when he was appointed as Lecturer in Pedology in the Department of Agriculture in 1962. On Peter's recommendation I had gone to Newcastle University in 1960 on my return from Pakistan, to do postgraduate research in pedology. While not my supervisor. Peter was always there to give advice and ran a series of seminars for the postgraduate students.

Towards the end of my three years at Newcastle, Peter drew my attention to an advertisement in *Nature* about a research officer position in hydrology and suggested that I apply for it. This

was to join a group at Oxford investigating the effects of vegetation cover on catchment yield, which had suddenly become an important topic in relation to the government's programme of afforestation of upland moorland. Before my interview Peter kindly provided a relevant text book that I read on the train on the way to the interview. The book and Peter's undergraduate lectures gave me a good basis for the interview. I was accepted for the position and subsequently remained in Oxford for the whole of my career apart from trips to more exotic locations for research, training and consultancy work.

Peter personifies to me the whole ethos of Wye, with its caring and stimulating environment making learning fun, a sharp contrast to my school days. In similar ways Peter and Wye must have had a profound impact on the lives and careers of the many students he taught. Sadly over the last 56 years I never once visited him at Newcastle to thank him for all the help that he gave me as an undergraduate and postgraduate that shaped my life in many ways. Perhaps, subconsciously, I was planning a visit, as strangely out of the blue in early May 2016, I happened to wonder how Peter was and contacted Newcastle University only to learn that he had died in April (see below).

A very belated thank you Peter for everything.

## Dr Tom Wright (Wye 1949–52 and Staff 1978–90).

*A tribute from Andrew Bannister (1967–73)*

I first met Tom when I did his Floriculture unit as part of my Hortic. degree, and we kept in touch for almost half a century. While doing his course, he explained to us that he was setting up an MSc course Landscape Ecology Design and Maintenance (LEDM). For the first few years, Prof Wibberley wouldn't let it be called Management as he felt it would confuse people. I was never quite sure whether it was the chicken or the egg that came first as the then Institute of Landscape Architects (ILA) was beginning to consider expanding its membership to include Landscape Managers and Tom got heavily involved in that process. So did this inside information spur Tom on in his desire to set up the course or did the course help give impetus and confidence to the ILA to expand and become the Landscape Institute (LI)?

I suspect it was a bit of each. Anyway, timing, as they say, is everything and it was the right course at the right time so I finished my Hortic degree and went straight on to join the first ever LEDM. There were just five of us and I think Tom always had a soft spot for us guinea pigs. It was a great year and Tom had just the right light touch to get the best out of us. We were all from very different backgrounds and we shared our experiences and knowledge with one another and with him.

In 1973, Tom got me to deliver one segment of the LEDM; I carried on making that contribution until the Imperial era when the course collapsed. I'm so glad Tom got out before those last sad years. In the early years of the course, he carried on working with the ILA and joined their ad hoc committee that was trying to make the idea of expansion work. Again, never one to forget his



former students, as the work of the committee progressed; he put me forward to join it, which I did.

The outcome of its work was that the LI was formed and many former LEDM students were able to join a professional body, and indeed this continues to be the case to the present day. Tom was the main external (i.e. non ILA ) member of that committee and I think those of us who went on to join the LI and have professional careers owe him a lot. Having got all that sorted out, Tom then went on to make his mark in the field of historic gardens – something which he'd always been interested in. So basically, I owe Tom a lot for my life-long career in landscape and ongoing involvement with the LI. It is a tribute to Tom's enthusiasm and support that I'm certain that I'm only one of many of his former students who can say that he helped shape their careers.

My last contact with Tom was 2014, when he added a note to his Xmas card asking me if I'd like the slides he'd got of his first LEDM course and the various trips we did. I wrote back and said yes please but unfortunately never heard from him again. Right to the end he was thinking of his ex-students.

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# Gardening is for life – Dr Tom Wright in his own words

An account of his life spent steeped in horticulture reproduced by kind permission from *The Kent Garden Trust Newsletter*, No 40, Autumn 2013.

I have always thought of myself as a Man of Kent having been born in Gillingham, south of the River Medway in 1928. When I was four my family moved to Canterbury and this is where my boyhood interest in gardening and natural history really began. We had a large garden, and an orchard and a kitchen garden, and over a stream there was a wonderful woodland to explore. We had big beds of flowers and I do recall two of these full of Madonna Lilies that were taller than me. I used to get pollen on my nose from their wonderful scent. I have never been able to grow them so tall since!

During WWII, I attended Simon Langton Grammar School in Canterbury, reputed to be the nearest school to the German occupation over the channel and still in operation. The school was partially bombed and we seemed to spend more time in the shelters below ground, but it kept going. I recall a balloon barrage tethered in the school playground that used to break loose at times.

## Early interest in alpenes

In my early teens I became interested in alpenes and started to build small rock features in safe 'pockets' of our gardens, not threatened by the ever increasing number of cars and motorcycles my brothers and Father were accumulating. They tended to be the 'Dogs Grave' type of rockery referred to by that great Father of English Rock Gardens, Reginald Farrer, whose book I had been given. I created a table scree garden, based on a magazine article, with a miniature alpine landscape with valleys and

outcrops, and gradually planted it with real and rather special alpenes bought with my pocket money.

## Sissinghurst an inspiration

Another inspiration came from special garden visiting with a few like-minded school friends. A very special visit I made with school friends, who felt the same, was to Sissinghurst Castle gardens. This was a 20 mile or so cycle ride from Canterbury, and on arriving at the famous gatehouse there was a collecting tin by the great door where one was requested to put in one shilling (I think it was?) and go inside. There we found a truly magical garden in all its early summer luxuriance. We had the whole garden to ourselves apart from a gardener and a lady working in the borders whom we think was Vita herself. An unforgettable experience.

On leaving school, my mind had already been made up to take up horticulture as my way forward. I had some opposition from my father at first who did not see 'gardening' as a career; but eventually I was accepted to start a Degree course at Wye in October 1949, and was granted a KCC award to cover this. I could write so much about my three years at Wye; its wonderful location, its gardens and orchards and the nearby Downs rich in botanical life, and the students and staff – a very friendly and lively atmosphere. We were very fortunate to have as our lecturer in 'decorative horticulture', **Christopher Lloyd**, who we found inspiring and entertaining. He had recently graduated from Wye and a privilege for a few of us was to spend



*Tom Wright pictured at Withersdane.*

a weekend at Great Dixter. Great memories of this and the commanding presence of Mrs 'Daisy' Lloyd to keep us in order!

After leaving Wye with my Degree, jobs were in fact not too easy to be found and it was some years before I found a post as manager of a nursery and flower growing business in South Devon. I was only 28 at this time and recently married and becoming a Nursery Manager was a new and rather daunting experience but it proved to be a full and rewarding job, getting to know more plants, and West Country gardens and the management of existing staff. I had also been doing some local talks to groups such as the WI that I quite enjoyed.

### **Lecturing at Pershore**

After some 10 years in Devon, I accepted a lecturing post at Pershore Institute of

Horticulture (now a College) in Worcestershire where my subjects were nursery practice, plants, and garden and landscape design. Another range of experiences, in the centre of a rich horticultural region, with nurseries and gardens to visit with students. Hidcote Manor was one of these, and Wheatcrofts Rose business, near Nottingham, among many more. I found lecturing very rewarding and when a post became available back at my old Alma Mater at Wye, in 1978, I was tempted to apply and was accepted, and so my wife Shirley and I moved back to my home county.

This was an exciting time to be at this college of the University of London when the more traditional courses in Agriculture and Horticulture were being widened to include more management and environmental studies and new courses in Countryside Planning. The former Decorative Horticulture undergraduate course became Landscape Horticulture at my instigation and we were able, with colleagues, to start a successful Masters Course in Landscape Ecology, Design and Management. We also included garden and landscape history and the restoration and management of historic gardens in our course studies. I was commissioned to write a book for Batsford as part of their series on The Gardens of Britain covering Kent, Sussex and Surrey which was published in 1978. One of my Wye students prepared the garden plans.

### **Historic gardens survey**

In 1982, I was asked by KCC planning staff to undertake a survey of historic gardens in Kent. The County Garden Survey was completed in 1985, with a summary by the County Planning Officer. This was also an important time when the Kent Gardens Trust was formed with a group of interested gardens people and assisted by

# Elizabeth & Graham George Thomas – inseparable in horticulture

**Graham George Thomas** (Wye, 1954–1957) and **Elizabeth Clare Thomas** (Wye, 1952–1955)

*A tribute from family and friends.*

Elizabeth (née Emmerson) and Graham Thomas met and married whilst at Wye and spent their lives together sharing a passion for plants and gardens. It seems fitting that this should be a joint tribute.

Graham died from Parkinson's disease on 12th April 2013 after a long illness during which he was lovingly cared for by Elizabeth. Elizabeth died on 30th July 2016. She had spent May of that year in Edinburgh with her sister, visiting gardens and galleries, going for walks – living her characteristic full and active life. She developed symptoms on her return, was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in mid-June, and died six weeks later.

But back to the beginning...



*Elizabeth and Graham Thomas pictured in their garden with their dog.*

KCC. This first survey was a useful basis for later surveys and reports by the Trust.

The October 1987 storm was devastating to many gardens in the South. I was appointed by English Heritage and the Countryside Commission Task Force Trees to undertake studies and restoration proposals for a number of Kent gardens including Olantigh, Godinton Park, Hever Castle and Squerries Court.

We took an early retirement offer from the University in 1990 and moved to West Sussex. I continued some advisory work in Kent and retained links with the Kent Gardens Trust. I also joined the Sussex Gardens Trust and have given

advice to some Sussex historic gardens. I have never once regretted taking up horticulture as a life's career. I have so many memories of my Wye days and can take some pride in the successful careers of many of our students. These include **Fergus Garrett** from Great Dixter, and **Mike Calnan** who has been Head of Gardens and Landscapes with the National Trust for some years now.

A respected friend in later years was that great plantsman, the late **Graham Stuart Thomas** and he observed that "Gardening and working with plants is a constant learning experience throughout one's life."

## Graham

Graham was born in Bromley, to parents Arthur and Doris, in 1935. There they endured the Blitz, but were ultimately bombed out and the family – Graham along with his parents (Arthur on compassionate leave to oversee the move) and his sister Janet – moved to Leamington Spa.

Graham did well at Bromley Grammar School, followed by a practical year with Vinson's Agricultural (now Edward Vinson Ltd), where he learned to drive tractors. This led in subsequent years to his becoming Champion Ploughman at Wye. He won several inter-varsity challenge cups of which he was very proud.

In 1954 he went to Wye College to study for his BSc in Horticulture. On completing his BSc he went on to complete an MSc (1959). His thesis was titled 'Studies on the Blackcurrant *Ribes Nigrum*'.

On completion of his degree Graham joined NAAS, the National Agricultural Advisory Service, now called ADAS. His first posting was to Brogdale National Fruit Trials (under the directorship of Mr Jock Potter). From there he was transferred to Efford Experimental Horticultural Station in late 1960 or early 1961. There he worked with Miss Hilary Hughes, the deputy director, who oversaw the work on fruit. Graham worked mainly with soft fruit, particularly blackcurrants.

He moved to the Ministry of Agriculture NAAS offices based in Winchester for a brief period before the whole family moved to Selling in Kent from New Milton, Hampshire, in May 1964. This move was to fill a vacancy at the Hop Department at Wye. He didn't teach but concentrated on research, focusing on the physiology of flowering. He completed his PhD there in 1968, under the supervision of Prof. W W Schwabe, entitled 'Studies on the effects of the environment on growth and flowering of the hop,

*Humulus lupulus*'. His work throughout his career was on this subject and he was able to demonstrate that the hop has to have reached a certain growth stage before it responds to daylength to trigger flowering. His work is much quoted and remains the seminal work on the response of the hop plant to day length.

In 1985, he became Deputy Director at the Hop Department but, following an Agriculture and Food Research Council review, he was made redundant in March 1986.

Graham battled depression for most of his adult life, which among other things manifested itself in a degree of fear of closed spaces, limiting choices: he hesitated to go to the theatre or to church, and travel, especially by air, was impossible. The news of his redundancy must have been devastating, but despite his illness Graham showed great courage and treated the change as an opportunity. He invested part of his redundancy payment in a new green house and a couple of polytunnels, and together with Elizabeth established Longacre Nursery, specialising in the propagation and sale of unusual hardy herbaceous perennials. Most of these were propagated from cuttings taken from specimens in their own garden. Graham's 'green fingers' seemed able to coax life from almost any twig or leaf and he could typically be found standing at the potting bench, sleeves rolled up, hands covered in compost, listening to the Test match.

It was in about 2001 that Graham was diagnosed with Parkinson's. Bizarrely, as his body battled with this new illness, his depression and fear of enclosed places lifted. This provided an opportunity for a brief and happy few years of travel and activities that had previously been denied Graham and Elizabeth. For the first time in his life he could fly, and whilst he was still able to travel without the assistance of a wheel chair they enjoyed holidays in locations from Spain to Sri Lanka.

## Elizabeth

Elizabeth was born in 1933, to parents Harold and Lucy Emmerson, and grew up in Bushey Heath in Hertfordshire. During the war years, she and her four siblings were evacuated to the Lincolnshire coast (home to their grandparents) – far away from the bombs falling around the family home close to London. Like so many of her generation she experienced rationing, the routine of the Anderson shelter, search lights, the threat of bombing and hand-me-down clothes. This experience no doubt left its mark in her lifelong priorities. People – and gardens – were always more important than things.

By her own account, Elizabeth “hated school”, but gardening was on the curriculum for the youngest girls. It may have been in the rather grand surroundings of the Rose Garden at the North London Collegiate School for Girls in Edgware that her love affair with plants began.

In due course, in 1952, she proceeded to Wye College, where she completed her Bachelor of Science in Horticulture. From Wye she went to study at Wageningen in The Netherlands. She spent a year there, lodging with a family who taught her Dutch, and with which she maintained a life-long friendship. On returning to Wye she began work as a demonstrator on the undergraduate course, and it was here that she met Graham – one of her students. When they came to be married she had to leave her job – in accordance with the College’s regulations at the time, which prohibited married couples from working in the same institution.

She went on to teach Biology at the Lady Capel School for Girls in Faversham, and then Horticulture for Hadlow College, but based on the Canterbury Technical College campus. Eventually she went freelance and started teaching adults from her home, using the garden and greenhouses

for practical lessons and demonstrations. She soon had a loyal following and her classes were always full. A feature of her teaching during the spring and summer was the garden visits – outings to small private gardens, mainly in Kent. For years she also organised a series of very popular coach trips every summer for members of her garden classes, Selling Gardeners, and friends, to large gardens further afield, including some in Essex and Sussex.

Elizabeth was committed to her village and its community, to which she freely gave her time and her quiet, wise counsel. She served as a school governor, was a Parish Councillor for over 24 years, and a member of the Parochial Church Council for 45 years (from 1967 until 2012). Her Christian faith was a foundation for all that she did. Her immense knowledge of gardens and gardening served her well in the region’s gardening quiz in which she regularly competed as a member of the village’s team.

## Together

Graham and Elizabeth – for those who knew them, it is hard to think of one without the other. Since meeting at Wye College their lives were inseparable. They had three children - Mary, David and Clare – and five grandchildren. Beyond that there was a large extended family of brothers, sisters, nephews and nieces. Every year, at around the time of Elizabeth’s birthday in June, they would host a family garden party at Longacre. It was an occasion which everyone looked forward to.

The setting for the party was the same each year – the glorious garden that they created out of an abandoned smallholding of blackcurrant bushes and cherry trees, the naturalistic planting providing a tranquil haven surrounded by woodland. For more than 20 years they opened the garden to the public under the National Garden Scheme, raising thousands of pounds for charities.

## Wye College treasures – portraits

# 4th Baron Northbourne

We continue the series of brief biographies of past Principals, Governors and Fellows. As previously, this coincides with the regular and rotating loan of portraits to the Wye Heritage Centre from the Imperial College picture store where the 'Wye Treasures' portraits are currently housed. We are indebted to Imperial College Archivist Anne Barrett for her assistance in making the loan arrangements.

**Walter Ernest Christopher James**  
**4TH Baron Northbourne b1896 d 1982**

**Governor of South Eastern Agricultural**  
**College (Wye College) 1925-1965**

**Chairman of Governors Swanley**  
**Horticultural College 1938 –1946**

**Chairman of Governors Wye College**  
**1946 –1965**

**Fellow of Wye College 1965 –1982**

**The Chairman of Governors also carried**  
**the title of Provost**

Lord Northbourne owned and ran the family estates at Betteshanger and Northbourne in East Kent. He was a prolific writer and is credited with the first use of the term 'Organic Farming'. He was a passionate artist, gardener and woodworker. He also won a rowing silver medal at the 1920 Olympics.

From 1939 to-1945 he served as the Chairman of the County War Agricultural Committee for Kent.

His service as a Governor of Wye College over 40 years left a remarkable legacy. The merging of Swanley College with Wye College in 1946 was overseen by him and he was a great supporter and mentor of Dunstan Skilbeck, Principal of the College from 1946 to 1968. The post-war renaissance of the College was very much in the hands of Northbourne, Skilbeck and Charles Garland.

Over the years, Wye College Alumni filled the key posts on the staff of Betteshanger Farms Ltd. Farm Manager, the late David Powell, was instrumental in modernising the in-hand farming of the estate and amongst the Assistant Farm Managers are listed **Robin Graham** (1958–61), **Francis Huntington** (1961–64) and Howard Carr.

An excellent and well researched biography of Walter Northbourne was written by John Paull of the University of Tasmania. For those who would like to learn more, this would be an excellent starting point.

The portrait of Lord Northbourne, c 1965, was painted by renowned local artist, the late John Ward RA.

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*Continued from page 61.*

Graham and Elizabeth bore their illnesses with great dignity and grace and without any trace of self-pity. Right to the end they touched the lives of those around them through their ability

to bear their afflictions with humour, love and generosity. They were loving parents, adoring grandparents, and they will be missed by all those who knew them.





Walter Ernest Christopher James  
4th baron Northbourne (1896–1982)

# Wye College Agricola Club AGM

## Minutes of the 64th Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 24th September 2016 at 5.30 pm Kempe Centre, Wye

### Present

David Leaver (President and Chair), Susan Atkinson, Berkeley Hill, Francis Huntington (Secretary), Jane Reynolds, Chris Waters, Paul Webster (Treasurer) and 40 members.

### 1 Apologies for absence

Charles Course, Robyn McConchie, Mike Marshall, Chris Whitmey and John Walters.

### 2 To confirm the Minutes of the 63rd AGM published in the Journal

The Chairman signed the Minutes as a true record.

### 3 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

### 4 Chairman's report

The Chairman, John Walters, had sent his apologies and had asked the Secretary to read his report. He sent thanks to Jane Reynolds for all her organisation of the Dinner and to Francis and Lucy Huntington and the Wye Heritage team for organising the afternoon. He went on to record that the Club and the Journal continue to thrive, and that the Club finances continue to be in Paul Webster's safe hands, who he thanked for all his input.

The meeting asked that the Secretary convey to John the meeting's wishes for a speedy recovery.

### 5 Secretary's report

The Secretary confirmed the Chairman's comment by explaining that his job was being made easier and always interesting with an increase in correspondence by email and in response to the e-newsletter, as well as Facebook activity.

Not wishing to delay the meeting he referred members to the topics covered in his annual report in the 2016 Journal.

### 6 Treasurer's report and to receive the Club accounts for 2015–2016

Paul Webster tabled the Club accounts and talked through the details on the overhead screen. The outcome was very much as anticipated.

A motion approving the accounts was proposed by Geoff Dixon and seconded by Mike Anderson-Upcott and carried unanimously.

### 7 Memorial Fund – Trustees' report and accounts 2015–2016

The accounts were presented to the members for information. The year ending 31st July 2016 showed a small deficit on the income and expenditure account after support to applicants to the fund of £3,276 and transfers to the Club of £8,500 to cover the Journal costs.

- Portfolio performance during that year was satisfactory with an increase in the value of the portfolio of the order of £25,000. In response to questions Paul confirmed that the instructions to the portfolio managers was to achieve capital growth to at least cover inflation and to secure an income to meet the needs of the Club and grants from the fund. Portfolio management costs were of the order of 0.9%.
- There was a discussion about investing in ethical funds. Paul explained that it was difficult with our type of portfolio to instruct the managers to limit the investments to

ethical funds. The President indicated that the whole question had been reviewed by Trustees in the recent past but would continue to be reviewed on a regular basis.

- The accounts as inspected by Messrs Chavereys had been approved by the Trustees and signed at the AGM of the Memorial Fund held earlier in the day.

## **8 Appointment of Independent Examiners of the Accounts for 2015–2016**

The Treasurer, Paul Webster, recommended that Chavereys be appointed to act as Independent Examiner. Proposed by Geoff Dixon and seconded by Graham Milbourn and approved by the Membership present.

The President thanked Paul Webster, John Walters and Francis Huntington for all their work on behalf of the Club.

## **9 Journal Editor's report**

Anticipating his absence from the meeting, John Walters had prepared notes which the Secretary read out. As editor John felt that another high quality Journal had been delivered – mainly as a result of the fascinating material submitted by members. Geerings had done an excellent and competitive job with the printing and Gill Bond, as production editor, had again improved the overall appearance and readability of the Journal. John wished to extend his apologies to Chris Baines for not being able to include the review of his latest book *How to make a Wildlife Garden* and to the Gambia Expedition 1966 for having to delay the publication of the report on the 50th anniversary of that expedition until 2017.

John reminded the membership that he was actively looking for someone to take over as Editor in 2018.

The President said that he believed it was the best Journal for some years and thanked the Editorial team.

