

WYE

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of
The Wye College Agricola Club*



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Wye College Agricola Club

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President's message 2022

Paul Webster (postgraduate 1964–and staff) Agricola Club President.

May I say first of all what a great honour it is to be elected your President. It is now 58 years (yes fifty-eight!) since my arrival in Wye. I guess you could call me a Wye 'lifer'. But I hadn't planned to come to Wye at all.

With a degree in Agricultural Science from Reading, I had aimed to return there to do an MSc. But the MAFF scholarship panel who would fund it told me that if I wanted to move into farm economics, then I should go to Wye for a year and study under Ian Reid. At the end of the Dip FBA, I had expected to go into an advisory job of some sort. But instead, I signed on in the Economics Department as a research assistant, the lowest level of the academic food chain. In that job, whilst I had some specific tasks, I was given time and space to develop my own interests and to follow wherever my curiosity led me. Such freedom would be unknown these days. This was in the post-Robbins Report era when universities were expanding.

Then, having found a good project and gained the necessary PhD for a career in academia, I was ready to leave Wye and explore the wider world. I thought of going to the US where three- or five-year fellowships in the big Land Grant universities were available. It was 1968, the summer of love and all that, and I fancied a bit of it. But the application forms sat on my Head of Department's desk waiting for him to fill in the recommendation section. I badgered him, but still no action. Finally, I met him one day in the corridor and he said 'There's a good job going in Africa. It's only for a year and we'll keep your position open for you here in Wye!'. So I said 'OK, I'll go to Africa'. So it was that I



found myself at Makerere in Uganda dealing with smallholder farm economics. Of course, I found it fascinating and interesting, and it gave me insights that I have carried with me ever since on my travels. I suppose that it was on my return to Wye that my career at the College really started. But that's another story!

What I found at Wye in the 1960s was a close-knit community of students and staff. My first years as a student and as a very junior member of staff meant that I got to know and made many friends amongst the students of those days and with whom I still have many contacts. What a pleasure it has been to encounter such friends in my later career both in this country and in other places around the world. It is indeed an honour to serve as your President.

Reflections of the past-President on his time at Wye

Professor David Leaver (postgraduate 1964–67 and staff).



It was with great pleasure that I handed over the Agricola Club Presidency to Professor Paul Webster at the 2021 AGM. I have known Paul since 1964 when we both came to Wye as postgraduate students. Afterwards, Paul remained linked to Wye throughout his career and thousands of students benefitted from his excellent teaching and supervision during that time. In recent years as Honorary Treasurer of the Agricola Club he has also provided great service through his control over the finances, as well as guiding the Committee on the trends the Club will face over the coming years coping with a declining membership. I have been retired since 2007 and living locally to Wye (close to the Compasses pub which many of you will remember), and my wife Sally and I continue to see Paul and Amanda on a

regular basis. I wish him well in his new role as President.

I have always been extremely thankful for my time spent at Wye College. I was brought up on a small dairy farm on the Pennines and in the early 1960s I took a degree in Agriculture at Newcastle which in those days was Kings College, University of Durham. In my final year I became enthused with agricultural science and research and through that I first encountered what turned out to be my first connections with Wye.

The supervisor for my dissertation project at Newcastle was John Prescott and my external examiner from Bangor was Ian Lucas both of whom subsequently became Principals of Wye College, but the crunch connection at that time was the Dean of the Faculty, Professor Mac Cooper who persuaded me that, if I wanted to become a research scientist with an interest in ruminant animals, after Newcastle I should go to Wye College in Kent to study for a higher degree. His view was no doubt influenced by his previous role as Professor of Agriculture at Wye in the 1950s. However, the clincher was that my final-year dissertation project was on 'factors influencing voluntary food intake in ruminants' and in my review of literature I encountered the internationally rated papers on this topic by Drs C C Balch and R C Campling of NIRD in Reading. Imagine my enthusiasm for going to Wye therefore when I heard that Dr R C Campling was joining the staff at Wye! Bob subsequently became a great influence on my development as a

postgrad at Wye for which I shall be forever grateful.

So I came to Wye College in 1964 and the three years I spent there working on my doctorate completely changed my life. Not only did I meet my wife Sally, but I also received an outstanding educational experience in that very special collegiate setting and which set me up for my subsequent life and career. For this I shall be eternally grateful and I am sure most alumni of the College feel the same way. I returned to Wye in 1987 after working in research and research management for 20 years in Reading and Scotland when I was appointed Professor of Agriculture following the retirement of Professor Bill Holmes.

It is difficult to understand how the company developing the site is allowed to develop the medieval Grade 1 listed buildings as part of the housing development.