Berkeley Hill raised again the possibility of putting out the Journal exclusively in digital format and to utilise the cost saved for pursuing other Club objectives. He went on to say that the activities of Wye Heritage are central to what the Club should be doing and its long-term future could be sustained in part by the Club. A general reluctance to abandon the print version was expressed by those present. The President indicated that the Committee would look again at the Club's future plans and would review the Journal costs and the alternatives.

## **10 Elections**

The Secretary indicated that there were three vacancies on the Committee. John Walters had come to the end of his three-year term but was eligible to stand again and was willing to do so. His election was proposed by Sue Atkinson and seconded by Chris Waters. The President called for further nominations, none were forthcoming. John was duly elected with acclamation.

The number of Vice Presidents or Honorary Members is not limited; however, there were no current proposals for additional Vice Presidents or Honorary Members.

## **11 Future plans for Club events**

The next club event was announced as the 2017 Summer Event – a Hog Roast on the farm of the Brown family in Covington, Nr. Peterborough, on Saturday 1st July 2017.

## **12 Report on the Wye Heritage Centre**

Francis Huntington reported that Telereal Trillium (TT) had completed the purchase of the main campus on 16th October 2015 and had agreed Wye Heritage's continued use of the Latin School in the short term. During 2016 Wye Heritage has been working with TT to establish a permanent Heritage Centre. The location has now been allocated and plans are

being drawn up. It is intended that the Centre will be based on the old Common Room adjacent to the Wheel Room with access from the High Street. Those at the tea will have seen the concept plans. Francis commended his Journal report for further information on Wye Heritage's activities and encouraged Club members to subscribe to membership.

### 13 Update on plans for the Wye Campus

Francis Huntington reported that Telereal Trillium are pressing ahead with their plans,

but that until they are lodged in the public domain they are not available to view. Some indication of the likely residential development of the Medieval and Edwardian buildings had been given during the afternoon tour. Francis commended his Journal report for more information. Further information will be published in the next Journal and in the regular e-newsletters.

### 14 Next Annual General Meeting

The next AGM will be held on Friday 29th September 2017.



**The Wife of Bath.** Once highly regarded in Kent and Sussex for its fine dining and admired by Londoners as 'a little place I know in a lovely village in the country', the Wife of Bath has seen a few reincarnations in recent years. Attempts to kick start it have been abortive but now it's in a much more promising position. Under the watchful eye of Michelin-starred chef Mark Sergeant it has been re-born with a Spanish theme with tapas figuring high on the menu along with a limited list of speciality main dishes. Buena suerte!

# Agricola Club AGM Agenda 2017

## Friday 29th September 2017, Latin School, Wye College, Wye

The 65th Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday 29th September 2017 in the Latin School, Wye College, Wye. Starting promptly at 7.00 pm. Please note that this is a departure from our normal arrangement of holding the AGM to coincide with the Annual Dinner. Our 2017 reunion is taking the form of a Summer Event and not a September/October AGM and Dinner. The Summer event timing does not allow us to hold the AGM at that time, as the accounts will not have been prepared by then. We have therefore postponed the AGM to coincide with the September Club Committee meeting.

### Timing

5.00–6.30 Committee Meeting

6.30–7.00 Glass of wine and nibbles

7.00 AGM

### Agenda

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Minutes – confirm the minutes of the 64th AGM published in the Journal
- 3 Matters arising
- 4 Chairman's Report
- 5 Secretary's Report
- 6 Treasurer's Report and to receive the Club accounts for 2016–2017
- 7 Memorial Fund – Trustees Report and Accounts 2016–2017
- 8 Appointment of Independent Examiners of the Accounts for 2017–2018
- 9 Journal Editor's Report
- 10 Elections:
  - Committee – there are six vacancies
  - Vice Presidents – Nominations to be received by the Secretary at least 14 days before the meeting.
  - Honorary Membership – to receive and vote on the committee's recommendations
- 12 Future plans for Club events.
- 13 Report on the Wye Heritage Centre
- 14 Update on Telereal Trillium's current plans for the Wye Campus
- 15 Any other business

## A combined adventure

**David Hosford (Wye 1949-52) recalls some challenging, hands-on harvesting experiences in post-War Surrey.**

We were expected to seek work on farms during the long summer vac. when we were at Wye. My friends **David Maynard** (1949–52) and **Richard Horder**, decided we would combine to seek adventure during the holidays. We put an advert in the *Farmer's Weekly* offering ourselves for hire for 10 to 12 weeks. We received a number of replies, I can't remember how many. We turned down many and set off one weekend on our motor bikes to 'interview' our prospective employers. We spent the first night in somebody's hay barn. I recall I had a thumping headache. My two friends left me in the barn while they set off to buy some cider. I think we must have taken some food with us.

### Choice of jobs

The first place we visited was a big arable farm on the Sussex downs. We decided we didn't like the chap regardless of what he had to offer. Our next call was one Butler Henderson. We were to generally help with harvesting. It seemed OK so we left this one for further consideration.

Our last call was to a contractor AJ Ward and Son of Egham. We interviewed 'and son'. He was rather smooth and didn't quite tie up with the yard he had of many scrap steam rollers and living vans. He offered us a job in two parts. First we would spend time tractor driving in the London Parks. These parks had been ploughed up during the war and let out as allotments for the patriotic gardeners of London to grow veg. as their contribution to the war effort. In 1949 these were still in a shambles of derelict allotments. AJ Ward had the contract to put them back to grass befitting of a London park. The job offered required four people so I enlisted my friend Mac Wenyon to complete the party.

I should mention that in the first part of the vac. we were to drive tractors and for the second part we would have two combine harvesters and would set off to various farms in Surrey where Ward had been engaged to combine their grain crops. Our accommodation was to be in living vans. Initially they were parked on Wandsworth Common while we were working in the parks and then they would be towed behind the combines as we toured the various farms. This seemed to be the job that might provide a suitable amount of unpredictable adventure. So we mailed Wards to that effect.

### Less than hygienic accommodation

On the day appointed we duly arrived with motor bikes and baggage at the living vans parked on a bit of decrepit tarmac on Wandsworth Common. We were introduced to our vans. In traditional style there was a bunk at one end where we were to sleep, one above the other. Suspicious grey blankets were provided and a couple of equally doubtful looking mattresses. We were introduced to our tractors, fairly massive six cylinder TVO Massey Harris. There were a number of sets of harrows and cultivators lined up, all suitably tatty. We were given very brief instructions and suggested that we keep our hours and start work the next morning on levelling and working down a chunk of nearby park.

### Dual fuel problems

I seem to remember we repaired to a shady transport cafe nearby and then bedded down, Horder and Maynard in one van and Wenyon and I in the other. There was great excitement the next morning. Having had a scanty breakfast, we were to start work. Starting the tractors was not an easy matter. They did have self starters, quite an





*Noel and David Horsford*

advanced feature in those days. But they were very reluctant to go. They, of course, started on petrol and then when warm needed to be switched over to TVO. The switch over was a tricky job because they were reluctant to run even when the switch was suitably delayed 'till they got really hot. When they stalled on TVO they would not go again until we had drained the carburettor, refilled with petrol and tried again.

Eventually all the machines got going and we set off cultivating. As in all allotments, an array of sheds and many and varied clobber had been left behind. Allegedly, the ground had been cleared of such junk before we arrived. However, much still remained. I can't remember what we did about it all except that much time was spent in disentangling it from our implements. We ate evening meals at a transport cafe. We cooked breakfast on primus stoves and took some sandwiches or the like out with us for lunch.

### **Bed bugs and DDT**

After a couple of nights we began to notice that we were developing very itchy lesions over various parts of our bodies. This seemed curious until one or other of us thought that something was crawling about over us in the night. A careful examination of the bedding and under the pillows revealed a mass of gorged red creatures. They were of course 'bed bugs' (lice) which had been

feeding themselves on us during the hours of darkness.

On the daily visit of one character, Lorrie Gates, our immediate boss, we complained. He said that he would report the matter to the storeman back at headquarters in Egham. The chap there was duly concerned and provided fresh bedding and mattresses. Whether the new bedding was also contaminated or whether the bugs were still there in the crevices of the van I don't know. However, we decided that DDT, the insecticide of the moment, was the thing. We purchased large containers of the powder at a local garden shop and solemnly dusted ourselves down each night before going to bed. In retrospect what that did to us I don't know, probably altered our genes or meant that our children were likely to be deformed. After a week or so of such ablutions the bugs disappeared. We carried on with our reclamation work on Wandsworth Common and sundry other pieces of parkland nearby for some three or four weeks.

### **The combining starts**

The great day duly arrived for the second part of our adventure, 'combining'. I don't remember how, but we ended up with our living vans in the yard back at Egham, parked amongst the mass of steam engines, literally dozens of them, awaiting being broken up for scrap. Whilst there I had the presence of mind to unscrew one of the magnificent brass horses which were on the front of the steamers. It is well polished, and is a treasured memory of the days of long ago at AJ Wards of Egham.

Our combines were already in the yard – brand spanking new Massey 726 baggers with an 8'6" table. They had been specially fitted with a drawbar at the rear to which we were to hitch our living vans. We loaded our motor bikes, one inside the van and one on the bagging chute of the combine. We were ready to set off. The whole contraption was highly illegal by today's standards



*The Massey Harris 726, loaded with a motorbike and pulling the living van.*

no doubt. No rear lights, indicators or number plates. It is unlikely that such combines were ever designed to tow a van.

Our first assignment was in Bagshot Park. The big house there was, I think, a school for aspiring parsons. The chap who farmed the lands around, who we were to combine for, we christened, of course, Lord Bagshot. He was a crusty old retired Colonel type whose bark was much worse than his bite. He never knew that none of us had ever driven a combine before. How we pulled off such a coup I don't know. We received minimal instruction, but somehow we managed. We did about 100 acres or more for him to his complete satisfaction. When we came to leave he tipped us £20 each, a huge sum in those days. The way we operated was to take it in turns as was convenient to drive the combine while the other crew member would get food or cook lunch, help unbung the combine or any other urgent or non-urgent job.

With our motor bikes we were completely mobile. We received a daily visit from Lorrie Gates who was a genial undemanding boss. He would bring fuel and other supplies and see that all was going well. He would regale us with stories of his days in

the army during the war, of the doubtful entertainments available in the back streets of Cairo. He seemed happy with our amateurish performance. He drove a Morris 8 with very little in the way of brakes. They did work with the most vigorous pumping. He drove fairly recklessly and when braking was needed the pumping was frantic.

### **Flattening a lamp post in Staines High Street**

We were to part company with the other combine of Maynard and Horder for our next assignment. Wenyon and I were to travel to a fellow some way away. It was Sunday when we set off and we reckoned it was going to take most of the day to get there. Our journey necessitated travelling down Staines High Street. It was early on Sunday morning as we passed through. The drill was that one of us drove and the other would sit on the straw shaker hood to see both backwards and forwards. We had the van on behind, one motor bike on the bag chute and the other in the van perched in the middle. There can be no doubt we were an unusual sight.

Motoring down the High Street we needed to turn left on our travels to Normandy Farm. I was driving, I recall, as we swung left. Because of the

rear wheel steering on the combine the back swung out in an arc of course, taking the living van hitched to the rear wheels with it. In this instance, as it swung outwards, it mounted the pavement and hit a lamp post fair and square. Mac riding on top yelled too late and the lamppost was flattened. It was early Sunday morning you will recall and there were few people about. I began to slow down to survey the damage. Mac shouted furiously to keep going and I did. We never heard a thing about our minor accident. When we next passed through Staines we did note that there was brand new shiny lamp post just by that turning.

### **Next job near Hogs Back**

We duly arrived at Normandy Farm near the village of Normandy below the Hogs Back. The farm seemed to be run by a rather unpleasant man and his weedy son. The farmer was bedridden and needed to be interviewed up a ladder outside his bedroom window. As he liked to talk to us both at the same time it was a bit precarious for us both to be perched on the ladder so that he could see us. Once I fell off and landed heavily on my back but neither Mac nor the farmer seemed to notice and conversation continued without a pause.

We cut the first field of wheat with little trouble. It began to rain and it was several days before we could resume. The next field, now wet, was a badly laid crop of barley and was severely infested with cleavers, which almost completely covered the flattened straw with a sea of green. However, we needed to get going, although it was a hopeless task to save this field. The unpleasant foreman insisted we start. Wenyon, entering the field perhaps a bit fast, hit the gate post completely smashing the wooden struts on one end of the reel. We were a bit worried and contacted Lorrie Gates at headquarters. Our worries were unfounded; a fitter was dispatched with suitable wood and in what seemed no time at all, the reel

was mended and we started into the barley. While the mend was being executed, I heard the unpleasant foreman up the ladder telling the bed ridden farmer what the hopeless and reckless young boys had done and that they had completely b.....ed the machine. If only he, the farmer, had got his own combine this fellow would have finished harvest by now.

### **Combine bunged up by cleavers**

As soon as we put the combine to work it grabbed the first bit of straw and then, because of the cleavers, tried, it seemed, to pull the whole field into the drum. This caused a complete bung up. With much difficulty, we cleared the drum and tried again with the same result. The foreman complained of our lack of experience and suggested he knew how to get over the problem. Unwisely, we let him have a go. He pressed on until the whole combine was completely filled with wet straw, cleavers and earth. It took us most of the day to get it clear. The grumpy foreman hated us more than ever. By now it was late in the day. Lorrie Gates appeared with fuel and supplies. He knew little more about combining than we did. Between us we decided it was impossible to cut this crop. Gates duly ascended the ladder to report to the boss. Gates instructed us to push on as early as possible to our next farm, a Mr Petter of Petter Engines (or perhaps he was the son).

Mr Petter was a charming youngish fellow. The farm he had was his hobby, we discovered. He had about 40 acres of barley to cut. His crop was well standing and having unhitched and 'set up camp' we got started. It was the custom that the farmer would supply the man to fill and tie up the bags as they filled, put them on the bagging chute and release them with a pull on the release cord at a convenient place in the field. Mr P seemed reluctant or perhaps he had other things to do and asked if we could do the bagging. We did during the few hours left in the day after our arrival. Mr P duly arrived in the field with his Standard

Fordson and an old horse wagon converted with a well-made drawbar for tractor use. Mr P was a rather puny fellow but as it turned out later he was a clever chap with much academic engineering knowledge. He began to struggle to load the combine bags onto his wagon by himself. He became rather embarrassed as we motored on, producing more and more bags. As Mac couldn't bear to see him struggling, he suggested to me that we go and help him. Poor struggling Mr P was delighted at what he called 'a most generous gesture'. We soon had a good load up on the creaking old wooden wagon.

### **Problems with overloaded wagon**

We remounted our combine and pressed on. It was now getting dark and we were thinking about packing up for the day. Mr P drove into the field in his rather swish executive Rover to report that he had had a slight accident with the load. He asked if we could come and have a look and suggest what he might do. We drove back to the farm on our trusty combine to see the Standard Fordson parked some little way away from the wagon. Still hitched to the Fordson were the front wheels of the wagon whilst the rest of it was down on its front end looking a bit sorry nearby. Poor Petter was definitely downcast. Of course the old wagon was never built for a couple of tons of wheat. The turntable pin had in fact just sheared off.

What to do? Mr P took us to his workshop and suggested that as it appeared we were men of experience we surely could sort something out while he would go and make something for us all to eat. Young Petter was moving in the right direction we thought. He showed us his work shop and disappeared. His workshop was not the sort of tinkering shed we were accustomed to. It was beautifully tidy for a start, which appealed more to Mac than me. There was a comprehensive set of rather delicate tools many of which had never been used. We were flummoxed, what could we do to earn our supper?

### **Hay rake to the rescue**

A large chunk of round rod was what we needed but where was such a thing to be found in this rather unagricultural workshop? The metal store was small and delicate in the extreme. We noted a fine pillar drill which was not sparkingly new; it had perhaps come from an old blacksmith's shop. The pillar would have been ideal. Did we dare cannibalise it? Probably not. Then Mac's eyes fell upon an old hay rake just outside the workshop where it appeared to be undergoing some repairs. It had a very substantial axle. Should we ask permission to use this axle? We could but try. We made our way into the house and followed the smell of food cooking.

We got to the kitchen and could see through a haze of blue smoke Petter with a glass in his hand tending a smoking frying pan. He welcomed us in jovial terms and said supper was about ready. He offered us a large glass of cider which was just what we needed. To cut a long story slightly shorter, we had a very good meal washed down with plenty of potent cider. The time came for bed and as we bid Mr P good night, we casually mentioned the axle of the hay rake. Yes, of course, anything to get the wagon on its feet again.

The next morning we were up and about well before Petter. We cut with the oxyacetylene a suitable length of hay rake axle, welded a large washer on the top and, hey presto, there was a very good pin. By this time Mr P appeared; he had probably imbibed rather more cider than we since he had been at it longer. He seemed a bit jaded. We showed him the pin and he was delighted. How to get it onto the wagon still loaded with 2 tons of wheat? There was nothing for it but unload the sacks. We pushed ahead, unloaded the wheat, fitted the pin, reloaded the bags, unloaded them into the barn and were ready to finish Mr P's combining. One ton was deemed to be enough for the Standard Fordson and the old wagon. We finished the work for Mr P and, having

received his most grateful thanks, set off to our next assignment

### **Working for the King in Windsor Great Park**

We were sent to cut 120 acres in Windsor Great Park, not for the King, but for one of his tenants, a beautifully spoken young fellow and his sister, the pair of them doing the farming. They had a herd of Jerseys. What more could the King wish for but a truly elite couple with suitably elite cows? We were directed to a spot in a wood where there seemed to be a derelict house. Perhaps it was suitably out of sight. Our co-contractors, Horder and Maynard, were already settled in the allocated site when we arrived, which was a pleasant surprise. Late into the night our various exploits were swopped over a camp fire in this clearing in the wood beside the rather spooky tumbledown house. We decided that this out of the way place of was judicious. A couple of living vans inhabited each by a brace of rather dirty 'bikers' was not necessarily what His Majesty would have chosen for his country retreat.

I can't remember a great deal about this our last assignment before returning to our second year of our course at Wye. My wife to be, Noel, was doing her practical work near Windsor. She was able to be fetched and joined our happy party on several occasions which was good. I seem to remember that some other of the other girlfriends visited as well.

An event that does stand out is one evening that Mac set off to Farnham Royal I think it was, where Pay Bisset, his girlfriend at the time, lived. He was very apprehensive about the visit. Pay's father was an Admiral. Whether he was a chap to be feared by a boy friend of one of his four daughters I don't know but Mac was dreading it. When it came to turning in time, Mac had not arrived back. This did not alarm me unduly. Perhaps the admiral had suggested he stay the night. Hardly likely I thought.

On waking in the morning there was still no Mac in the lower bunk. Clearly something had gone wrong. All was to be revealed when Lorrie Gates rolled up to report that Mac was in hospital having had an accident on his motor bike. He had knocked a man down and both had landed up injured. No doubt Mac was speeding a bit. His 350 Velocette was a good machine. Fortunately, Mac was not badly hurt and he returned after a few days. I think the fellow he ran into was more seriously injured.

### **Massey Harris 726 – an advanced bit of kit**

Having finished the corn for the nicely spoken young man and his sister it was time to return to Wye for our studies. Both gangs had cut a little over 800 acres each which I suppose was not bad for, by today's standards, a rather primitive combine, but in 1949 an advanced bit of kit. The cutting table was able to be raised up and down mechanically. This was a big advance on previous machines which relied on strength and a large wheel connected to the table by a series of cables and situated near the driver's seat. The 726 employed an ordinary starter motor with reduction gears connected to suitable levers to the cutting table. In order to protect the mechanism it had a slip clutch incorporated in the drive, the adjustment of which presented many problems as only drivers of the Massey Harris 726 will know.

The summer vac. of 1949 was one big adventure. We received profuse thanks from Lorrie Gates and also we had an audience with the son of AJ Ward and son when suitable thanks were exchanged. He was, I recall, a rather unlikely boss of this very down-to-earth contractors. My lasting regret was that we didn't accept one of his scrap steam rollers in lieu of some of our wages, not that such was ever offered!

# A Kenya farm boy is thankful

**Ewen Maclellan Wilson (1962–1965)** looks back over a life that led him from his family farm in Kenya to a career in the US Department of Agriculture, working closely with the Reagan administration.

When I first arrived at Wye in the autumn of 1962, I fully expected to return to our family farms in Kenya. The coffee estate near Nairobi, which had been pioneered by my grandfather in 1903, had prospered in the 1950's coffee boom, allowing my dad to expand to a mixed farming operation in the highlands of Kenya. I looked forward to my future there, but it was not to be. A few weeks after Dad had dropped me off at Wye and returned home, he suffered a terminal stroke. It was tough and lonely being far away from family, but I remember getting comfort inside Wye Parish Church. During the subsequent political changes that came with 'Uhuru' in Kenya, my mother relocated to England, I lost our beautiful family farms in Africa, and life took a new course.

## **To the US via Rhodesia**

Upon graduation from Wye, I received a letter of encouragement from **Glenn Allison** (1959–62), so I followed him to Rhodesia. There I worked in Lomagundi, one of the most productive agricultural districts in what was then a marvellous country with well-run commercial farms. I met my future wife, Kay. Another marvel was getting my private pilot's licence. The "winds of change" however, created turbulent conditions for us colonials of Africa. At the time, I realised that graduate education might assure future career prospects. After getting married, starting a family, earning masters and doctoral degrees in the United States, and casting around for various ways to make a living, we settled permanently in America and became citizens.

A fortuitous break came when I was given the position of chief economist at a trade association in Washington, DC, representing the US meat industry, the American Meat Institute. It was a fascinating job that entailed travel across the US, and interactions with top agribusiness leaders as well as many international meat and livestock groups, including the British Meat and Livestock Commission.

At that time, the American Meat Institute was headed by a truly remarkable man, Richard E. (Dick) Lyng. He had served as California's Secretary of Agriculture when Ronald Reagan was Governor of California. Following the 1980 presidential election, Mr. Lyng was appointed by President Reagan to the number two position at the United States Department of Agriculture, and a few years later, to the President's cabinet as the Secretary of Agriculture.

## **Rising through the ranks at the Dept for Agriculture**

I was fortunate to follow Mr. Lyng to the Department of Agriculture, and to be appointed by the President as Assistant Secretary for Economics, a position that requires hearings and confirmation by the United States Senate. This role meant that I frequently was called upon to testify before Congress, especially with regard to the 1985 Farm Bill, and I was subjected to continual media scrutiny. Some of the notable highlights in which I was involved were ethanol policy, immigration reform for agricultural labourers, and a tour with Secretary Lyng to analyze the impact of the 1988 drought



devastated Mid-West, conducted by flying in the legendary Air Force One.

### High level travel in Europe

The work was intense and stressful – but exciting. I enjoyed several official trips to the UK among other things as a speaker at the Oxford Farming Conference, the FEFAC European Congress, the Canterbury Farmers Club and East Kent Chamber of Agriculture. A memorable assignment was when I represented Secretary Lyng at high-level meetings in The Hague, Italy and Spain to discuss agricultural policy issues related to the accession of Spain to the EC. One of the places where I was invited to speak was the ancient University of Bologna, which was preparing to celebrate its 900th anniversary. In Piacenza and Cremona there was much ceremony with a police motorcycle escort to a meeting with the President of the provincial administration in Cremona and a private viewing of a Stradivarius violin. They must have mistaken the Kenya farm boy for some higher up luminary! All in all, my time in the Reagan administration was a great privilege, which provided fabulous opportunities and interactions with amazing people.

At the end of the Reagan administration, in order to allow the incoming President to pick his own team, we were sent packing. Secretary Lyng described it as "akin to a flock of starlings flying off from a tree, only to return to new perches, some on higher branches, some lower." In my case, there was a variety of subsequent positions, including one in which I was responsible for the US Census of Agriculture and of the Economic Census of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands – nice places to visit! Since retiring at the end of 2006, we moved from the DC suburbs to our rural property at the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains near the Shenandoah National Park.



Three daughters and five grandkids are cherished visitors, and we hope that they have an attachment to this place similar to what I remember for our farms and coastal property in Kenya.

### Thank you Wye College

Receiving the Agricola Club Journal is especially enjoyable, and it is fun to read about the varied careers and memories of graduates and faculty of Wye, and of old friends. I suspect that when we graduated from Wye, most of us, unless we were fortunate enough to be returning to the family farm, had no inkling of what was in store for us. Was our Wye degree our passport to success?

Personally, I have enormous gratitude to Wye College. We received a fine education from a dedicated and talented faculty, we enjoyed a fantastic social life, and the friendships we made in those formative years of our lives have lasted a lifetime. Thank you, Wye!

## A lifetime of tractors – and hearing loss

**Dr David Bennett (1953–56) recounts his experiences with various makes of tractor, and the resulting problems with his hearing.**

During the flying bomb era of the WWII we were evacuated to a Norfolk farm. It was there that I first got to know tractors. There were various Fordsons, but I preferred the Minneapolis Moline bought on Lend-Lease to help the war effort. I liked the way it was easy, even for a nine-year old, to stand beside the controls, sit on the mudguards and work the clutch, which was on a long handle, so that I could move the tractor and cart from one stook to the next.

I returned to that farm to help with the harvest every year until I did my year-on-a-farm in Essex, where the Fordson was the model of choice.

During one Easter break I had the job of carting silage from one Yorkshire Dales farm to another using a David Brown tractor. This was exciting, as the tractor had virtually no brakes. Going

downhill required racing gear changes, only possible because of the famous David Brown gearbox. Luckily, I never encountered another vehicle coming the other way as I approached the humpback bridges en-route.

I had a few months to fill in between graduating and call-up for my national service, some of which were spent night ploughing on the Essex farm where I had done my farming year. By this time the farm was equipped with Fordson Majors. These were to have lasting effects. If I fell asleep ploughing then I had a couple of seconds as I crossed the headland before hitting the hedge. I remember waking up one time with large oak trees on either side of the wheels.

I was discharged from the army in November 1958, and was weighing up the options of either migrating to Australia or doing a PhD under



*The Minneapolis Moline*



*The Fordson*



*In 2014, while on holiday in Argentat in the Dordogne, I passed a shop which sold T-shirts, one of which summarised how my life had been wasted pursuing the wrong goals.*

Professor 'Mac' Cooper at Newcastle University. All the while I was driving a Fordson ploughing for David Neame (Wye circa 1951) who had a farm on the Downs above the Crown. It turned out that I contemplated too long, so migration was the only option.



*The David Brown*

I imagined that there would be opportunities to engage in mixed farming in Australia, but it turned out that nearly all farms were owner-occupied, leaving little opportunity for penniless farm managers. So I became a 'Jackaroo' on cattle stations. In 1961, I was offered a scientific career in CSIRO, the Commonwealth Government's research organisation. This lasted for the next 25 years and did not involve tractors. After that there were various jobs in education, government and consulting, which did not involve tractor driving either.

My wife and I took up scuba diving in 1975 and, since diving can be tough on hearing I took my first hearing test. The result was not too good, but it was not until I took another one later that I realised I had serious hearing loss. As the article overleaf, from an Occupational Health and Safety supplement to *The West Australian* newspaper reports, I had industrial deafness, probably as a consequence of the night ploughing in 1956.

If I had read the article more carefully I would not have wasted £10,000 on successive useless hearing aids.



*The Fordson Major*

From *The West Australian*



Or David Bennett shows how he damaged his hearing 25 years ago - before the days of hearing protection.

## LIFETIME OF HEARING LOSS

Part-time tractor driving as a young agriculture student caused a lifetime hearing disability for Dr David Bennett.

Dr Bennett, a technical consultant to Agriculture Minister Ernie Bridge, was aware of some hearing loss, but the extent of his disability was confirmed only two months ago through a job-related hearing test.

The test showed a serious hearing loss in his right ear and a lesser loss in his left. This is a classic pattern for people who drive farm tractors — something Dr Bennett had not done for 25 years.

Tractor deafness is usually greater in one ear because of the time the driver spends looking back at the plough — with one ear pointed towards the tractor engine.

In Dr Bennett's case, the exposure over some 3½ years occurred mainly on weekends in

the 1950s when he was working his way through an agriculture degree at London University.

A typical shift behind the wheel was 12 hours throughout the night. At one stage he worked this shift full time, every night for four months.

The tractor had no cab, and in those days hearing protection was not an issue. The tractor was particularly noisy.

Typically, he did not notice any deafness immediately. A baseline test in 1976 established some hearing degeneration, but it was the test last May that confirmed how much he had been missing in conversations, his favourite music and other sounds for so long.

"I'll never really know what it would have been like to have heard these things with my hearing intact," he said.

Noise induced hearing loss is irreversible. In Dr

Bennett's case a hearing aid would not help.

Workers compensation legislation now requires compulsory hearing tests for employees in prescribed noisy workplaces — those exceeding an average of 90 decibels per eight-hour day or peaking at 140 decibels.

Hearing loss compensation payments will then be made in proportion to varying degrees of noise-induced hearing loss from the date of these tests.

A useful hint is that if you have to raise your voice to make yourself heard by a workmate one metre away, your hearing is probably at risk.

Although your ears may seem to become "used to" loud noise, this is in fact due to temporary hearing loss. Repeated exposure to excessive noise will eventually lead to permanent damage.

# Challenges in Australia

**Steve Walsh (1962–65) reflects on a life ‘Down Under’ after arriving as a ‘£10 Pom.’**

After graduation from Wye, I emigrated to Australia as a ‘£10 Pom’, arriving at Brisbane, Queensland, on Jan 1st 1966. I was sponsored by Guy Allfrey, son of a Kent Farmer, who in the same year bought a grazing property on the Darling Downs in Queensland and turned it into an irrigated cropping property pumping water from the south branch of the Condamine River. After a couple of years the farm had 800 acres under irrigated maize and sorghum.

After two years with Guy, I got a short-term Technical Assistant job at CSIRO in Samford on the outskirts of Brisbane. My supervisor at CSIRO, Dr Jim Lambourne, gave me some contacts and taking some leave I drove through NSW, Victoria and South Australia looking for a more permanent job. I was lucky enough to score an interview with the Department of Agriculture in Victoria and joined as a trainee Beef Extension Officer based at the State Research Farm at Werribee in 1968. After a post-graduate Diploma in Agricultural Extension at Melbourne Uni in 1970, I was posted to a District office (Warragul) in Gippsland, east of Melbourne. Marriage to Judy followed in 1971.

## Interesting changes in marketing

It was a very interesting time to be involved in Agriculture in Victoria with many challenges, particularly on the marketing front. For example, Britain’s entry to the Common Market and the oil crisis in 1973 had a dramatic impact on traditional Victorian agricultural exports and caused major shifts to new markets.

Initially, my main work involved on-farm trials and experiments and surveys. Later the work turned to district extension of innovations such as computer-assisted marketing, and farmer discussion group work and workshops.



The work has always been interesting and I appreciated the opportunity to mainly work out of the office. Also, Warragul has been a good environment to raise a family of three boys and we have been very happy here.

## Fond memories of Wye

I have fond memories of Wye. I think the course gave us a general, broad grounding in Agriculture. I guess my main memories are not of academia but of the people and events:-

- Many fine evenings at the Kings Head and the George (and Dragon???)
- The Second Year Review, mainly the work, I think, of **Dick Foss** (1962–65);
- A huge dressing down of the Rugby team by Dunstan Skilbeck after some riotous events following Rugby Cub dinner!

On my many returns to England to catch up with family I have usually caught up with old Wye friends **Chris Lonsdale** (1962–65) and **John Southgate**. Through your publication I would like to pass on my regards to the rest of the 1962–65 cohort and offer a warm welcome to anyone visiting Melbourne and Victoria.



# The agri-food industry from all sides

**John Webb (1967–70) recalls his journey from Wye through the ARC, and commercial pig breeding to a food processing company in Toronto.**

I walked in to the Porter's Lodge at the College in October 1967 to sign on for my three-year BSc in animal production. At that time the College was already part of London University, and had adopted the University's mix and match course unit system giving undergraduates a very wide a la carte choice of courses that I believe was unequalled anywhere in the world. I lived one year in the old college building, one year at Withersdane, and one year in a rented flat. The walled gardens and lawns at Withersdane were beautiful and unforgettable.

## **Pre-and post-degree work centered on Wye**

During some vacations, I worked at the College pig research unit on Amage road. At those times I lodged with Mrs Brenchley in her bungalow 'Brenchley's Piece' on Olantigh Road. One of the pig unit staff, John Morgan, was a well-known village character riding his full-sized tricycle around the streets.

In fact, my loose association with Wye had begun a year earlier in 1966, when I spent my mandatory pre-College year working on the Mersham Hatch Estate farms belonging to Lord John Brabourne, then chairman of the College governors, and son-in-law of Lord Louis Mountbatten. I lived in Brabourne Lees and at an early stage discovered the Wye Hill Café and the King's Head.

On graduating with my honours degree in 1970, armed with an ARC postgraduate studentship and with great encouragement from Wye College, I moved to Edinburgh University to study for a PhD in animal genetics. The University seconded me to the then ARC Animal Breeding Research Organisation (ABRO) on the

same campus, now the world-famous Roslin Institute. On completing the PhD in 1973, ABRO offered me a job running the pig breeding research program.

In 1986 there was a government swing from applied to 'fundamental' pure science research, so I accepted a position as director of genetics with a large international pig breeding company based in Lincolnshire (the Cotswold Pig Development Company). There, my association with the College was rekindled in a way that was almost miraculous. The company needed a place to expand its research programme on minority pig breeds such as the Meishan, recently imported from China. The idea was broached of a joint venture with the College pig unit, and the principal Prof. John Prescott accepted right away. Our company took over management of the unit and put in our own pigs. The terms allowed the College free use of the new breeds for research under the direction of Dr Ian Lean, and the pig unit would be open for teaching purposes to College staff and students. When Imperial took over, I was even given an honorary faculty membership.

## **Foot and mouth epidemic intervened**

It worked like a dream until, in 2001, foot and mouth disease hit the UK, and overseas sales of UK breeding stock plummeted to zero. At the same time, upon the death of its owner, Sir Joseph Nickerson, the privately held Cotswold Company had been sold to the Ridley Corporation out of Sydney Australia. Faced with foot and mouth, the Australians decided to get out of pig breeding and out of Europe. The business people were instructed to exit the





agreement with the College pig unit as quickly as possible and discontinue all science. The company was broken up and sold.

### **To Canada's largest food producer**

Heartbroken at the sudden loss of all that we had built up at Cotswold, not least the Wye research farm, in 2002 I accepted a position as director of emerging science with Canada's largest food processor, Maple Leaf Foods in Toronto. Originally a \$5 billion annual sales corporation with 24,000 people, that too was

broken up leaving only a smaller prepared meats business, without the need for a resident scientist. After a small heart attack in 2013, I accepted an offer to retire, and joined the swelling ranks of the independent 'consultants'. I am on the board of the so-called Canadian Swine Research Cluster, where I lead a small initiative to determine national research priorities.

### **My thanks to Wye**

So that's my story. Three careers as first a government scientist, then in an international breeding company travelling the world, and finally with a large North American vertically integrated food corporation. I saw the agri-food business from all sides. I owe it all to my mentors at Wye, who recognised my interests and directed me down the right path. To me it is unthinkable that Wye College would be closed down, and I can't imagine how anyone could arrive at the conclusion that it was the right thing to do. But this is purely an emotional response, and I have no visibility on the exact situation, nor indeed the finances involved.

I'm sorry that I don't have any photos of any of this. I'm happy to just share my connections with the College with your small group. Usual caveats apply – that these are my recollections and not based on documented fact. And my warmest thanks for keeping the memories of the College alive and well.

## Five careers in one

**Peter Beedon (1964–67) describes his succession of careers in agriculture that span the extremes of international consultancy to UK wildlife advice and education.**

Since Wye there has been involvement in farming somewhere in the world although this could be separated into several separate careers. With neither money nor farming background, it didn't take long at Wye to realise that a move into practical farming would be difficult and so I turned to my other love of insects.

### Career One – Africa

Career One started after: marrying Barbara in 1967; followed by a year of Applied Entomology at Imperial's Field Station near Ascot. A discussion with one of the lecturers about The Gambia and farmers there, then being offered a job in 1968 with the World Bank funded Chikwawa Cotton Development Project in southern Malawi on the Mozambique border. An

Agricultural Entomologist was wanted, which grandiose title covered field research trials and the running of two experimental stations, the aerial spraying of cotton for small farmers, development work on ULV spraying, and the collection, analysis and presentation of the agricultural statistics, plus writing up the field research results in various journals.

Then a move to Northern Nigeria with the Cotton Research Corporation: a colonial anachronism with staff attached to a dozen or so mainly African national research programmes. Hand-held ULV development again but with agro-economic, on-farm piloting of the introduction of crops new to the area (maize and dwarf sorghum) and technologies (ULV on cotton). With new cotton pests arriving, ecological work included cotton seed dressing, and selection for major cotton diseases.

### Career Two – practical farming

Having squirreled money away, we came back to UK for Career Two with the intention of trying to farm ourselves. But even to rent a farm, practical experience counted with landlords and, as we had none, we had to try and buy instead. But during ten years or so in Africa there had been developments in UK farming and we were out of touch, so I was lucky enough to get a place at Warwickshire College of Agriculture for a six month ANCA in Grassland Management. During this time Barbara looked after Mark, born in Malawi, and Jennifer, born in the three months between Malawi and Nigeria, whilst I had been washing dishes in a local night club to 'make ends meet'.

*This email preceded Peter Beeden's submission and I thought it worthy of publishing—Ed.*

"Usual shambles here with too much to do and not enough time to do it in; ewes lambing with various prolapses; red kites circling overhead; goats ready to go for meat; getting clothes and sheets ready for a Ugandan hospital and clinic, and trying hard with my Welsh. This latter is mainly because in Autumn last year I was overcome with a severe case of embarrassment that after more than 40 years of living in Wales, my spoken Welsh was less understandable than my Indonesian was after my first three days in that country!

The lecturers at Warwick were ever helpful and forced me to face the economic realities of farming. At the same time – for ‘insurance purposes’ – I finished writing up my PhD on the ecology and pest status of an emerging pest of cotton in Northern Nigeria. The Warwick course supervisor suggested that we might consider buying in Wales, as land prices were so much lower than in England. After all, the late 1970s was the time of rising Welsh nationalism and the slogan ‘Come home to a roaring fire; buy a holiday cottage in Wales’ had led to lower domestic house and land prices. We knew that we had to buy a dairy farm as the Agricultural Mortgage Corporation was reluctant to finance beef or sheep units because of cash flow issues. In any case, dairy was what we wanted as my year’s practical before Wye was in milk and I had never had anything to do with arable or non-dairy livestock.

So after a weekend in South Wales with our Warwickshire lecturer, Barbara and I then looked at another 25 or so farms before buying the first farm that the lecturer and I had seen on that initial weekend in Wales.

If borrowing the money was interesting, then running 30 cows on a run-down dairy unit at 300 m asl was even more so, until we had had time to ‘put things right’ on the farm and ended up in 1984 with 60 cows on 72 acres. But it must be one of my many character defects that the enjoyment of it all had been the restoration and building up of an effective enterprise rather than the running of it when restoration was complete! So we sold and moved to where we are now, some 15 miles to the south and 250 m lower with all our land sloping down to the Towy estuary. Milking no longer but beef cattle, dairy replacements, meat goats and sheep. It is interesting that in our final year of milking we

averaged 14p per litre for our milk sales to the Milk Marketing Board, equivalent, with inflation, to 43p per litre in 2017. In fact, in winter 2016/17, we heard of several dairy farms still only getting the same 14p per litre that we had 35 years earlier!

### **Career Three – back to Africa and other far-flung places**

Whilst moving from the one farm to the other, we had a phone call asking whether I might be interested in going back to Nigeria for six weeks or so. I ended up in Ibadan and then Maiduguri in Borno State as an agronomist helping to put together an Accelerated Area Development Programme for the World Bank. Maiduguri is in the North East of Nigeria that was then so easy to travel around but, has for the past ten years, been blighted by the disruption caused by Boko Haram.

This first consultancy initiated Career Three and visits to several regions of Nigeria, and then in pest management, agronomy, environmental conservation and various other roles for FAO, IFAD, World Bank, African and Asia Dev. Banks, EU and others, every year until 2010, involving work in some 30 countries in Africa, Asia and Middle East for periods ranging from six weeks to two years. It has always been very satisfying to meet ex-Wye students overseas or in Rome and Washington; that common link has always enabled the development of good working relations and communication.

### **Career Four – Somerset Wildlife Trust**

Then Barbara told me that running a small farm with someone (me) who was either there under her feet all the time or 6,000 miles away was ‘difficult’ and so we changed our way of life. Buying a rundown house in Taunton, we worked on that and sold, bought again and sold and still have a converted 1600’s pigeon loft there.

Meanwhile, Career Four developed with Somerset Wildlife Trust for 10 years, advising farmers on how to manage the more than 2,000 areas of recognised wildlife importance called County Wildlife Sites [CWS] in Somerset. This included flower-rich grassland, ancient semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, ponds and streams, and anywhere that was habitat for scarce wildlife such as otter, crayfish, dormice, great crested newts and greater horseshoe bats.

With a not wonderful salary, I was allowed to take off several months each year to go back to Career Three and overseas consulting to replenish the coffers. As most CWSs are owned by farmers, the work was again about talking to farmers and asking questions about management practices – just like The Gambia Expedition and subsequent careers had been. Barbara always said that the only people that I ever wanted to talk to were farmers and about farming – it didn't matter where in the world. For about 10 years we went to Guernsey twice a year for the Guernsey Government and talked each time with every dairy farmer about managing the wildlife habitat on their farm. Finally, for each farm we developed a Farm Biodiversity Action Plan, the implementation of which was agreed in return for the additional farmgate payment that the Guernsey Government gave them for their milk.

### **Helping primary schoolkids learn about wildlife**

After Career Three's overseas consultancy and Career Four's Wildlife Trust work finished, helping farmers with applications for Natural England-funded agri-environment schemes surfaced with three to four of these each year; some for only 40 ha and others for over 2,000 ha and involving plant identification and habitat management plans. For several years I was also involved with the Kingfisher Trust in Somerset, Devon and

Wiltshire that in summer invited coach loads of primary school children to a wildlife habitat. There were four to five stations where each group of 12 to 15 kids would touch, feel and talk about wildlife. This included ants nests, bee hives, and social culture – how to make apple juice using a pressing machine, looking for plants and fungi, and bits of animals that you can find in the wild. This latter was usually my field, looking for animal skulls and teeth, horns and antlers, and we would talk about the food chain and how animals had to search much of the day to find enough to eat whilst humans – in UK at least – have access to so much cheap food, relative to disposable income, of course.

### **Rescued owls**

We have homed several Rescued owls and the children were able to see the claws needed to catch their field mouse and vole food. Finally, each group of kids would examine the 30 or so live traps that we had set the night before and, when they found one with a captured rodent, they would 'persuade me' to drop it into a large clear plastic bag and then to pick it up by its scruff then let it go so that they could see how fast it ran and how good the aerial and ground predators had to be to catch their meal. If the field mouse peed on my hand or managed to bite me then this was considered a good thing and caused much laughter! One year, I worked with **David Forest's** son, Edward, for several days and he also found that field mice peeing on my hand was amusing! I also worked on Open Farm Sunday for five or six years, when members of the public and their children are invited onto farms for a day of finding out where the food on the supermarket shelf actually comes from.

For the past 10 years or so there have been talks to various groups including: WI, Rotary, Probus, Young Farmers Clubs, schools and various



*Hand held ridgers from the Gambia*

societies. The two main topics have been 'Farming for Wildlife' and 'Family Farming in Africa and Asia' – all with slides taken at the time, and a car-load of things to look at and hold. For the Africa and Asia talk, the audience are always shown and can hold a marvellous hand-made wooden *darambo* ridger from The Gambia. I can remember bargaining for it with a farmer on his way to use it in the field and we settled on 10 shillings. I thought at the time that I was probably paying too much, and he did run off fast as soon as he had my 10/- note in his hand in case I changed my mind, but it has proved itself for me over the years! It was bought early during our time in The Gambia but I cannot now remember whether it was in the few days before leaving Yundum or later in Basse Santa Su with John P, Milroy and David.

### **Career Five – back to Wales**

Following this interlude of five to six years after Career Four, we are back now in Wales again with Career Five on our small south-facing farm that runs down to the Towy estuary and on which we keep sheep and meat goats with 60 to 80 cattle during the summer. It doesn't earn us much because farm-gate prices are volatile and generally low and the farm income lifeline for 80 % of UK farmers is the annual payment under the EU's Common Agricultural Policy. And after Brexit who knows what will happen, although one might suspect that farmer support subsidies will not feature strongly in any future UK food management strategy. (See Prof. Hill's article about Brexit on page 90 – Ed.)

### **Only one career**

Reading through this article quickly just before I sent it, I realise that there haven't been five careers at all, merely the one that has just moved in four different directions depending upon my age at the time, opportunities available, current interests and family needs, but all within the common theme of farming. We shall always be grateful to The Gambia Expedition and the team that triggered the move for us to Africa and elsewhere, and perhaps enabled our UK farming episodes to take place as well.

## Farming life on Tristan de Cuna

**Sam Kent (1970–73) describes life on this far-flung outpost and comments on the state of agriculture in 2013 on this tiny island so many thousands of miles from anywhere.**

Tristan da Cunha is a circular island about eight miles across in the South Atlantic Ocean, 1743 miles west of Cape Town. It is home to 260 English-speaking people and can only be reached by sea as there is no airstrip. There are only eight sailings a year to and from Cape Town and everything other than beef, mutton, fish, potatoes and poultry has to be imported. The island is regarded as the most isolated community in the world.

Very few people have any idea what Tristan is – some think it is a Portuguese wine, some a Brazilian cheese and some a sexually transmitted disease; but those of a certain age would remember that it is an island somewhere that was evacuated to England in 1961 when a volcano erupted and threatened the whole island, only for the inhabitants to return in 1963 when it was declared safe to do so.

### **Discovered in 1510 by the Portuguese**

The uninhabited island was discovered in 1510 by the Portuguese and from then on was used as a navigation aid for ships rounding the Cape of Good Hope to and from the Indian sub-continent. Various people used it temporarily as a base for piracy, for whaling and sealing but nobody stayed long. In 1815, the British were concerned that the Americans would use it as a base for whaling or the French would use it as a base from which to rescue Napoleon from St Helena 1500 miles to the north. So they claimed Tristan as British and built a garrison there – two years later the garrison was abandoned but one man, William Glass and his family from Kelso in Scotland, and two stone masons stayed behind. People came and went, and today the islanders are all descended from

seven men who went to the island from Britain, Holland, America, Italy and St Helena; it is now a British Overseas Territory.

### **British military base established in 1942**

In 1942 the British built a secret military base on the island using as much local labour as possible. Up to then trading was by barter but the islanders were paid for their work in pounds which brought unheard of wealth. The military base brought a water system, sewerage, electricity, a shop, a hospital and a doctor. This is more or less how the island is today, although there is also an Anglican and a Catholic Church, a pub (The Albatross), a village hall (The Prince Philip Hall), decent housing, television via the Falkland Islands from BFBS Germany, a phone system (Tristan is a London number), an overseas postal system with a British style pillar box, a school for children aged 4 to 16 up to GCSE level, the Internet and a Policeman, who is not over-worked and who also acts as the Customs Officer.

There is a factory run by a South African company that processes and freezes lobsters caught by the Tristan fishermen. They are sent to Cape Town on the ships that supply the island and are sold in Europe, USA and Japan, forming the island's biggest source of income.

### **Shaped by the volcano**

The island, being volcanic, rises like a cone from the sea with the remains of the 3 million year old volcano rising to 7000 ft in the centre. Around the edge of the island is 'The Base', about 2000ft above sea level, which forms almost vertical cliffs making landing from a boat hazardous or impossible. There is, however, a flat





*Standing on the 1961 volcano overlooking the settlement.*

area of about 1500 acres in the North West where the settlement called Edinburgh of the Seven Seas (named by William Glass from Kelso) is built. This area has all the 128 houses, the harbour, the factory, the churches, the pub, the hall and all the storage that is available because it cannot be built anywhere else. There are 4km of paved roads in the settlement and another 5km which go south to an area called The Patches where the islanders grow potatoes for their own consumption. There used to be a bus to The Patches but that is no longer running as some islanders have cars, which are at the end of their lives, brought from Cape Town – all have number plates and have so far reached TDC 183.

### **Climate like North Devon**

The climate on Tristan is not dissimilar to that of North Devon – the wind always blows, mainly from the west, laden with salt and always damp, so much so that the washing has to be dried

indoors. The temperature range is 3°C to 28°C, there are no frosts or snow in the settlement, although both occur on the Base and above. However, the weather is unpredictable and can change in a matter of minutes – so too the sea swell, and huge waves can come ashore in calm conditions making it dangerous to walk too close to the sea in the odd places where that is possible. Because of this, cargo ships have to anchor half a mile offshore and can only be unloaded one day in three. Open fishing boats catching lobsters can also only go out one day in three.

**Call for agricultural and horticultural advice**  
Through **John Magnay** (Wye 1974–77), I heard that Tristan was looking for a retired farmer/farm manager to go there and advise on their agriculture and horticulture. Having recently retired it seemed like the dream job – and it was! After a week on the boat from Cape

Town we arrived at the island but had to drop anchor in the lee of Tristan until the weather improved. Some 14 hours later, we got to within half a mile of the harbour, were taken off the boat by a crane, put on a barge and taken to the island soaking wet and freezing cold. Despite talking to various people who said they knew about Tristan farming before I left, I was surprised by what I found.

In England, farmers get their information from the press, reps, discussion groups, etc but this cannot happen on Tristan and so nothing changes.

The land is owned by the island but the cattle are owned by the islanders – each adult is allowed to keep one cow with the offspring having to be slaughtered by the time they are three years old. The Department of Agriculture looks after them and does all the veterinary work, etc.

### **Beef farming on Tristan**

All the beef is consumed by the owner and is only marketed internally. The cattle are small, lousy, wormy and of various breeds – they use an Angus and a Hereford bull but the cows are thin, so fertility is bad. No fertiliser has been applied for some years and fences are more or less non-existent. All these things are easy to put right at comparatively little cost but in the long term things have to change. The islanders have to be persuaded to kill their calves at two years old regardless of their condition, which would get rid of 20% of the cattle. The use of fertiliser, proper grazing with better fencing and the use of AI using an easy calving proven bull to breed their own bulls would not only start a proper herd but would save, say £10,000, getting an unproven bull from the UK or £6,000 getting one from South Africa, which, like the Hereford they use now may look like a Hereford but his offspring don't! Some of the cows are separated from their calves at night and are milked in the morning by hand by their owners

for liquid milk or butter – however, most people buy imported long-life milk from the shop!

Most people have Collie dogs for cattle and sheep work – all are imported from South Africa but have to be neutered as no pets or entire dogs are allowed on the island.

### **Grazing is short on the island**

There is no cattle housing on the island so animals going into the winter in a poor condition really suffer and a significant number die. With fewer cattle, fertilised grass etc, all this would change, but the lack of grazing is the problem that must be solved quickly. Of course, feed could be imported but who would pay for it? More importantly, as Tristan is an international biodiversity site, the risk of importing rogue grass species in hay – as happened some years ago when Yorkshire Fog was introduced – has to be avoided.

The sheep, which are all sorts of breeds, do better as they graze on the Base and up to the Peak, so they are not short of keep. They use imported Corriedale rams. They are mustered for slaughtering in early December and are shorn using hand clippers whenever the weather permits, which can be into January. The best wool is kept for knitting hats, jackets, jumpers, etc by Tristan women to sell to visitors and exported to Europe under the 30 Degrees South brand. The other wool is used as a soil enhancer and fertiliser.

The Department of Agriculture is in charge of the Potato Patches about two miles south of the settlement where the islanders have allotments for growing potatoes, vegetables, and keep chickens and ducks for their own consumption. There are also greenhouses where they grow tomatoes, cucumbers, etc and the Mission Gardens – land surrounded by New Zealand Flax which protects the gardens from the wind – on which they grow vegetables to sell to the other islanders.

People who were at Wye in the '60s and '70s may remember Frank who waited on table during formal dinners. He never smiled and was as miserable as sin – egged on by the Beau Club, JSF and the Garter Club. When anyone smashed a plate the whole hall yelled FRANK. He walked around saying how he hated all us badly behaved hooligans, that he had had enough and was going back to Tristan da Cunha! I cannot find anyone who knew his surname. If I could find out I would know if he really did come from Tristan – I always felt he didn't!

### Full employment and a variety of jobs

There is full employment with the average wage of £240 per month on which 20% tax is charged. Working hours are 6am to 2pm with a breakfast break of 15 minutes. After 2pm they can do other, better paid work in the fish factory or on UK government financed projects. There is employment in fishing – nine boats each with a two man crew which go out every other day when conditions allow or until the quota of 180 tons of lobster has been caught. There is more employment in public works, admin, the IT department, the tourist office, selling souvenirs by mail order, the hospital, the shop and the Post Office, which does a roaring trade in stamps and first day covers which are much sought after worldwide. The islanders are paid extra for unloading the cargo boats that bring provisions for the shop and a lot of alcohol; all this has to be stacked by hand.

All the departments are required to show a profit, especially the shop, which will order goods from overseas, eg. washing machines, TVs etc, but at a cost.

The island has to be self financing and to balance its books, although capital projects such as replacing the water system, putting electrical cables underground and rebuilding the hospital are funded by grants from the Foreign Office.

### A base for international research

There is a great deal of research being done by ex-pats into global warming, sea level changes, seismic events, air pressure, meteorology, and the island is an automatic site for air testing to monitor the comprehensive nuclear test ban organisation. The RSPB also has a presence on the island.

The Tristan environment is fragile and the island is a World Heritage site. Any pollution such as a diesel spillage could be disastrous. Some years ago heavy oil and 65,000 tons of soya beans were discharged into the sea when a cargo ship ran aground on a nearby island. This decimated the bird population and some of the lobster breeding grounds with disastrous effects for several years, as well as polluting the sea bed with an aggressive type of mussel. Black rats arrived some years ago on a ship. These eat birds eggs and chicks but there is now an eradication scheme using poison as well as a ratting day when the whole island turns out to catch rats and drink a lot afterwards!

Tristan does have visitors, but getting a berth on a ship can be difficult and, as there are no hotels, they have to stay with residents until the boat back to Cape Town leaves two perhaps months later. On top of that, if someone has to be medically evacuated to Cape Town, the visitor may have to wait even longer and there is not a lot to do. Cruise liners also call occasionally; these are a great source of income for the tourist office selling souvenirs, teas, cakes, etc and the post office sells stamps and first-day covers to the tourists.

The people are friendly, generous and very kind. They love their island and nearly all the people who go to Cape Town when they leave school return as soon as they can. They are all totally happy and content with their lives and don't want or need what we have. It is a wonderful place – long may it continue.

# Britain's policy for agriculture post Brexit

**Berkeley Hill, Emeritus Professor of Policy Analysis, sets out his views on a way forward for British agriculture after Brexit.**

The surprise win by the Conservative party in the 2015 General Election left it with the unwelcome obligation to carry out a referendum on UK membership of the EU, something that political insiders believe was one of the Conservative Party election manifesto proposals included to placate the right wing of the party, that David Cameron was intending to sacrifice in order to bring the Liberal Democrats into a renewed coalition government under his Premiership. Added to this, the result of the referendum of June 2016 was contrary to expectations of the Conservative government and most commentators too. So it was not surprising that the government departments responsible for agriculture in the UK (domestic policy is a devolved responsibility for the separate administrations in England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland) had no ready-made national policy plans on their shelves that could be made operational in time for Brexit in, say, 2019 or 2020.

## February 2017 White paper sets the scene

The February 2017 White Paper<sup>1</sup> on Brexit contained nothing of detail but merely repeated the assurance that the UK budget would provide funding at existing levels for Pillar 1 (Basic Payments) up to 2020 and honour longer-term commitments made under Pillar 2 agri-environmental and similar agreements. The Secretary of State, Andrea Leadsom, in an address to the NFU annual meeting on February 23rd, 2017, outlined five 'priorities' for post-Brexit UK agricultural policy (achieving the 'best possible'

**trade deal**, improving **productivity**, promoting **sustainability** by combining high quality food production and the environment, developing **trust** in British produce by promoting high standards of animal welfare, food safety and traceability, and increasing the **resilience** of farming to market volatility, natural disasters and similar shocks). The first is obviously dictated by the exit process, but the others are wholly predictable given the way that the CAP and UK policy has been evolving over the last two decades. There are lots of details missing that farmers will be keen to know before planning the future of their businesses.

## Uncertainties

Since the result of the June 2016 referendum was known, Defra has been in 'listening mode', but the public debate on what the UK's national agricultural policies beyond 2020 should look like is only just starting. The trade aspects will remain uncertain for a long time; not only are there uncertainties about what future arrangements will be possible with the EU and other partners, but even extracting the UK from existing EU agreements presents issues of major complexity. For example, how will trade concessions (so-called *tariff-quotas*) between the EU and third parties (such as New Zealand) be split when the UK is no longer a Member State? While some British producers assume that we will eventually have greater opportunities to export to the EU-27, some exporters based there expect to be able to sell more food to the UK market. Everything is uncertain until the negotiation processes are concluded.

## Government spending priorities

However, for domestic agricultural policy, which

<sup>1</sup>HM Government (2017) *The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union*. February 2017.



will become the responsibility of the devolved administrations, the unknowns are of a lesser order. A preparation that goes beyond the Leadsom priorities can be made now. The funding of a UK national agricultural policy will have to be justified to HM Treasury and thus proposals will have to stand examination alongside those for spending on health, education, defence and other government priorities. The surest way to do this is to start from the rationales for any government intervention in the economic system and which HM Treasury will recognise as being valid.

These are, firstly, to **counter market failure** that impacts on economic efficiency; this comes mainly in the form of actions to counter externalities (such as pollution) and to produce public goods (which the market would not otherwise provide), deficiencies in information that prevent markets from working properly (such as inadequate knowledge by entrepreneurs of technical innovations, of prices, or of risk management) and imperfect competition (such as monopolies).

The second rationale is to **achieve equity**, such as by preventing families from falling into poverty; the core rationale of the CAP in ensuring a fair standard of living for the agricultural community is of this sort.

The third is one of **political economy**, in that a particular intervention, though not justifiable in its own right, may be necessary in order to free up a more important change elsewhere; the introduction of direct payments to the CAP in 1992 allowed reforms in market support that might otherwise have been blocked by the agricultural industry. However, a solid rationale is not enough to justify government intervention. There must also be a technical fix available – something that is capable of delivering the required impact – and there has to be a balance of probability that the additional benefits to society from action exceed the costs to society of taking that action.

### **Fundamental components of support policy**

Starting from these fundamentals, it is easy to identify some components that would be expected in principle to form part of domestic agricultural policy in post-Brexit Britain. Market failure lies behind many of them. This applies *inter alia* to actions to promote the rural environment, animal welfare, the provision of education, knowledge transfer, training in business skills and advice, the prevention of pollution, and support that enables farmers to cope with natural disasters and man-made catastrophes. The argument is less about whether such elements are needed within domestic agricultural policy agenda and more to do with the nature and extent of the intervention. For example, is legislation to promote animal welfare with fines for contravention to be preferred to financial incentives for good practice? To help farmers cope with losses caused by extreme weather should the government step in on an ad hoc basis after the disasters have happened (the UK's traditional approach), or

should it support the costs of premiums for pre-arranged insurance that otherwise farmers would not be willing to pay (assuming that such cover is commercially available)? Whichever route is taken, HM Treasury will need to be convinced that the additional anticipated public benefits from intervention will be at least equal to the additional public costs incurred.

Thus it would be reasonable to expect that post-Brexit UK agricultural policies will contain many (though not all) of what currently appears within Pillar 2 Rural Development Programmes, the balance varying among the constituent countries according to local priorities. Some of the present schemes may not survive scrutiny; for example, it may be hard to demonstrate that financial assistance to young farmers who come from farming families generates much public benefit.

### **What about Basic Payments?**

However, what about Pillar 1 and its main element, the Basic Payments – the per hectare sum that depends on the size of farm? These dominate overall public spend on UK agriculture – more than half the total. Though there has been a vigorous attempt in recent years to paint CAP direct income payments green by linking them with the delivery of some environmental benefits, these could probably be delivered much more efficiently by targeted agri-environmental payments. Mostly, Basic Payments constitute income support for which there is no public benefit in return, and thus rely on the equity argument for their justification, the assumption being that without them the standard of living of the recipients would be unfairly low. Though in some other EU countries a welfare case might be put together for such payments to farm operators, this would be near impossible for the UK. As a group, farm households have been shown on numerous occasions to be not only a relatively high-income group in British society but also an exceptionally wealthy one.

### **Supporting low income farming families**

While there are undoubtedly some low-income farm families, even if the good years of farming are averaged with the bad (averaging for tax purposes over five years is now allowed for UK farmers), support to them via agricultural payments is a very inefficient way of providing assistance; the present approach involves making much larger payments to families that are, by any judgement, hugely above poverty lines even if their Basic Payments were stripped away. Most commentators would recommend that poor people who happen to be farmers should be the subject of national social welfare policy, not agricultural policy.

So it is unlikely that HM Treasury would sanction spending on blanket income support payments as part of post-Brexit national agricultural policy, and these should disappear as a major feature. Nevertheless some parts of the country facing environmental or social problems (such as remote hill areas) may make a case for payments related to farm area; it should be clear that these are in exchange for identifiable public benefits and are not income support *per se*.

### **Managing Basic Payment withdrawal**

But there is a problem in that Basic Payments are a current reality and will exist up to the end of 2020. There is an issue in how to manage their withdrawal. The simplest approach, recommended to Defra after a review of a range of possibilities, is to announce that they will cease on a certain date. Farmers have been shown in numerous studies to be highly adaptable to changing circumstances if they are given adequate notice; governments will avoid accusations of misleading farmers into inappropriate investment decisions if a time horizon is chosen that is adequate to allow capital to be withdrawn without loss by reinvesting depreciation allowances elsewhere. Somewhere in the region of five to ten years would seem to be appropriate, though tapering may also form part of the exit strategy.



Are more complex transitional arrangements necessary or advisable? The short answer is 'no'. Some have looked to the support systems of the USA and Canada as containing tools – in particular forms of subsidised insurance for revenue or income falls – that might be introduced in the UK as ways of easing the removal of Basic Payments. This may contain some political economy rationale, but it ignores the very different backgrounds as to why such schemes were introduced in North America, in their types of agriculture, farm business structures, ability to use data extracted from farmers' tax returns, and the nature of insurance providers. And transitional arrangements carry the distinct danger that they become permanent – the best example of this is the CAP's direct payments that were introduced in 1992 to facilitate reforms in support to commodity markets, but which were

not time-limited and are still with us in a modified form.

### **Brexit provides an opportunity**

So Brexit provides an unexpected opportunity to re-establish the framework of the UK's domestic agricultural policy on sound principles. The need to be able to demonstrate market failure should dominate the agenda, and income support, in the few cases where it can be justified, transferred to social policy. No doubt there would be some structural adjustments as Basic Payments, which tend to inhibit change, are withdrawn. However, the end result should be an agriculture that is more attuned to the nation's environmental objectives, more internationally competitive and more innovative, and capable of achieving these aims at a lower public cost, thereby freeing up resources for other pressing purposes.



*The Agricola Quad taken from the Porter's lodge.*

# The Gambia expedition

## A survey into the benefits of ox-ploughing over hand cultivation

In former times, every two years members of the Wye College Exploration Society would organize an expedition to a third world country to carry out investigations into farming practices that could result in improvements in the way things are done. This article marks 50 years since the 1966 expedition to The Gambia was reported on. Drafted by the expedition leader, **John Peacock**, with major inputs from the rest of the team.

The Gambia has been much in the news in 2017, and hopefully this tiny West African country can again enjoy the peace and tranquility that reigned 50 years ago, when eight young undergraduates from Wye College set foot there in July 1966 to commence their expedition survey.

With the definite article as an integral part of the name of the country, The Gambia was so named in 1965 to avoid confusion with Zambia, which had obtained its independence from Britain one year earlier. This small country is only half the size of Wales and is surrounded by the Republic of Senegal. The Gambia River runs the length of the country to a small coastline with the Atlantic Ocean. In 1966, The Gambia had a population of just 320,000 people, plus eight from Wye. Today, unbelievably, the population is 6.5 times that, at 2,088,398. Sadly, with the increase in population has come an increase in political instability.

The history of the Wye Expeditions is well documented, but in brief they were biennial, usually carried out in the summer vacation of the year before finals, and required the team members to give up, on average, one and a half days a week to the expedition organization, subsequent survey analysis and report writing.

Prior to this survey of The Gambia, there had been a number of previous expeditions, including those to Morocco (1960), led by **David Norman** (1959–62), Iceland (1962) and Sierra Leone (1964), led by **Chris Lonsdale** (1962–65).

The idea of going to The Gambia was first raised by Dr. H.L. Richardson, manager of the Fertilizer Program at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and as a direct result of this the College contacted Mr. S.G. Trees, the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture in The Gambia. He suggested that a survey would be useful to compare the productivity of the agriculture practiced by farmers who had attended their Mixed Farming Centres (MFCs) and used oxen and a plough with that of the traditional hand-cultivating farmer. This proposal was also strongly supported by the UK Ministry of Overseas Development (ODM). So the seeds were sown and we were set.

### Preparation, the team, budget and donors

The eight undergraduates who came together to form the team were:

Peter Beeden, David Forrest, Jon Llewellyn Jones, John Luckock, Michael Marshall, John Peacock, Milroy Russell and Rick Viner.



**Team photo.** Left to right. Michael Marshall, Milroy Russell, David Forrest, Jon Llewellyn-Jones, John Luckock, John Peacock, Peter Peeden and Rick Vinner.

The first task after the selection of the team from the Expedition Society was to develop a plan and delegate responsibilities. After the budget was developed, the lion's share of the work initially fell on the shoulders of the Expedition Secretary, David Forrest, who from a published 'List of Firms with Interest in Nigeria' sent out literally hundreds of letters on our newly designed headed note paper to firms with possible agricultural interests in West Africa.

Our budget was as follows:

Travel	£1,000
Insurance	£110
Food	£350
Equipment	£100
Stationary and printing of report	£150
Photographic	£100
Medical	£30
Miscellaneous	£100
Internal transport	£0
Accommodation in The Gambia	£0
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,940</b>

We received financial aid from 18 firms, foundations and private individuals, in particular the Governors of Wye College, ODM, the Government of The Gambia, Ransomes, Sims & Jefferies and Rank Hovis McDougall Ltd. Surprisingly, an entry in the Notices of *The Times* (then on the front page) headed 'Help the Gambians Help Themselves' produced a remarkable response, including £100 from The Bank of West Africa Ltd.

Team members also visited the Agricultural Division at Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd. (ICI), M.J. Sharpston at ODM, The Royal Geographical Society (RGS) and John Darbyshire & Co. Ltd, the manufactures of the Aplos plough that was to be central to our survey work. In some cases our visits and explanations as to the object and value of the expedition proved very successful, others less so. ICI considered sales of fertiliser in The Gambia to be too small and decided that their contributions to FAO were sufficient, while the RGS felt that our aims were far too specific.



*Disembarking in Dakar from a French passenger ship.*

Needless to say, by the time we left, our Treasurer, Mike Marshall, had achieved our budget, with us and Mike's father supplying the shortfall. Not bad considering it would be equivalent to approximately £35,000 today.

Those responsible for the equipment, stores, photographic and medical supplies, namely John Luckock, Milroy Russell, Jon Llewellyn Jones and Rick Viner, respectively, got everything delivered to Wye and crated up ready for dispatch. This included almost everything you could imagine, from 45 lb of Tate & Lyle sugar, 18 lb margarine and 12 bottles of Ketchup, for example. The medical supplies were even more diverse, with 69 different medicines and supplies including 300 Nivaquine, 100 Vimagma, 100 Veganin, 100 Aluminium hydroxide tablets. No Viagra, but I don't think any of us needed it then!

### **Getting to The Gambia**

Our travel officer, Peter Beeden, had numerous headaches trying to organize safe passage for the crates because there was a strike just as the crates were about to be shipped and we could not afford to airfreight them. A bit of a scare, but fortunately the strike was called off in time and those crates found their way to The Gambian capital of Bathurst (now called Banjul).

At the end of June, the team travelled by rail from London to Marseilles. There was a minor fiasco on the train in France when a small crate containing cigarettes, kindly donated by W.H. & H.O. Wills Ltd, was confiscated by customs officials and had to be left on the platform. Just after they blew the whistle for the train to depart, a member of the team quickly grabbed the crate and put it back on the train, only for

the train to be stopped a few stations down the line and the confiscation repeated. Later, before leaving Senegal on the way home, we came to hear that it was being held in customs in Dakar—in one of seven huge warehouses. So looking for such a minute package was not on!

From Marseille we travelled to Dakar, Senegal, on the *MV Ancerville*, a French passenger ship. Classe Dormitoire was the lowest class but we had superior three- to four-berth cabins. However, we managed to find a way through the bowels of the ship to First Class where we spent much of our time, using the pool, playing table tennis and quoits and generally having a good holiday before returning to eat and sleep. We even attended the captain's raffles for prizes and cheekily asked that the numbers be read out in English!

The food was basic and at every meal we had to work hard to persuade the waiters to bring more *vin de table*. A very frequent 'delicacy', for both lunch and dinner and on one occasion, breakfast, was octopus. It can be supposed that the octopus was given only a rudimentary cooking, as it had not lost the elasticity of a car inner tube for which fresh octopus meat is well known. One of our team, whose identity is lost in time, broke a tooth on this delicacy, and our intrepid leader cut the top off his finger on a wine glass whilst partying in one of the berths. John Peacock is still very accident-prone.

Anyway, Peter got us there and we arrived in Dakar on 13 July, where we were greeted by people from Siscoma, a French company making agricultural equipment, including the Polyculteur plough that had also been tested at the Gambian MFCs. The company treated us to an enormous lunch with copious amounts of

steak and wine. I wonder why? We also met our supervisor, Dr Kurt Gall, a German economist working as a consultant for the Gambian Department of Agriculture (DOA).

We were then driven overland in two Land Rovers to the DOA at Cape St. Mary, in Bathurst, where we met Mr. Hector Davidson, the Director of Agriculture for The Gambia.

### **Bathurst, settling in and meeting with the Prime Minister**

After brief introductions and the first of many lectures by Hector on the 'Mechanical Ladder' (see page 107), we were taken to Yundum Agricultural Station and allocated two houses in the staff residential area. This was an alternative to the student quarters at the adjacent Yundum Teachers Training College, now The Gambia College.

These quarters were apparently conversions from the admittedly high-quality deep litter poultry housing constructed by the then Colonial Development Corporation (as it was until 1954, when it became Commonwealth DC) for the ill-fated Yundum Egg Scheme. This scheme started in late 1948 and was designed to redress the shortage of eggs and chicken meat during the UK's post-war years by producing and exporting 20 million eggs and 1 million pounds of dressed chicken each year to the UK, using all locally produced feed. Apparently the scheme was opposed by The Ministry of Food & Agriculture in Britain and by the Gambian Governor Andrew Wright, but was implemented anyway. It was abandoned in February 1951 after locally grown feed crops produced less than 25% of projected yield and the imported expensive Rhode Island Reds suffered the ravages of Newcastle Disease and





*Village scene.*

died by the thousands. This stands as yet another example of inadequate planning and piloting of a development idea.

Soon after our arrival, the team was introduced to the Prime Minister of The Gambia, Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, GCMG. Jawara was the first leader of the country, serving as Prime Minister from 1962 to 1970 and then as President from 1970 to 1994 when he was sadly usurped in a bloodless coup by Yahya Jammeh. Jawara had trained as a veterinary surgeon at the Glasgow Veterinary School and completed his training at Liverpool University. As a veterinary officer, he travelled the length and breadth of the country for months vaccinating cattle, and knew the country and its people well.

On that hot and humid night on the lawn, ad-lib G&Ts were served on silver trays by bearers wearing white gloves; Mike Marshall's single-barrel shotgun caused a stir right from the beginning with the customs chief; and Dave Forrest remembers being rightly ushered out within 45 minutes after becoming increasingly 'giddy'. But I think we would all agree that it was a night to remember, even if most of us have little recollection, like David, of that evening.

### **The survey and field work**

We turn now to the nitty-gritty of the survey. The DOA had been setting up MFCs since 1956 and by 1965 there were 24 of these with 377 trainees, which were evenly distributed throughout the country. A farmer, or trainee as he was called, entered one of these centres for two months. He was taught how to use ox-drawn ploughs, initially the Emcot (produced by Ransomes, Sims & Jefferies, UK), and the advantages of using improved agricultural techniques such as fertilisers (but not enough, as far as ICI was concerned, unfortunately for our budget) and seed dressings.

He was also taught how to use the new Aplos plough, the latest baby of the National Institute of Agricultural Engineering (NIAE) at Silsoe, UK,



*The Aplos plough.*



being manufactured by Darbyshire's in the UK, and part of the famous 'Mechanical Ladder'.

Most research and development work relating to animal traction had gone into developing equipment, rather than the agro-economic realities of its use by small-scale, self-sufficient farmers. In the period 1955 to 1965, the Emcot ridger had been the main implement advocated by the DOA for use by farmers, but a need was seen for a more versatile tool that was also capable of tasks such as weeding. From 1965, the DOA in conjunction with NIAE promoted the use of wheeled tool carriers pulled by oxen. The history of this initiative is well documented in our report published in March 1967 (Peacock et al. 1967) and by others reported in Starkey (1986).

By 1966, 300 sets of Aplos wheeled tool carriers had been distributed throughout the country. These tool carriers comprised a plough, weeder, ridger and cart body and they were sold at the subsidised price of £66. Our task, by way of a questionnaire, was to evaluate these Aplos tool carriers and to compare the productivity of farmers using these and other ploughs with that of the traditional hand-cultivating farmer.

The questionnaire had been kindly developed by Dr. Kurt Gall in conjunction with the DOA and was designed to assess the production of groundnuts, the only cash crop and the general indicator of farmers' standard of living in terms of food production, material possessions, living accommodation, etc. This questionnaire was intended to evaluate any increase in standard of living and revenue as a result of farmers attending the training programme at the MFCs.

Of the 24 MFCs, we selected 14 centres at random, as it would have been impossible to

interview farmers from all of them in the approximately eight weeks available. As it was, the team had to be divided into two groups of four, each with a Land Rover, a driver and two interpreters. The interpreters were first year students in their late teens from Yundum Teachers Training College, and they were excellent. The interpreter shared by John Peacock and Milroy Russell, Mr. Momomdo Sompom Ceesay, later obtained a degree at the University of Reading and in 1986 became the Assistant Director of Agriculture in Banjul. One team worked in the Upper River and McCarthy Island Divisions and had their base camp at Sapu, whilst the other worked in the Lower and Western Divisions and were based at Yundum.

Before commencing our surveys we spent an enjoyable afternoon on one of the country's then unspoilt beaches, with their tremendous white sands, giant turtle shells and raging surf. No hotels existed on these beaches, although there were rumours that some might be built. One wave put John Peacock into a massive spin, and if it had not been for John Luckock, an experienced surfer, he may not have been around today.

The team was also taken to Fort James Island, an important historical site in the West African slave trade. It is now listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and in 2011 was renamed Kunta Kinteh Island. (Kunta Kinte, a character described in Alex Haley's book and TV series *Roots*, was taken in 1767 from James Island). Dave Forrest remembers collecting hundreds of very colourful beads, once worn by the slaves, from the sand near the ruined British administration buildings and their very old baobab trees.



*Crossing by boat to Fort James.*

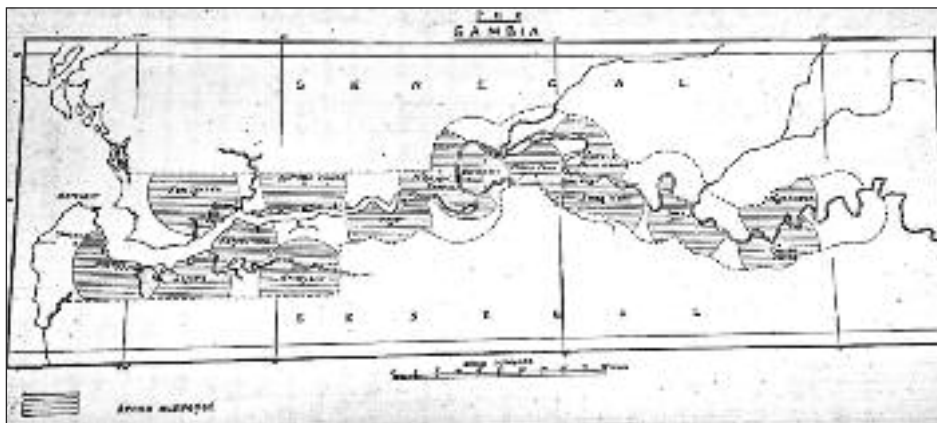
Our work in the field was very tiring: pacing out farmers' lands all day under the blazing hot sun, and asking the same questions of each farmer, through the interpreters, over and over again. It was very hot and humid and the nights, despite our mosquito nets, were sometimes sleepless because the country is infested with mosquitoes.

In fact, the mosquitoes nearly caused a revolt early on within the team when it was discovered

that John Peacock was apparently unaffected by the bites despite nearly everyone else being an itching mess. "Just because you are the leader it does not mean you are entitled to a superior net", argued the team. John pointed out that as far as he was aware all eight nets were identical, but this explanation would not satisfy David Forrest, who eventually had to try out the leader's camp bed and net to prove the point. Fortunately, John Luckock was also immune to these bites.

The day-to-day routine started by travelling to the selected village. On arrival in a village, we went straight to the *bantaba*, a platform under a tree where the Chief held court, village meetings were held and decisions were made. When being introduced to the Chief and explaining the purpose of our visit, it was also very important to ask them about their family and to reassure them that we were not tax collectors.

The interpreters then sought to identify two or more compounds (essentially a group of people eating from the same pot; typically an extended family unit) that belonged to the same tribe but



*Map of The Gambia showing the 14 surveyed sites.*



*Emcot plough drawn by oxen.*

differed in practicing either traditional hand cultivation or mechanisation. The team measured their respective land areas, sought information on crop yields, and assessed the standard of living through possessions such as a *radiyo* or a *bicyclido*, a thatched or corrugated iron roof, and the number of beds for the number of people. All this information was recorded on survey forms for later analysis.

Sometimes the household of a juju man was suggested, who was always remarkably wealthy and could not be part of our survey as none of his income came from agriculture. Rick remembers that he and another team member managed to get a spell from one juju man (which had to be given at a special time linked to the phases of the moon). It was then taken to the leather man to be sealed with strict instructions not to knock it or the spell would be lost and bad luck could happen. Many of members of the team took their jujus back to

the UK. Rick lost his juju, quite mysteriously, but had had several instances of bad luck before it disappeared!

There were many more interesting stories and useful lessons learnt. John Peacock remembers one Chief telling Milroy and himself that he did not see the point of having to work harder to earn more money from groundnut sales, as he had all he wanted: two wives, a nice house and cattle to mind. He suspected the extra money was so that he and other farmers would buy more British goods.

There are several tribes in The Gambia: the Mandinka, the largest single tribe (many team members still have their English-Mandinka dictionary, our Bible for a few months), as well as the Wollof, the Fula, the Jola and the Serahule. Different tribes spent their extra cash on different things; the Fula would most often replace grass roofs with corrugated iron, while a Wollof man might get another wife.



*Gambian farmer inspecting his ground nut crop.*

The traditional agriculture in the country was primarily hand cultivation with a short fallow period of two or three years.

Most farmers did not and could not clear their land of trees and practiced shifting cultivation using a slash-and-burn method. The only cash crop grown was groundnuts; rice, millet, sorghum and findi (*Digitaria exilis*) were their food crops.

As the aim of the survey was to compare the productivity of farmers who had attended an MFC and had an ox-plough with those who had not, we had to try to select farmers of comparable status within each village. This was never an easy task, as the non-MFC attendees tended to be those farmers with smaller areas of cultivated land and for whom time spent in training would mean reduced time growing crops for food or sale, or working in the fields of other farmers to earn money to buy food and other items for the family. Finding the capital to buy a plough was never easy for a small farmer, and many did not have oxen anyway.

We also heard stories from the farmers of their experiences with their ploughs, one pointing out that he had travelled repeatedly to Cape St. Mary in Bathurst to get a replacement sheer, only to be told that the budget for spares had not been finalised and they still had to be ordered through Ransomes, Sims & Jefferies in the UK. Therefore, it could take a year to come.

### **Memorable recollections**

One evening, Peter, Rick, Jon and John Luckock were riding back to camp when the driver remarked that there was a place just up the road where an all-white crocodile appeared every Thursday afternoon without fail. They asked if he could stop there, and he sent them on a short detour by foot to what appeared to be a pool or perhaps a meander of a small river. Rick advised the others to keep away from the bank, but they got too close and a small, perhaps 2m long, crocodile leaped from the water and with an almighty splash crashed back into it, snapping its jaws closed with a loud crack as it did so. They were fairly startled but continued to look

for any other signs of crocodile life, with no success. Going back, they told the driver that the crocodile had no white on it at all. To this the driver replied, with a smile, that this was not surprising as it was now Monday evening and not Thursday afternoon! They never did get a chance to see that white crocodile.

Peter Beeden also came across a chameleon about 20cm long, which he carted around in a brown box that was once used for carrying bottles of beer. Named Hector, after you-know-who, it turned very pale grey when on the mosquito nets on our camp beds and would actively feed on insects on the Land Rover windscreen. Not surprisingly, Hector became colour confused when placed on a beach umbrella. For several weeks he accompanied the Upper Division Team wherever they went, until he was released in the wild in Yundum upon our departure.

Another team member recalls that when a visit to a village compound coincided with the birth of a child, a request would be made to name the child after the team member. Having already named two boys after himself, on the third occasion he offered the name of Wilberforce.



*Hand sowing.*

Ever since he has hoped that Wilberforce Joof would be named Prime Minister or President.

Rick remembers, after one long day in the field, hearing music, drumming, bells and whistles. He walked down the road and joined in the dancing, much to the amusement of the locals. One long, snake-skinned drum and a man with bells on his feet and a whistle provided music. Women would dance individually, then fade out and another would take over, with the elder women showing the best style and stamina. Dancing with one woman, Rick remembers being pushed aside when a large black scorpion was just behind his foot. The men then performed a jumping ritual over it before stamping it into the ground. Rick also remembers attending a circumcision dance, the *kankourang*, during one of his field trips. The men were all dressed up in elaborate grass costumes, including Rick!

Mike's shotgun came in useful; it served to assist with some game for the pot, as well as with dispersing monkeys from the crops. On one occasion, Mike and Rick went out for guinea fowl, but finished up shooting a spitting cobra, which Rick skinned!



*Hand cultivation.*



### Departure and the journey back to the UK

Just before the whole team left Yundum, Rick went to the market to buy food and came back with what seemed like lovely fresh fish. Sambo, our cook, split his sides with laughter, as they turned out to be packed with fine bones. It is not exactly clear which day we departed, as it was all very rushed at the end. We did not even get a chance to see Kurt Gall again, but armed with hundreds of completed questionnaires and many, many Gambian artifacts hats, snake skins (not all shot by Mike), hand hoes, you name it - we made our way back to Dakar and the awaiting ship.

The boat trip back was a nightmare for Mike, who spent most of the time sick. On arriving back in the UK he spent two days at the Medical School of Tropical Diseases being tested and was diagnosed with some type of amoebic dysentery (which served him right for killing and eating those poor birds). For the rest of us, it was

a more pleasant trip, with stops in Casablanca and The Canaries. In Casablanca, we pooled our remaining cash and bought many leather souvenirs. John Peacock remembers the guy in the souk whose eyes lit up when he saw a blue £5 note, and how our eyes lit up, in turn, when we found some very, very cheap bottles of VAT '69 in Tenerife. We all bought some of these, only to find out when we got back to the College, and to the amusement of others, that the bottles had been cleverly filled with tea!

Eventually we made it back to the White Cliffs of Dover and British Customs, who only wanted to know what we thought about England's World Cup win. We explained that most of us actually had no idea at all and that we had been literally up a creek without a paddle when this event, yet to happen again, occurred! However, it turned out that at least Jon Llewellyn Jones and Kurt Gall had been able to listen to the final match. Kurt Gall, being German, was clearly not amused by the result.



*Crossing the Gambia River on the way to Bathurst.*





*Fula compound showing thatched roofs and boundary fence.*

### **Analysis of questionnaires, report publication and impact**

It was October now, and back at Wye the difficult work began of sorting the hundreds of questionnaires, analysing them and getting the much-awaited report finished, published and circulated to over a hundred donors, agricultural institutions and benefactors.

With hindsight, this might not have been possible without the tremendous support given us by the head of the Statistics Section at Wye, Reg Wimble, who with our only Honours student on the team, Milroy Russell, toiled over and analysed the data from pages and pages of hand-written questionnaires. **Robert Clerk** (Wye 1964-67), now Sir Robert Clerk, although not a member of the team, also kindly helped with this analysis.

It was mid-November before our final draft was completed, and we were now under tremendous pressure to get this report out to both the Gambian Government and ODM. Indeed, John Peacock received a letter from Hector Davidson, the Director of the Gambian DOA, on 7 March, which amongst other things said:

*Dear John,*

*..... Kindly advise the present position the G.E. Report. Having regard to its major importance policy wise, here and elsewhere, plus our bid for various Overseas Aid, we are most anxious to secure this. In particular Budget Financial Talks are scheduled in London for early next month and we are somewhat embarrassed by the absence yet of your survey.....*

The report was finally published and distributed in March 1967, due in part to the industry and efforts of the Vice-Principal and Head Librarian, Miss E. Sita Smyth.

The ODM were also anxious to see the report and a copy was hand-delivered to them in London. They were unhappy, to say the least, with our findings. Although recognising the value of the MFCs in general, our findings showed clearly that a high proportion of the Aplos tool carriers were lying unused and the introduction was essentially a failure. The only ones we saw working in farmers' fields were being used to carry water or firewood. Based on our survey, farmers found them too expensive, too heavy for the N'Dama oxen to pull, too complicated to adjust and unsuitable for use on land with stumps due to limited manoeuvrability. The farmers did not accept that full de-stumping was beneficial, as most of them, as mentioned earlier, adopted a simple slash-and-burn method.

### **Response was scathing**

The report, as far as we know, was not used by the ODM and went no further than that office. The response from The Gambia was equally scathing, but we stuck to our guns. It had been a very rigorous survey and the results clearly reflected what we measured, saw and evaluated from our fieldwork and discussions with farmers. However, we were not deterred by this and made sure our report was distributed to as many agricultural institutions and universities in the UK as possible.

Overall, the team was very disappointed with these official responses, but with final exams looming we put it behind us. We did receive a

few letters congratulating us, not least from Mr. F.A. Evans, a past District Commissioner in The Gambia and then the General Secretary of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award:

*Dear Peacock,*

*.....Congratulations to you all for having covered a good deal more ground than I had thought you would find possible. Like me, you may feel you have unearthed as many interesting new lines of enquiry as you have found answers to others?.....*

Some years later, John Peacock met Dr. Paul Starkey from the University of Reading who drew his attention to a series of papers and books he had published on the history of animal-drawn toolbars in Africa.

### **Wye team's results vindicated**

It was most pleasing to read them and to learn that the subsequent history of the Aplos and other wheeled tool carriers had completely vindicated the Wye Team's results. In his book, *Animal-Drawn Wheeled Toolcarriers: Perfected yet Rejected: A Cautionary Tale of Development*, our report is quoted very favourably.

*It is not clear what influence, if any this report had on the authorities in The Gambia. Apparently the British Ministry for Overseas Development (ODM/ODA) that had been assisting the Gambian Ministry of Agriculture was unhappy with the conclusions of the Wye College Team and refused to assist in the publication of the report. Certainly the active promotion (of tool carriers) continued for several more years and a total of 900 units (worth about one million US dollars at 1986 prices; and approximately three million by 2017 prices) were imported into The Gambia*

*before it was concluded that the tool carriers were inappropriate for Gambian farmers.*

There are many more references, eventually putting the Wye College Team in a very good light.

On reflection this was probably to be expected, bearing in mind that the Aplos tool carrier had been designed in the UK on the basis of technical excellence rather than appropriateness to farming systems in The Gambia. The justification for their introduction appears to have been the concept of Hector Davidson's 'Mechanical Ladder', which represented a series of stages proceeding from hand cultivation to simple animal-powered implements, tool carriers and finally small tractors.

Clearly the expensive failure of the Aplos initiative could have been avoided had farmers been consulted from the outset, and had the innovation been first evaluated by farmers, both technically and economically, rather than by British engineers working in isolation from the real world.

The animal-drawn tool carriers, despite their failure in The Gambia, persisted in Africa for many more years; they later followed John Peacock to Botswana and to the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) in India, and there, as in The Gambia, they were eventually rejected by farmers.

Unfortunately, this top-down approach continued in many of the international research centres, like ICRISAT, as well as in national research, for many years to come, until the eventual shift to on-farm trials, farmer field schools, participatory plant breeding approaches

and the appointment of agricultural economists, anthropologists and rural economists in developing these initiatives.

Today, more appropriate intermediate technology has been designed by farmers for farmers. The last few years have seen many changes brought about by the advent of conservation farming, which has made ploughs less attractive in many places as agents for farm economic development. **Peter Aagaard** (1965–68) and Glenn Allison at the Conservation Farming Unit in Zambia have stressed the need to involve farmers in the development of tools – including toolbars, wheeled and/or otherwise, designed for conservation farming.

Thus it can reasonably be said that the expedition performed a very useful purpose, despite the initial hostility from some individuals and bodies. Lessons were learnt and changes made as a direct consequence of the findings of the survey, a matter of great encouragement to the eight undergraduates who were involved and a matter of pride for the history of Wye College.

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## Life after The Gambia

The expedition also influenced the subsequent careers of many team members, as the following accounts indicate.

## Life after The Gambia

John Peacock



The expedition had a great influence on my life and my career. After Wye I joined the Grassland Research Institute at Hurley and stayed there until 1975 when I completed my PhD at the University of Reading. Then my wife, two daughters and I left for Gaborone in Botswana, ironically seconded for three years to ODM, working as a physiologist on sorghum. Our son was born in Botswana. Whilst in Gaborone I was the local Scout Master and on Saturday mornings also took some of the Scouts and local school boys for football training.

In 1979, I joined the International Crops Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) in India as a Principal Scientist and spent 12 years working in both Africa and India. Whilst in India I continued to take school children for football training. I also opened the batting on occasions in ICRISAT's cricket team. In 1991, I left and joined the International Centre for Arid Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA) in Aleppo, Syria. I worked much of that time in Africa, but later in the Middle East, helping to

develop drought and heat tolerant wheat and barley varieties.

Whilst trying to identify sources of tolerance to both heat and drought, I became increasingly interested in landraces\* and the wild progenitors of agricultural crops. This led to my developing a project with the Global Environment Facility on the wild relatives of agricultural crops in the countries of the Fertile Crescent. At ICARDA, I built a squash court and started a cricket team in Aleppo. In 1996, still with ICARDA, I moved to the Arabian Peninsula as their Regional Coordinator, with main responsibility for restoring rangelands in those seven countries.

After 10 years with ICARDA, I joined the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research with a responsibility to restore the rangelands severely damaged during the Iraq-Kuwait war. Whilst there I married my second wife, Paula; her subsequent work as Director of Research for the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) took me first to Tanzania and then to Nigeria. In Tanzania, I worked as the Chief of Party for a USAID project in the six Great Lakes countries, confronting two devastating diseases of cassava and banana.

In 2012, having spent the last five years working on restoring rainforests in Nigeria and as an Independent Reviewer for the United Nations Compensation Commission on rangelands restoration work in Kuwait, I left for Rome with my wife before going to Bonn where she worked with the Global Crop Diversity Trust as the Deputy Executive Director.

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\*A crop cultivar or animal breed that has been developed through traditional farming practices for many years in a particular locale without influence from modern agricultural science.

In 2015, we moved to west Cork in Ireland, where I am happily retired and trying, amongst other things, to restore a heavily degraded two-acre garden. In total, since Wye, I have lived in 13 different countries and spent 46 years working in almost 50 countries on improving agricultural systems for subsistence farmers, most of it in Africa.

## Peter Beeden



After Wye, marriage to Barbara and a year of Applied Entomology at Imperial's Field Station near Ascot, we went back to Africa and worked in southern Malawi on a project encouraging farmers to grow cotton. Then to Northern Nigeria on an agricultural research station working on the development of a simple system of applying insecticides to the cotton crop and with agricultural economists and rural sociologists investigating how this ULV technique, and introducing new crops to the area of maize and dwarf sorghum, might fit into the existing farming system.

We then bought a small dairy farm in South Wales and milked for ten years until we moved farm and at the same time started to go back to some 30 countries in Africa and then Asia and the Middle East as an agronomist or in pest management for the identification, appraisal,

supervision and evaluation of donor-funded development projects. For 25 years and lasting three to four months each year, these consultancies fitted around the new farm, also in South Wales, but this time with sheep, meat goats and cattle.

With this farm being on the Towy Estuary with its wildlife on our doorstep and a re-awakening interest in conservation and habitat management, we took a job with Somerset Wildlife Trust as a Wildlife Sites Liaison Officer, offering advice to landowners of some 2,000 recognised areas of wildlife importance. Ten years of visiting farmers in Somerset was combined with a continued overseas consultancy programme mainly in Central and East Africa, Indonesia and Guernsey.

Finally back to the farm and trying to catch up with all the jobs left undone during the years in Somerset and overseas. Not surprisingly perhaps, a couple of weekends on farm each month had not been long enough to maintain fences, lay hedges or keep bramble invasion under control, let alone manage saltmarsh, permanent grassland, buildings and roads. So we are retired but with never enough time for either the work that has to be done or that we want to do!

Whatever the outcome of this Expedition review – and I am sure that the article will grace the pages of the Journal – John P's email of mid-January has certainly triggered some memory searching in this household. With the resuscitation of these memories has emerged the realisation of the very large part that both Wye and The Gambia Expedition played in shaping what happened subsequently in our lives – and still continues so to do!

## Mike Marshall



The Gambia Expedition 1966 definitely inspired me to return to Africa after graduating.

I applied to Voluntary Service Overseas and was sent to Malawi in 1967 to work in the Northern region as 'Cotton Officer'. The fact that I knew very little, if anything, about cotton growing was of no concern. I missed my graduation ceremony and flew out to Blantyre and drove up to Mzuzu. There I met John Rice who gave me and my allocated Field Assistants and Cotton Demonstrators a crash course in cotton growing. Time passed quickly with many bumpy Land Rover journeys to Karonga Lakeshore and Rhumpi Highland growing areas, visiting farmers and setting up demonstration plots. The cotton acreage was over 2,500. I attempted to teach the safe handling of DDT, Carbaryl and Dimethoate using knapsack sprayers and had a sideline in encouraging vegetable plots!

I was sad to leave Malawi in 1969 to return to Bedfordshire; however, after the frustrations of working for Government, I was looking forward to being my own boss. I am a great supporter of VSO and in the year 2000, to mark the

millennium, I and daughter Laura joined a sponsored trek in Nepal raising in total £250,000. We made good friends and this started a 'Nepal Trekkers' walking group that meets once or twice a year. In 2011, to mark ten years of our group, 12 of us did the coast-to-coast walk from St Bees to Robin Hood's Bay. It nearly killed me but raised more funds for VSO.

Back to 1969; I began two steep learning curves, adjusting to married life and being production manager of a flower and vegetable business, R.H.Marshall Bedfordshire Blooms. The partnership was divided into three sections: my father oversaw the outside crops – courgettes, brussel sprouts, cabbage and gladioli; my brother ran the office and sales; and I had the glasshouse production of all-year-round chrysanthemums, both cut flowers and pots, Alstroemeria, lilies, irises, etc, the machinery, boilers and the staff! We worked 24/7. Father died at 62 in 1980 but lived to see us grow into one of the top five flower businesses in the country. We continued to expand and invest into the 1990s and had nine acres of glasshouse production growing nearly five crops per year per unit area. We harvested 60,000 stems of flowers and 5,000 pots per week and at one time employed over 80 staff.

Overseas competition was severely affecting the flower market by the early '90s so we made the decision to downsize – and retire at 60. We had educated our children at private schools, when the profits were good, and owned mortgage-free houses in beautiful villages, so all the hard work had reaped rewards.

### **A whole new life after retiring**

I took part in industry groups and societies, serving on the A-Y-R Chrysanthemum Growers



Association committee; I was a founder member of the Institute of Horticulture, the Alstroemeria Growers Group and the YRF buying and advisory group. I was proud to be the first commercial grower to have an acre of pot mums protected organically against an array of pests and diseases (helping Jude Benison of the Cambridge Institute in her research and development of the use of predators).

In the nineties I began part-time teaching, initially on a scheme to teach adults and school leavers basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. I did the training in Biggleswade schools before moving to Shuttleworth College just down the road from my home. For 10 years I taught practical horticulture covering HND and diploma courses and lectured to adult RHS students. I was also on the College management committee.

### **Family news**

Our four children (and now the six grandchildren) have been and still are a great joy.

Fleur, the eldest, after attending my old school, Repton, read medicine at Bristol and joined the Royal Navy in her second year. She is a Surgeon Captain and at present is Principle of the Institute of Naval Medicine having served on HMS Boxer, HMS Norfolk, Antarctic Survey ship and was last PMO on Ark Royal. She is married to Captain Dean Bassett who was Captain of the Navy flagship HMS Bulwark before joining the office of the CDS at MOD. I sailed with him on board his ship HMS Cumberland and on HMS Monmouth which I boarded at Gibraltar on its return from pirate hunting off Somalia.

Our son Guy attended Bedford playing rugby and rowing for the school before reading Physics

and IT at Bath. He works for British Aerospace Systems as a communications and computer expert.

Laura, our third, enjoyed Repton and Leeds University. She worked at Luton Airport in the early days of EasyJet, moving on to manage the terminals at Manchester and finally to Dubai where she is now Manager of Properties and Planning at Dubai Airport. Laura is married to a rugby/triathlon fit Aussie and will eventually move to Australia.

Holly, our youngest, survived Repton and read Bio-Medical Sciences at Manchester where she met her husband. She then studied dietetics in Glasgow and now works in Nottingham University NHS Trust Hospitals.

Our six grandchildren range in age from 16 years to only three months so 'Granny M' is much in demand for granny duties.

### **Village life is rewarding**

Old Warden is a very important part of my life. I built a house in the village in 1977 and have been involved in every aspect of village life since, starting with the cricket club as part-time player, then Treasurer for many years and now President. I have been on the PCC for many years and am a sidesman in our ancient Parish church and have been chairman of the Village Hall Committee for donkey's years. Whilst Chairman of the Parish Council, I campaigned for eight years before finally succeeding in getting eight affordable houses built in this listed, estate village. We were involved in a successful bid for a £3 million Lottery grant to renovate The Shuttleworth Historic Swiss Garden. As part of the criteria we published a History of Old Warden and founded a History and Heritage Society. This month we received a

£10,000 heritage grant to do a geophysical survey of our Warden Abbey site. I instigated a domestic oil buying group and we have nearly 200 members and buy 40–50,000 litres at discounted prices.

All this and more happy activities meant the embarrassment of being awarded, in 2016 Birthday Honours, a BEM for 'services to the local community'. Jolly celebrations in the village and a second Royal Garden Party for Mrs M!

Now in our 70s, we are reasonably healthy having survived a few 'slings and arrows' and bumps along the way. We enjoy our holiday house in Norfolk, golfing, travelling and many wonderful friends and family.

This exercise of contributing to the Journal has brought back happy memories and reminded me how extremely fortunate I have been.

## Dave Forrest



My Scottish Presbyterian father's last words to me in February 1962 were: "I have left you no money but given you an education". Small-scale English fruit farming was on the way to becoming extinct. Much against the odds, I passed sufficient A levels to enter Wye College, after hard work doing an arable livestock practical year. Unwittingly, Wye plus the 1966 Expedition were to be the passport to all that

follows. Reading University Agricultural Extension paid for by Shell. Mike Brown (**Pete Beeden** knows Mike well) was a flat mate that led to Brown and Forrest ([www.smokedeel.co.uk](http://www.smokedeel.co.uk)) thanks to **Martin Nowell** (1964–67). **Peter Briggs** (Wye post-grad. 1972) welcomed me to South Africa where he was based at the time.

After being told to shape up, gained career invaluable MBA at the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business. It opened the door to IBRD West Africa state-wide agricultural programmes through **Dick Grimshaw** (1957–61); to co-directing EC grant funded, global empire-building South East Asia China training centre and integrated rural development programmes through **Hugh Bennison** (Wye); to co-founding Country Gardens with Nicholas Marshall (Mike's cousin) that grew from £1 on registration to being sold in 2000 with 40 garden centres for £100 million to Wyevalle with 80 centres at the time.

But, unknown to me, throughout, a perfect and pleasing agenda was at work in my life. After UK pulled out of ERM, recession hit big time and Country Gardens went into administration. I left in 1992 to co-direct turnaround major EC programme high up in Philippines in communist-ridden Central Cordillera. Part of EC €1 billion investment. '90%+' spent on EU member country-favoured corporate service and procurement contracts. Little reached poorest communities or households. In 1995, I faced a Congressional Hearing in Manila. Gold-laden Provincial Governors and politicians tried unsuccessfully to seize programme funds from the poorest to fund upcoming election and their construction businesses.

All this took a huge toll on my life. I was burnt out. Just at that moment the Holy Spirit stepped in, laid His hand on me, saved my life. The old David was gone, born again aged 50 to humbly serve God's agenda (not EU) and others; especially His poorest forgotten children who world-wide are fed false promises by corrupt self-interested politicians and forced to live shackled to destructive evil of extreme hunger, poverty and inequality. While learning God's will, love and faith in action, and in time greatly influenced by Salvation Army General William Booth, I was called to found [www.womanweepnomore.com](http://www.womanweepnomore.com), a charity focused on millions struggling every day to survive in 35 Sub-Saharan Africa countries.

When working to extend God's kingdom, you don't retire. His reward is immeasurable. He saved a wretch like me by His amazing grace. Amen

My two sons have similar education foundation. Robert (35), is based Munich, and a member of the BMW i8 design team, via RCA. Edward (33), is cofounder of [www.educateforlife.org.uk](http://www.educateforlife.org.uk), via UCL.

## John Luckock



I determined, towards the end of Wye, that agriculture was not a career for me. What is now British Airways was at the time seeking science graduates for an accelerated programme of

flight training, and as I already had a pilot's licence, that seemed an excellent alternative. Bureaucracy stepped in and rejected my application because I was not British, but Australian persistence overcame that, for a time, until part way through the course a downturn in aviation meant fewer pilots were needed. I was a casualty, partly because of the above, and partly because I may not have been perfect in their eyes.

I returned to Australia, to fly from Alice Springs around the outback. At the same time, my letter- writing skills attracted a wonderful girl to fly to the Alice from the UK and life in the 'Red Centre' no longer seemed appropriate. We married and moved to Melbourne, to a career in business. Aviation, automotive accessories, engineering, and timber processing have been my fields ever since, as a general manager and as a director. Companies have ranged from relatively small through to a stock exchange-listed enterprise, with the final 16 years self-employed with way too many staff (up to 85) for our one-family balance sheet.

Retirement followed in 2005, and what a wonderful stage of life it is if one is healthy, gets on with one's spouse and has sufficient funds. Our two sons both live in Europe (private equity in London, and major crude oil trading in Switzerland), and with five grand children, regular visits are required. Numerous other destinations around the world have also been visited, with Antarctica the highlight.

Wye was a wonderful experience and my B.Sc.(Agric) has not been wasted as I later obtained an MBA from Melbourne University; and I have had several lifestyle farms, the last of which we have recently sold to move to the coast. Much more importantly, it is from Wye

that I met my 'Maid of Kent', Lauraine Hale, from Littlebourne, near Canterbury. Forty seven years of very happy marriage have followed.

Other activities have included substantial involvement as volunteers with the Sydney Olympics and Melbourne Commonwealth Games and 59 years as a member of a good golf club.

I am as sad as anyone at the demise of Wye College and applaud the efforts of those who work so hard to keep past students in contact with each other.

### Jon Llewellyn-Jones



After leaving Wye I joined Massey Fergusson as a graduate trainee but, after a year, had itchy feet and wanted to travel. I bought a one-way ticket to Australia with no set intention but expected to work my passage back at some point in time. As luck would have it, I met **John Hudson** (1964–67 Horti), and eventually joined the same company (Geigy) as a field trials officer in their development team. I travelled extensively throughout eastern Australia and eventually was based in Melbourne where I met my wife. After

returning to England for a couple of years, I returned to Australia in 1972, got married and then started working for Pfizer (another drug company!!).

We (Kaye, my wife, and our newly born first child) returned to the UK in 1975 due to the unexpected death of my father, and got involved in running the family farm. I was also a Director of a farming cooperative for some years. We expanded our family to four, (daughter, son and twin sons) and once their education was complete we thought about returning to Australia. We had sold the farm in 1995 due to a chronic neck problem I had, which required spinal fusion of three vertebrae, and the fact that we really didn't have enough land to make things work for the family. I spent five years serving on the Ipswich Magistrates bench as a JP.

In 2003 we moved to Queensland taking our twin sons with us but were not able to convince the others. After seven years, the humidity started to take its toll and we moved south to Victoria and now live on the Mornington Peninsula, south east of Melbourne, which we love.

### Rick Viner



I went to Iran in 1969 on a Silsoe College student irrigation study, and then to Fiji from 1969 to 1984 initiating pulse research, and

conducting on-farm trials. From there I took a job in Samar, Philippines, for two years providing support for neglected upland farmers. Bornu in Nigeria (1986–88) followed, where I conducted applied farm trials. Thence to Penang in 1989 for a year as a research adviser; Laos (1990–92) for upland agricultural research; Ethiopia (1992–94) for agro-pastoralist trials; W. Samar, the Philippines (1994–96) in capacity building.

Then, in 1997 to Laos on a Xieng Khuang Development Project interim agricultural review. Tanzania (1998–99) District advice; Cao Bang, Vietnam (1999–2000) for extension agricultural.

trial development; Amhara, Ethiopia (2000–02) Research liaison; Carabello, S. Cordillera, Philippines (2002–03) farmer training support. Back to Tanzania (2003–05) participatory farmer testing; back to Vietnam (2005–06) district administration and farmer trials, commune and village review followed by Laos in 2007 as a team member on an end of project review. My last stop was Cambodia in 2010 on an EU project review.

My main thought following our Gambia expedition was the need for more activity at farmer level in tropical agronomy with the involvement of the key actors – the farmers!

## From Swanley to Asia, via Wye

**Iris M Forshaw (née Goodson, 1944–48) describes the effect of war on female horticultural students and then her early career before her husbands' work took them off to Asia and Africa.**

In October 1944 I was due to join Swanley Horticultural College for women (founded 1888). Sadly, earlier in 1944 it was bombed by the Germans and a student was killed. So it was decided to close the College.

First-year degree students were sent to the Royal Holloway College at Egham – also women-only and founded in 1888. The rest of the students were housed in Ripley with practical operations at the RHS Gardens at Wisley.

We were billeted in private houses and 12 of we first year students read Botany, Zoology, Physics and Chemistry with other Holloway freshers. i.e. Inter B.Sc.

I had appendicitis and failed the summer exams in 1945 but was allowed a resit when Wye College re-opened in 1945–6 as the faculty for

Horticulture and Agriculture of London University. Dr Kate Barrett interviewed all of us in London in 1944 and we were set to write an essay at school — I was awarded the 2nd bursary at £40 per annum.

I completed my B.Sc. Hortic in 1948. After graduating, I was employed by Pan Britannica Industries (PBI) at Waltham Abbey for two years. Then in 1950, I joined the National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAAS, a forerunner of ADAS) as an Advisory Officer in the Lea Valley glasshouse area for four years.

I met my husband at Wye. We married at St Mary's, Hayes, Middlesex on January 3rd, 1951. Mike was with SICC and in 1954 we went to India for three years, then Thailand for five years, then Sudan for two years and Malaysia from 1969 to 1974. Then Mike retired.

I taught science at various times.

# Afghanistan: integrating agriculture, nutrition and health

**A report from Wye's own correspondent Dr Nigel Poole (1991–92), Reader in International Development, Centre for Development, Policy and the Environment, SOAS, University of London.**

In this global information age, we are bombarded to such an extent with 'news' that it seems we have a limited attention span. Once upon a time Afghanistan filled our news bulletins, but that is all history. Except that it is not. Note the BBC report for Tuesday 10th January 2017: <sup>1</sup>

*'Up to 30 people were killed and 80 wounded in twin bombings near the parliament in the capital, Kabul.'*

*'Blasts at the governor's guesthouse in Kandahar killed at least 11 and injured 14 including the UAE ambassador.'*

*'Earlier, in Helmand province a Taliban suicide bomber targeted a guesthouse used by an intelligence official, killing at least seven people.'*

And a UN report released on 6th February showed that more civilian casualties were killed and wounded in 2016 than for any year since 2001, with child casualties up 24% on 2015.

## Fascinating country

Afghanistan is a fascinating country, going back long before Alexander the Great. Ancient Bactria may ring bells: think, the origin of the two-humped Bactrian camel. Genghis Khan wandered through in 1220 and you can see the Gholghola fort near Bamyan which he demolished – near where the giant Buddhas

were destroyed by the Taliban in 1997.

British interest in the region goes back to the early nineteenth century and attempts to protect 'our' empire in the Indian subcontinent. The history can be summed up very inadequately in a few bullet points:

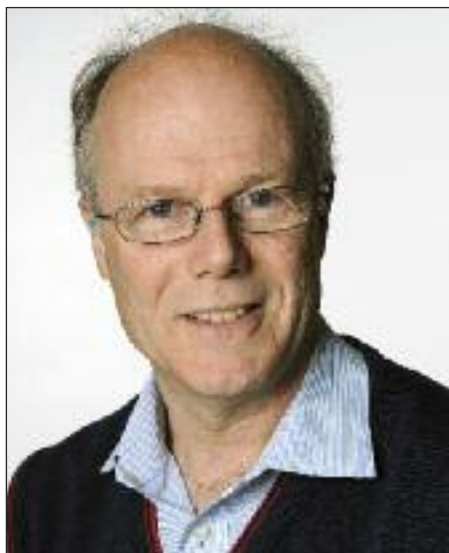
- First Anglo-Afghan War 1839–42 – the Great Game between England and Russia.
- Second Anglo-Afghan War of 1878–1880.
- Winston Churchill's first active service, on the North-West Frontier, 1897.
- Third Anglo-Afghan War, 1919.
- Stability in the mid-1960s/70s.
- Infighting characteristic of political and tribal divisions led to the Russian invasion in 1979.
- Mid 1980s to 2001 – emergence of the Taliban.
- 2001 US-NATO led invasion.
- Draw down of western troops at the end of 2014.
- 2017: still unstable, insecure, dangerous: 'Fifteen years after the US-led intervention in Afghanistan, competition for influence – reminiscent of that rivalry between the Russian and British empires in the 19th and early 20th Centuries, and that during the Cold War in the 1980s – is intensifying,

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-38567241?intlink\\_from\\_url=http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/1a5696c5-07d0-4a08-8b54-41ad5cd534b6/afghanistan&link\\_location=live-reporting-story](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-38567241?intlink_from_url=http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/1a5696c5-07d0-4a08-8b54-41ad5cd534b6/afghanistan&link_location=live-reporting-story)

<sup>2</sup>[https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/protection\\_of\\_civilians\\_in\\_armed\\_conflict\\_annual\\_report\\_2016\\_feb2017.pdf](https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/protection_of_civilians_in_armed_conflict_annual_report_2016_feb2017.pdf)





complicating an already precarious security situation.<sup>3</sup>

I have been going in and out since 2015. Why go there?

### **All because of Wye...**

As each visit approaches, it is a question that I – and not I alone – ask myself. Many readers of this journal will know that the Wye mission continues through SOAS, University of London, notably Distance Learning teaching in agricultural development, environment and international development policy. We also have to conduct research for our living, but that is what drives us still.

My own research focus for the last three years or so has been as a member of an international research consortium on agriculture and nutrition, funded by UK DFID, working in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan – and Afghanistan. We are addressing the conundrum of why people in such rural-based

economies should suffer catastrophically high rates of malnutrition and are trying to find policy options that will better integrate agricultural development and human nutrition. No-one else on the team wanted to go to Afghanistan.

It is an intensely beautiful country at the end of the Hindu Kush but different in most respects from anywhere else I have worked. It is largely arid, but with fertile well-watered valleys, a pastoral economy, rapid urbanisation, opium, very traditional society, strongly Islamic, just too close to Pakistan. The high rates of malnutrition, especially stunting and wasting among children, have huge, generational consequences in terms of lost human and economic potential. In a predominantly agricultural society, why is malnutrition so serious, and what can be done?

Simply, poor diets: 'man cannot live by bread and tea alone' – which is the staple diet from far too early an age. Of course, there are many complicating factors, and hence no easy answers.

### **What is it like?**

My impression on first arrival one Saturday afternoon was to see hordes of girls coming out of school, evidence that some things have changed for the better since 2001. I don't think many things have got better since 2014: insecurity is oppressive and worse now. Travelling round Kabul to visit organisations working in health and agriculture is difficult, and many international staff have little or no freedom to go anywhere other than home and office. Most UK government staff never leave their concrete fortress. Security 'lock-downs' are not infrequent. I have enjoyed relative freedom, to visit Balkh, Samangan, Nangarhar, Kandahar and Bamyan. Sadly, even these relatively accessible regions are being closed down because of the insurgency. But I have had some memorable experiences:

<sup>3</sup>[http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-38582323?intlink\\_from\\_url=http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/1a5696c5-07d0-4a08-8b54-41ad5cd534b6/afghanistan&link\\_location=live-reporting-story](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-38582323?intlink_from_url=http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/1a5696c5-07d0-4a08-8b54-41ad5cd534b6/afghanistan&link_location=live-reporting-story)



*A tried and tested technology.*

- Visiting a new university built on the Tarnak River in Kandahar where Osama Bin Laden lived and cultivated grapes.
- Skimming through the mountains from Bamyan to Kabul in an old Russian UN helicopter.
- Difficulties in relating to any women, except dinner for three visitors hosted by the cleaning lady in Bamyan when we probably ate a month's supply of food – amazing hospitality!
- Walking unaccompanied round the potato fields at dawn in Bamyan... perhaps the only Province where this is possible.
- Another dinner in Kabul with colleagues – all married but no Afghan women invited – at which we all had to sing a song: so I sat cross-legged in the middle of Kabul singing 'The Lord is my shepherd...'

- A colleague in Kandahar who told me about his brother-in-law who was teaching in a college; standing by the window, someone came up to him from outside and shot him through the head...
- Escaping from all danger of theft, kidnapping, bomb blasts and gun attacks.
- Each time getting on the plane to come home!

#### **Findings so far**

Working through local organisations, we are still conducting field work on the drivers of household dietary diversity, and I have hopes of conducting a small value chain analysis of a dairy project in Badakshan, funded by UK FCO and implemented by Afghanaid, a UK NGO. We also have a local NGO working on nutrition and horticulture education among girls who have dropped out of school.

My view is that agriculture and nutrition policies are not related: there is a strong nutritional focus

on therapeutic rather than food-based approaches to nutrition. Agriculture projects are primarily to boost the sector – employment, exports, alternatives to opium – and such project initiatives don't reach the rural poor. There is little real knowledge in Kabul of the situation in the regions because public sector officials don't go to the Provinces – and there are many governance problems which can be easily imagined, not least corruption and the capture of interventions and initiatives by political, military and criminal elites. For me, the search for good policies and implementation has to be through a workable form of decentralisation – to regions, or even to individual Provinces.

Environmental fragility is less obvious than political fragility, but poor Afghanistan faces frequent natural disasters: earthquakes, drought, floods and landslides. An avalanche in Badakhshan killed 10 people on 4th February, and another 60 to 70 died today in avalanches in Nuristan and Parwan, as I was finalising this draft. UN models suggest that Afghanistan is likely to experience some of the most extreme consequences of global warming and climate change. Any agricultural developments need to take into

account the likely extremes of temperature and precipitation, and damage to infrastructure.

### Is there any hope?

Can't we drop Afghanistan and move on? I would argue that 'we' have a social and moral responsibility to help. There is also the question of investments made in terms of lives and money. And the money so far is extraordinary: I don't have access to UK expenditure, but US spending on the war in Afghanistan from 2001-2016 was \$783 billion,<sup>4</sup> and US spending on reconstruction in Afghanistan 2002–2013 was \$104 billion.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Crawford, N.C. (2016). *US Budgetary Costs of Wars through 2016: \$4.79 Trillion and Counting. Summary of Costs of the US Wars in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and Pakistan and Homeland Security*. Washington DC, Watson Institute of International and Public Affairs, Brown University. Retrieved 03 February 2017, from <http://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2016/Costs%20of%20War%20through%202016%20FINAL%20final%20v2.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup>Lutz, C. and Desai, S. (2015). *US Reconstruction Aid for Afghanistan: The Dollars and Sense*. Washington, DC, Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University. Retrieved 03 February 2017, from <http://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2015/US%20Reconstruction%20Aid%20for%20Afghanistan.pdf>.



Potato fields of Bamyan.



*Fruits are an Afghan specialty.*

Who knows what the Trump vision will be... but over 70 countries attended the Brussels Donor Conference on Afghanistan, 4/5 October 2016, pledging \$25 billion until 2020 for development. Our own Department for International Development “will spend at least 50% of its annual budget in fragile states and regions for each year up to 2020. Economic development will be a significant proportion of this investment<sup>6</sup>, including Afghanistan.”

In the end, it is not about maximising returns on resources invested. Nor is it about British or European self-interest, all the while recognising that Afghans make up the second largest group of asylum seekers in Europe, after Syrians... but it is about people’s wellbeing. There are real limits to what outside intervention can achieve, but improving agriculture and nutrition is one objective that is not beyond possibilities. That fits the Wye mission.

Let’s hang in there...

<sup>6</sup>Department for International Development (2017). *Economic Development Strategy: prosperity, poverty and meeting global challenges*. London. Retrieved 03 February 2017, from [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/587374/DFID-Economic-Development-Strategy-2017.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/587374/DFID-Economic-Development-Strategy-2017.pdf).

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# Wye Rustics' Cricket Tour 2016

Report by **Dickon Turner** (1982-85)

## The Tour Party

*Ex Wye College:* **Simon Richardson** (1971–74), **Peter Holborn** (1974–75), **Nigel Snape** (1977–80), **Tom Atkinson** (1979–82), **Andrew Craze** (1982–85), **Martin Hole** (1982–85), **Dickon Turner** (1982–85), **Charlie Squire** (1987–90).

*Wye College Progeny:* Robert Pinney, Richie Turner, Robert Craze.

*Honoured Guests:* Chris Neild, Ryan Waldoock, Josh Holmes, Freddie Preston, Kick Douglas, Curt Luthart.

## Kilminster 3rd July 2016

*"You touch my fingertip, and my heart is aglow",* sang the topless man, sprawled across the garden table of The Old Inn, Kilminster.

"He's massacring a Hoagie Carmichael classic", lamented Martin Hole, but the stripper's audience, a dozen young chicks in a hen party, did not appear concerned.

*"But at a time like this, my resistance is low",* continued the male stripper until he was rudely interrupted by the captain of Kilminster Cricket Club, seeking the Rustics' skipper. At this point, Charlie Squire put his shirt back on, kissed the bride-to-be and climbed down from the table before walking to the cricket ground, winning the toss and inviting the home team to bat.

Over the many decades of this fixture, the Rockett family have tormented Rustic sides and a brace of the new generation ensured that Kilminster blasted their way to 109–1 from the first 19 of their 40 overs. From there, they struggled to ignite the afterburners as Turner and Squire bowled with surprising economy. Rookie Curt Luthart chipped in with three wickets and Nigel Snape, dynamic as ever at backward point, snaffled a low catch to restrict Kilminster to 225 for 8.

At 137 years old, Simon Richardson was compared to Gandhi with bleached hair as he opened the batting for the Rustics, holding the innings together while most around him failed. When he was caught for 35, and Robert Pinney was bowled for an aggressive 45, Rustics were tottering at 150 for 5. New recruit Freddie Preston showed no sign of nerves, having more concern for the elegance of his stroke play. "Are my cover drives aesthetically pleasing?" he was heard asking the umpire in between overs. His partner at the crease was another rookie, Kick Douglas, who was more Neanderthal in style but no less effective as the pair compiled a match-winning stand.

With the Rustics' total standing four short of their target, Preston was on 45 not out. A lofted slog over cow corner was required to bring up a well-deserved 50, but in typically chic style, he caressed the ball to the boundary along the ground, thereby winning the game and (so he thought) avoiding the need to buy a jug of ale but remaining one short of a half century.

The Rustic Tour is kept alive by a vintage collection of Wye College graduates and their pure or cross-bred progeny, along with some well-chosen friends/guests. The Wrinklies may retain some wily (Wyely) old cricketing skills, but they were soundly beaten by the youngsters in the traditional drinking contests in The Old Inn. During the minibus journey back to the Rustic Retreat, the off-key vocal tributes to Yogi Bear and his love of French cheese, ensured the driver didn't dally.



*Super Josh bowling in front of the new pavilion on the County Ground in Exeter (which is already famed for its reviving Bloody Marys). Nigel Snape is the focused umpire at square leg.*

### **Devon Dumplings 4th July 2016**

The Rustics were not singing the following morning. One of the tour party had stepped over the line. He had woken the landlady at 12:30am with a phone call, requesting the access code to the Retreat's indoor swimming pool. The alias "Tom" had been used, but the landlord knew there were no residents by that name and was keen to identify the culprit before any cooked breakfast was served. He pressed 'return call' on his wife's phone and a ringing tone emanated from the pocket of Richie Turner. Flowers and chocolates just about saved everyone's bacon.

The early exchanges of the Dumplings match were a triumph for Super Josh Holmes, another new face on the tour. His suitability as a Rustic was evident from the moment he waited and waited for Ryan Waldock to collect him from his Cambridgeshire home, having forgotten to advise his chauffeur that he had moved house. Now, as he delivered a bonanza of long hops in his opening spell, he induced three top order batsmen to smash the ball straight into the hands of shocked

fielders. This audacious burbling of wickets in broad daylight prompted the arrival of the Devon constabulary on the boundary.

Chris 'Mum' Neild then took a wicket with his first delivery of the tour, as his utterly confusing straight'un hit the batsmen plumb in front of the stumps and the home side were 112-4. However, a careful century from Sinclair ensured the Dumplings regrouped and amassed an ominous total, albeit at a stodgy pace thanks to a long spell of controlled spin by Turner Jr. It took 60 overs for the home side to reach 257 - 8 when the declaration arrived 80 for 4 in the 26th over was not the response that the tourists were seeking, particularly with the injured Andrew Craze unable to bat. However, there followed a contrasting stand of 93 between his son Robert, who carefully milked singles through the offside gaps, and Kick Douglas who battered everything to the square leg boundary. The Dumplings were forced to bring back their opening bowler and he dismissed our would-be heroes in consecutive overs, leaving the Rustics 186 for 6. But all was not lost, for now





*Robert Craze milking (left) and Kick Douglas battering (right).*

Hole was at the crease, smashing three boundaries in a single over to reignite Rustic hopes. But wait ... Hole was not in the starting line-up. With blatant disregard for the basic laws of cricket, the Rustics were allowing a substitute to infiltrate the batting line-up. Debutant, Super Josh, recognised he must uphold the spirit of the game, and the principles of the Rustic Tour, by entering the fray and immediately running out the illegitimate batsmen. From there, the innings fizzled out and the tourists tasted defeat for the first time since 2nd July 2012.

'Mum' organised the evening meal in the Hong Kong restaurant, Seaton, where the 16 hungry tourists were greeted like life-boat men to a sinking wreck by the proprietor of the empty restaurant. Snape chauffeured nine of the Rustics back to the Retreat; five inside his Land Rover and four clinging to the rails

### **Beaminster 5th July 2016**

Skippering a Rustic side can be a traumatic experience, but Ryan Waldock's sheer panic was unnecessary. From the time that Luthart and Preston put on 50 for the first wicket, he should have relaxed, but chose to fret over the timing of the declaration (perhaps wishing that substitute

fielder Kick Douglas had held onto the catch presented to him by Luthart while still on 0). When Preston and Atkinson took the score to 150 for 1 in just the 28th over, his anxiety attacks were palpable. Despite being disappointed there were no Big Macs in Beaminster to supplement his cooked breakfast, Preston was immense, driving the ball elegantly both through and over the inner ring of fielders and bringing up a stunningly attractive century before lunch; a ton which included 13 fours and 4 sixes. After the traditional curry, Hole continued the feast of runs on his favourite Dorset ground, and despite a mini mid-order collapse, Waldock was able to declare the innings on 250 – 8 (with bad boy Robert Craze being unable to bat as he was still in the pub). Tom Atkinson had manfully held together the second part of the innings with an adhesive 61 not out.

When the Beaminster innings commenced, sharp catches from 'Mum' and Craze allowed Super Josh to pilfer more early wickets from such scurrilous deliveries that the serious crime squad were now alerted. Waldock was worrying the game would be over to quickly so called upon his senior stick bowler, Dickon Turner, to open out the game. However, his deadly doosras induced outside

edges that were smartly snaffled behind the wicket and after a five overs spell which cost three wickets and one run, Turner was withdrawn with Beaminster on 38 for five from 17 overs



His son only continued the miserly bowling, collecting several maidens and a couple of scalps which included an expertly juggled catch from Douglas. When Super Josh returned and claimed two lawful wickets (both clean bowled) Beaminster were 104 all out and Rustics completed a dominant victory through playing spectacular cricket in all facets of the game. (Many would say it was all down to the selfless captain taking all the stress away from his team.)

Such was the success of this years' tour that Fixture Secretary Holborn has already secured two extra matches for 2017. The spirit of Wye continues through the men-in-white.



Top: The exquisite stroke play of Preston admired by Douglas, Holmes, Waldock, Hole, Snape, Holborn, Turner jnr and Neild (left to right above).

Statistics					
Kilmington	225 for 8	C. Luthart 8-1-40-3	C. Squire 4-0-11-2		
Rustics	226 for 5	F. Preston 49*	R. Pinney 45	K. Douglas 34*	S. Richardson 35
Dumplings	257 for 8 dec	J. Holmes 13-2-62-4	C. Neild 11-1-39-2		
Rustics	236 all out	R. Craze 64	K. Douglas 63		
Rustics	258 for 8 dec	F. Preston 105	T Atkinson 61*	M Hole 43	
Beaminster	104 all out	J. Holmes 8.4-1-16-4	D. Turner 7-5-2-3	R. Turner 5-3-3-2	

# Updated advice on wildlife gardening

By **Chris Baines** (1966–69), who provided the following introduction

A brand-new edition of my best-selling book *How to Make a Wildlife Garden* was published by the Royal Horticultural Society and Frances Lincoln on 1 September 2016, under the title *The RHS Companion To Wildlife Gardening*.

The original was published as long ago as 1985 and has been continuously in print since then. The new book has been completely updated and redesigned, and the opportunity to review the past 31 years has been extremely interesting. It is particularly satisfying to see the new book published as The **RHS** Companion to Wildlife Gardening. You may know that the original was launched at Chelsea Flower Show, where I made the first ever Chelsea Wildlife Garden. In 1985, the RHS were so confused by the very idea, that my Chelsea Medal was inscribed: to *J C Baines for a WILDFIRE garden*.

Over the past three decades (and actually I created a *Rich Habitat Garden* on BBC TV's Gardeners' World as long ago as 1979) there have been a great many changes. Some species such as goldfinches that were struggling then have become very common. Others, such as hedgehogs and spotted flycatchers, have declined disastrously. Garden centres, where wildflowers and bird feeders were almost unheard of in 1985, are now overflowing with wildlife gardening products. In the world of citizen science, gardeners are being recruited in vast numbers to gather knowledge about all manner of wildlife, from bumblebees, ladybirds and bats to migratory birds and invasive water plants.



Looking back, it is very satisfying to see how far we have come. Gardening to encourage wildlife has become second nature for millions. The idea that we can make a positive difference by managing our surroundings in subtly different ways is now central to the conservation movement across the wider landscape, in the countryside as well as in towns and cities.

If you have been a long-time owner of *How to Make a Wildlife Garden*, then I hope you will enjoy sharing in the review that the new book offers. If the original passed you by, then I hope the new book will spur you into action, and if you want to encourage friends and relatives, especially the younger generation,

Published by the RHS 2016. £25.00.

## Memories of an economics tour to France

This is a selection of photos taken on a tour with Dr John Nix to France in 1977. They were sent in by Penelope Feeney (née Brown 1976–79) who is currently resident in Gibraltar.



*John Medland, long suffering tutor. The whisky was for hosts at the University of Paris Sud.*



*Dr John Nix, keeping the whisky safe.*



*Jo Ashman.*



*Matt Clarkson.*





*A muddy field, somewhere near Champagne.*



*Left to right: Steve Day, Jonathon Leyland, Joe Ashman, Jeremy Peters, the sole male in the year below whose name I forget, and almost obscured, Graham Lacey.*

## A walk up to the Crown, September 2016

Familiar scenes spotted by **Michael Payne** (1978–81) on a walk up to the Crown from the village during the 2016 reunion.



*Withersdane Hall viewed from the gardens .*



*Residential block at Withersdane with the Crown beyond.*





*Above: The compass rose.*

*Left: part of the main gate to Withersdane*



*Looking down on the village of Brook.*



*The vista across East Kent.*



*Symbol of the Crown on the flint stonework bench above the Crown.*

## A little known 'sporting' victory for Wye

**Rob Savory (1957–61) recalls how Wye College entered a team for the 1961 University of London Carnival beer drinking race...and won!**

Very few readers will know that Wye College entered a team for the 1961 University of London Carnival beer drinking race ... and that we won!

The four-man relay team was selected the week before, in a series of timed trials conducted in the Kings Head. Initially the four individual fastest pints were downed by members of the Wye College Rugby Club. However (much to their disgust) three of the rugby players were subsequently eliminated by members of the Wye College Exploration Society. The team eventually selected consisted of **John Massey, Chris Dagenhardt, Dave Colman and Robert Savory**.

Up in London on the day, the Wye College team found themselves up against some pretty tough looking characters from the other Colleges. But hardiness and split-second timing prevailed and we won the race, downing our four consecutive pints in just 16.5 seconds. We were each presented with a pewter mug to mark the occasion. David Colman recalls driving round west London later, with seven of us in his Mini!



*56 years on: Rob Savory holding his sporting trophy, the base of which was signed by the four team members.*

On our return to Wye, we found that our victory had been announced on the blackboard that was always placed outside the Porter's Lodge on a Saturday afternoon: 'Wye College wins University of London Beer Drinking Race'. And, at dinner on the following Thursday, Dunstan Skilbeck passed around a large silver bowl full of beer for the triumphant team, much to the delight and applause of the rest of the students. Ah, those were the days!



*Church Street is the heart of the village offering a glorious view of the Church of St Gregory and St Martin. The shops and cars may change but the view hardly does.*

## Some highlights from the late '50s

**Roger Hobcraft** (1958–62) who sent in the pictures on this page, said: "I can still feel the heavy ball on my head when crossed by Tony Biggs from the right wing. The opposition schools were fitter and faster, the Army sides tougher, the London Colleges had more to choose from and the village sides had pitches that were rougher than ours and usually covered in sheep dung".



### Soccer team of 1958:

**Back Row:** Dave Collinge, the referee, Roger Hobcraft, John Whellams, John Mc Inerney, David Norman, Tony Biggs and Rickie Wheatear.

**Front Row:** Michael Wright, Mike Pash, Martin Roberts, Dick Wells, Tony Dent, Alan Whatton and Colin Field.

*The Duke of Edinburgh, Prof. Bill Holmes, Phil Kean and Dr Peter Payne on the occasion Duke's visit to the College in 1958.*





## It's not a 70's rock band called The Turtles – It's the JCR Committee ... with the tortoise.



**The Junior Common Room Committee (1978-79) with the college tortoise.**

*Back: Entertainments Officer (unknown), Nick ?, Simon Jessel, and Matt Clarkson, Chairman.*

*Back middle: Christine Vincent, Penny Brown (now Feeney) and Janet ???*

*Front middle: Jonathan Leyland, Oriel Kenny, Adam Wheatley*

*Front: Toby Veall and tortoise.*

# Agricola Club Memorial Fund research grants

**This report on successful applicants for the SOAS Agricola Club Memorial Fund Small Research Grants 2016 has been prepared by Dr Andrew Newsham, Dissertation Convenor, Centre for Development, Environment and Policy, SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies), University of London.**

2016 continued the upward trend in applications for the fund, demonstrating the dividends from increased levels of advertising amongst the student body. For the second year running, we have allocated all of the funds made available to us. Students have very much appreciated the funding offered and it has enabled field research projects which would not otherwise have been possible.

Therefore, once again, we are deeply grateful for the continued support of the Agricola Club. Frederick Kamusine, one of our successful applicants, wrote, "Thanks...for this wonderful news. I really appreciate your effort for this grant to be distributed". Another successful applicant, Tholumuzi Ngwenya, responded, "This is great news indeed. Every little bit helps, thank you very much".

Applicant Name	Dissertation title	Funding requested	Funding allocated
Nicole Wong	Measuring satisfaction: evaluating microfinance from the clients' perspective using case studies from Rwanda and Ghana	£170	£170
Sudaney Blair	Land Use Policy and Food Security in Jamaica – A case study	£390	£291.25
Katharina Kiener-Manu	Exploring reasons for staying – a comparative case study of experiences and perceptions of families of the German ethnic minority living in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan	£499	£291.25
Cristina Lomi	The role of informal waste workers in the solid waste management sector: the case of Kathmandu, Nepal.	£499	£291.25
Ferdinand Gakuba	Rwanda goat production project country wide: A key element for economic growth perspectives and sustainable development	£360	£291.25
Frederick Kamusiine	The analysis of one cow per poor family program: Understanding the trajectories into/out of poverty. Case study: Rwanda, Muhanga District	£400	£291.25
Kirsty MacLean	Role of the Ghana Navy in combating illegal fishing	£500	£291.25
Imran Khan	Community conservation in Northern Kenya; Way forward for new conservancies?	£500	£291.25
Tholumuzi Trevor Ngwenya	Smallholder commercialisation: Prospects for the South African essential oils sector	£460	£291.25
<b>Total funding:</b>		<b>£3778</b>	<b>£2500</b>



# Agricola Club

## Accountants' report for the year ended 31st July 2016

In accordance with the engagement letter dated 18 August 2014 we have compiled the financial statements of Wye College Agricola Club for the year ended 31 July 2016 which comprise the income and expenditure account, the balance sheet and the related notes from the accounting records and information and explanations you have given to us.

The financial statements have been compiled on the accounting basis set out in note 1 to the financial statements. The financial statements are not intended to achieve full compliance with the provisions of UK Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

This report is made solely to you, in accordance with the terms of our engagement. Our work has been undertaken solely to prepare for your approval, the financial information of Wye College Agricola Club and state those matters that we have agreed to state to you in this report in accordance with the guidance of ICAEW as detailed at [icaew.com/compilation](http://icaew.com/compilation). To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the members of Wye College Agricola Club for our work, or for this report.

You have approved the financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2016 and have acknowledged your responsibility for them, for the appropriateness of the accounting basis and for providing all information and explanations necessary for their compilation.

We have not verified the accuracy or completeness of the accounting records or information and explanations you have given to

us and we do not, therefore, express any opinion on the financial statements.

B P Wilkinson ACA  
Chavereys  
Chartered accountants  
Faversham  
Date: 1st September 2016

## Notes to the accounts

### 1 Accounting policies

The club prepares accounts on an accruals basis, using UK Generally Accepted Accounting Principles as guidance.

All income, except interest on investments, is derived from members or from sources outside the scope of Corporation Tax. As such the club is covered by Mutual Trading exemptions.

The club elects to write off the income from 'lifetime membership' applicants in the year of application.

# Agricola Club

## Income and expenditure account for the year ended 31st July 2016

	2016	2015
	£	£
<b>Income</b>		
Sale of ties, prints etc.	54	169
Subscriptions	1,548	1,772
Annual dinner	–	7,073
Donations	–	125
Hog roast	–	2,660
Memorial Fund journal contribution	8,500	8,500
	<u>10,102</u>	<u>20,299</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Opening stock	505	630
Closing stock	(465)	(505)
	40	125
Annual dinner	–	6,234
Hog roast	–	3,240
Wye Journal	7,835	8,595
Website expenses	166	206
Meetings, expenses and secretarial	1,227	1,316
Insurance	321	321
Donations	–	600
Accountancy	300	300
Purchase of equipment	175	–
	<u>10,023</u>	<u>20,812</u>
	<u>10,063</u>	<u>20,937</u>
<b>Net surplus (deficit)</b>	<u>39</u>	<u>(638)</u>

## Balance sheet as at 31 July 2016

	2016		2015	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Current assets</b>				
Lloyds TSB	13,154		12,614	
Stocks	465		505	
		<b>13,619</b>		<b>13,119</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>				
Creditors	—		—	
Accruals	(300)		(274)	
Deferred income Dinner	(735)		(300)	
		<b>(1,035)</b>		<b>(574)</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>12,584</b>		<b>12,545</b>
<b>Accumulated funds</b>				
Opening reserves		12,545		13,183
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		39		(638)
<b>Accumulated reserves</b>		<b>12,584</b>		<b>12,545</b>

We approve the accounts set out on pages 2 to 4 disclosing a net surplus of £39 and we confirm that we have made available all relevant records and information for their purpose.

These accounts were approved on 1st September 2016

**Prof J P G Webster**

**Treasurer**

(for and on behalf of the committee)

# Agricola Club Memorial Fund

## Accountants' report for the year ended 31st July 2016

In accordance with the engagement letter dated 18 August 2014 we have compiled the financial statements of Wye College Agricola Club Memorial Fund which comprise the income and expenditure account, the statement of assets and liabilities and the related notes from the accounting records and information and explanations you have given to us.

The financial statements have been compiled on the accounting basis set out in note 1 to the financial statements. The financial statements are not intended to achieve full compliance with the provisions of UK Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

The report is made to you, in accordance with the terms of our engagement. Our work has been undertaken so that we might compile the financial statements that we have been engaged to compile, report to you that we have done so, and state those matters that we have agreed to state to you in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the members of Wye College Agricola Club Memorial Fund, for our work, or for this report.

We have carried out this engagement in accordance with technical guidance issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales and have complied with the ethical guidance laid down by the Institute.

You have approved the financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2016 and have acknowledged your responsibility for them, for the appropriateness of the accounting basis and for providing all information and explanations necessary for their compilation.

We have not verified the accuracy or completeness of the accounting records or information and explanations you have given to us and we do not, therefore, express any opinion on the financial statements.

B P Wilkinson ACA  
Chavereys  
Chartered Accountants  
Faversham  
Date: 1st September 2016

## Notes to the accounts

### 1 Accounting policies

The charity elects to prepare accounts on an accruals basis.

Investment assets are revalued to market value at the year end. Net gains and losses are recognised as movements on the retained surplus.

### 2 Student / member awards

The trustees actively seek suitable candidates with a view to satisfying the objects of the charity.

# Agricola Club Memorial Fund

## Income and expenditure account for the year ended 31st July 2016

	Note	2016 £	2015 £
<b>Income</b>			
Dividends received		13,223	15,080
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Student / member awards	2	3,276	5,065
Support of Wye College Agricola Club		8,500	8,500
Governance expenses		3,846	3,710
		<u>(15,622)</u>	<u>(17,275)</u>
<b>Net deficit surplus/(deficit)</b>		<b>(2,399)</b>	<b>(2,195)</b>
<b>Retained surplus brought forward</b>		<b>449,994</b>	<b>445,810</b>
		<b>447,595</b>	<b>443,616</b>
Increase in value of investments		24,600	6,378
<b>Retained surplus carried forward</b>		<b>472,195</b>	<b>449,994</b>
<b>All receipts are unrestricted funds</b>			

## Statement of assets and liabilities as at 31st July 2016

		2016	2015
		£	£
		£	£
<b>Cash funds</b>			
Current account		1,325	748
Cash held by broker - Portfolio 1		2,237	1,118
Cash held by broker - Portfolio 2		(1,679)	1,494
<b>Investment assets</b>			
4,104.00 Charifund Income Units		61,422	60,839
<b>Portfolio 1</b>			
846.42 Rathbone Income Units	7,428	7,397	
37,500.00 M & G High income	44,531	42,795	
4,497.70 Artemis Income Fund Dist.Units	9,352	9,541	
7,000.00 Invesco Perpetual monthly inc plus fund	7,528	7,847	
2,650.00 Investec Capital Accumulator Class A	5,588	5,688	
4,592.11 IFSL Brooks Defensive Capital Class B Acc	6,768	8,100	
88.00 Veritas Global Equity Income GBP Class A	15,536	13,329	
44.15 SSGA GBP Liquidity Fund INST Stable NAV	49	44	
10,000.00 Threadneedle High Yield Bond clas1	4,252	4,354	
		101,033	99,096
<b>Portfolio 2</b>			
15,000.00 Alpha Prop Inv Freehold Income Trust	29,238	28,134	
60,000.00 Kames High Yield Bond Class A (Inc)	–	32,244	
1,980.00 Fidelity South East Asia	19,752	16,068	
8,000.00 First State Asia Pacific Leaders Class A	45,766	39,127	
27,500.00 Henderson UK Property	25,806	28,595	
20,000.00 Invesco Perpetual Monthly Income Plus Fund	21,508	22,420	
40,000.00 M & G High Income InvT ZDP	47,500	45,648	
55,000.00 M & G European High Yield Bond X Class	24,068	20,438	
19,000.00 Newton Global Higher Income	35,625	28,468	
90.75 SSGA GBP Liquidity Fund INST Stable NAV	295	91	
45,000.00 Threadneedle High Yield Bond Class	19,134	19,593	
7,400.00 Threadneedle UK Property Trust	5,949	6,374	
4,722.00 Murray Income Trust (MUT)	33,715	–	
		308,357	287,199
<b>Less accruals</b>			
Accountancy		(500)	(500)
<b>Net assets</b>		472,195	449,994

We approve the accounts set out on pages 2 to 4 disclosing a net deficit of £2,399 and confirm that we have made available all relevant records and information for their purpose.

These accounts were approved by the trustees on 1st September 2016

**Prof JPG Webster**  
Trustee

**Mrs J D Reynolds**  
Trustee



# Agricola Reunion 2017

This year we are again organising an informal summer event in the form of a

## **Gourmet Hog Roast**

**plus salad, followed by summer fruits dessert**

**With pay bar (beer and wine)**

**Saturday 1 July at 12.00 noon**

**Bottom Farm, Covington, Nr Huntingdon, Cambs. PE28 ORU**

By kind invitation of the **Brown family**.

I wish to purchase \_\_\_\_\_ tickets at £20 per head

(Cheques payable to Wye College Agricola Club)

Please indicate any dietary requirements \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Tel no \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to

Mrs Jane Reynolds, The Pent, Postling, Hythe, Kent CT21 4EY

Any queries to [info@janesgardendesign.com](mailto:info@janesgardendesign.com) or 01303 862436.

You will be acknowledged by email (please write it clearly!) otherwise please send an SAE

PLEASE RETURN BY 15th JUNE AT THE LATEST.



# Wye College Agricola Club

## News Please

Marriages, births, deaths, changes in career, or anything else of interest. Photos are welcome; please send via email or supply copy prints, since we cannot promise to return them.

**Copy deadline 15 January.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name at Wye \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. no \_\_\_\_\_

Is this a new address? Yes ☐ No ☐

Current date \_\_\_\_\_ Years at Wye \_\_\_\_\_

Do you live overseas? If so, would you be prepared to represent the Agricola Club in your country? This would involve advising any visiting members and occasionally sending us news.

**News.** Please email, or else write clearly or type.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Continue overleaf or add another sheet.

Return this form to Mrs Jane Reynolds, The Pent, Postling, Hythe, Kent CT21 5LS  
[info@janesgardendesign.com](mailto:info@janesgardendesign.com)



# Wye College Agricola Club

## Application for Membership

Surname/Family Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name at Wye \_\_\_\_\_

First Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. no \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Academic details: Graduate/MSc/PhD/Staff (Please delete as appropriate)

Year of entry \_\_\_\_\_

Year of leaving \_\_\_\_\_

Degree course (Dept. if PhD or staff) \_\_\_\_\_

### Declaration

I offer myself for election to the Wye College Agricola Club and agree to abide by the Club Regulations (copy available from the Hon. Sec. or visit [www.wyeagricolaclub.org.uk](http://www.wyeagricolaclub.org.uk)). I authorise the Club to publish my name and address and email in the Wye Journal and agree to pay the annual membership fee, currently £10 per annum, by standing order.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

On receipt of your signed application it will be placed before the Committee for acceptance. The Hon Sec. will send you a standing order form to complete.

Please return this Application to  
Francis Huntington, Hon. Sec.

Agricola Club Secretariat, Cumberland House, Church Street, Wye, Ashford TN25 5BJ





# Wye College Agricola Club

## Change of Address or Email

Please return this form before Christmas to:

Francis Huntington, Hon. Sec.

Agricola Club secretariat, Cumberland House, Church Street, Wye TN25 5BJ

Email: [contact@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk](mailto:contact@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk)

Addresses for the list go to press at the end of April, and changes cannot be included later.

Surname/family name \_\_\_\_\_ Name at Wye \_\_\_\_\_

First name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. no \_\_\_\_\_

Degree course taken at Wye (Dept. if Post Grad. or staff) \_\_\_\_\_

Years of attendance at Wye \_\_\_\_\_

### Data protection act

For many years we have published members' names, postal addresses and emails in the Wye journal. When you provide us with updated information we are now asking you to confirm that you give your permission for your contact information to be published in future Wye Journals and on the Club website..

I confirm that I give permission for my details to be published in the Wye Journal and to be accessible to members on the Cub website.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



# Wye Heritage

Our past shapes our future

## Wye Heritage Centre - Membership Application Form

Please support the work of the Wye Heritage Centre by becoming an annual member and help us to preserve the archives, photographs, artefacts, memories and ethos of the former Wye College. Now housed in the Latin School, Wye.

Membership annual fee £10.

Surname/Family Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name at Wye \_\_\_\_\_

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to my details being held on the membership database

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The current membership fee is £10.

Please enclose a cheque made out to 'Wye Heritage'.

We will then send you confirmation and a Standing Order for subsequent years.

Please return to: Wye Heritage Office, Cumberland House, Church Street, Wye, TN25 5BJ



# Wye College Agricola Club

## Committee Members 2016-2017

Elected	Retire	Position	Name and Address	Tel no
2015	2018	President	Prof David Leaver Sole Street Farm, Crundale, Canterbury, Kent CT4 7ET <a href="mailto:jdleaver@gmail.com">jdleaver@gmail.com</a>	01227 700978
2016	2019	Chairman & Journal Editor	Dr John Walters Akermans, 38 High Street, Wye, Ashford, Kent, TN25 5AL <a href="mailto:akermans38@yahoo.co.uk">akermans38@yahoo.co.uk</a>	01233 812823 07969 739974
2014	2017	ACMF Trustee	Mr Charles Course Heathpatch Ltd, Dairy Farm, Semer, Ipswich, IP7 6RA <a href="mailto:charles@dairyfarmoffice.co.uk">charles@dairyfarmoffice.co.uk</a>	01449 741481 07889 218590
2015	2018	Secretary	Mr Francis Huntington Cumberland Court, Church Street, Wye, Ashford, Kent TN25 5BJ <a href="mailto:contact@weagricolaclub.org.uk">contact@weagricolaclub.org.uk</a>	01233 813884 07860 390087
2014	2017	Treasurer ACMF Trustee	Prof Paul Webster 25 Chequers Park, Wye, Ashford, Kent TN25 5BB <a href="mailto:jpgwebster@gmail.com">jpgwebster@gmail.com</a>	01233 812786
2015	2018	ACMF Trustee	Mrs Jane Reynolds Pent Farm, Postling, Hythe, Kent CT21 4EY <a href="mailto:info@janesgardendesign.com">info@janesgardendesign.com</a>	01303 862436
2014	2017		Prof Berkeley Hill 1 Brockhill Road, Hythe, Kent CT21 4AB <a href="mailto:b.hill@imperial.ac.uk">b.hill@imperial.ac.uk</a>	01303 265312
2015	2018		Prof Geoff Dixon Hill Rising, Horncastles Lane, Sherbourne, Dorset, DT9 6BH <a href="mailto:geoffrdixon@btinternet.com">geoffrdixon@btinternet.com</a>	01935 387470 07774 628641
2014	2017		Dr Susan Atkinson 52 Maxton Road, Dover, Kent CT17 9JL <a href="mailto:susan.atkinson@talk21.com">susan.atkinson@talk21.com</a>	01304 211977 07808 435968
2014	2017		Mr Henry Holdstock The Old Buttery, Homestall Lane, Homestall, Faversham Kent ME13 8UT <a href="mailto:henry@georgewebbfinn.com">henry@georgewebbfinn.com</a>	07831 320500 01795 428020
2014	2017		Mr Chris Waters 2 The Moat House, The Moat, Charing, Ashford, Kent TN27 0JJ <a href="mailto:chris.waters@leathams.co.uk">chris.waters@leathams.co.uk</a>	020 7635 4009 07710 835523
2014	2017		Mr David Simmons Whitehill House, Brogdale Road, Ospringe, Faversham, Kent ME13 0DN <a href="mailto:dhsimmons@btconnect.com">dhsimmons@btconnect.com</a>	01795 532100
2015	2018		Mr Philip Bair Bonner View, The Street, Northbourne, Deal, Kent CT14 0LF <a href="mailto:blairs@vwclub.net">blairs@vwclub.net</a>	01304 360317