The 15 years I then spent at Wye until my departure in 2002, to what is now the RAU at Cirencester, were extremely challenging for the College which was already facing financial constraints when I arrived. In spite of the continuing excellent output in teaching and research, the College had an operating deficit in all but one year of the 1990s, and as the College was a relatively small business compared with most universities it had less scope for a significant change in strategy, and eventually in the late 1990s, having taken

lots of advice both internally and externally, the governors of the College decided on merger with the highly prestigious Imperial College, London. There has always been some criticism of the merger, but the financial position of the College was not fully understood by many at the time and the options were few. At the same time very positive messages came from Imperial over the proposed merger. For example, Lord Oxburgh, the Rector of Imperial when speaking to the Wye College governors in 1999 said 'we have many kinds of expertise but we do not have agriculture and so to find an institution like Wye that was willing to contemplate joining us was an opportunity we could not turn down'. However, as we are now all too aware, within months of merger in 2000 a new Rector of Imperial was appointed, Sir Richard Sykes, who had a very different view about Wye and its future, and the subsequent gradual closedown followed. For those who have not seen the publication produced in 2010¹ by the Agricola Club, it spells out in great detail a record of the factors leading to and the consequences of the merger.

My personal reflections on Wye are therefore many and varied. For the most part they are very positive and are particularly about the people I met and the influences they had on my life. Any negative thoughts I have are about the changes that have taken place in the 20 years since merger, but these should not cloud the impact Wye College has had since its inception as an agricultural college well over a century ago, not only on agricultural and rural development

¹ 'A record of the factors leading to, and the consequences of, the merger of Wye College University of London with Imperial College' Wye Agricola Club 2010.

around the world, but also in the personal development of those who attended and worked at Wye.

Nevertheless, the present hiatus over the development of the College buildings fills me with sadness and disappointment, especially when I pass the boarded-up College. I have no objection to a good part of the site being used for housing, but it is difficult to understand how the company developing the site is allowed to develop the medieval Grade 1 listed buildings as part of the housing development without due consideration of the important history and heritage of Wye College.

The founder of Wye College in 1447 was Cardinal John Kempe. He was born in Wye and Stewart Richards² in his book on the history of the College described him as 'arguably the most remarkable man of his day, rising to the very pinnacle of each of his parallel careers in politics and the Church' who became Archbishop of Canterbury and also 'the indispensable mentor and confidant of Henry VI'. The Latin School which lies in the garden along the High Street was central to the foundation of the College in 1447 and will become an accessory of the Grade 1 house behind. Also within the Grade 1 buildings are nationally important heritage items of outstanding significance, in particular the ancient staircase and its statues. These will become privately owned. Surely these Grade 1 buildings and contents of high historic value should be conserved for the long term and available to the public?

It is pleasing that the Agricola Club continues in its role on behalf of the alumni. In the 12 years I had as President I saw many joyful

reunions of former students at dinners and barbecues around the country, and this has been a great pleasure. To see and discuss the achievements of former students is always satisfying, and to read their stories each year in the Journal highlights what an outstanding educational institution Wye College was, and how fortunate we were to have had that experience.

A final reflection looking to the future is what a great pity the College is no longer here at a time when highly significant changes to food production methods and environmental management are going to occur due to policies aimed at climate change and biodiversity, and to the emergence of new and exciting developments in new technology. The mix of expertise across and between agriculture, horticulture, environmental management, biological sciences and economics would have put Wye in an ideal teaching and research position to address many of the needs that are going to arise.

Come to the Agricola Hog Roast!

**Sunday 3 July 2022
at Roves Farm,
Swindon, Wiltshire.
See Green Form at
back of Journal.**

² Stewart Richards (1994) *Wye College and its World*, Wye College Press, 336pp.

Chair's – and Editor's – report 2022

Jane Reynolds (née Shackleton) (1973–76) – Agricola Club Chair – looks back on a turbulent year for the Club and the Committee

I think it is fair to say it has been a challenging year for the Chair! The word 'turbulent' also springs to mind! Looking back at the Chair's report I wrote last year, it was obviously some months before publication and things moved fast in the interim.

In my article 'All Change on the Committee' and also alluded to in the Dinner Report, we started losing Committee members in rather short order! Firstly, **Francis Huntington** (1961–63) our long-standing and, I might add, long-suffering Secretary resigned, followed within two weeks by **Chris Waters** (1983–86). This was followed, as expected, before long by John Walters retiring as Editor of the Journal, with no successor in place! As you can imagine this was all somewhat unnerving for a relatively new Chair and the expression 'Captain of a sinking ship' sprang to mind. I turned to our President, **David Leaver** (1964–67) and basically said 'Help, what am I doing wrong?' Thankfully for me, David had some soothing reassurances to give me, that, in the case of the first two, this was all historical fallout from earlier disagreements on planning issues concerning the College buildings and nothing to do with my leadership!

David also reminded me that he too had been wanting to step down as President, for some time! So, I was left with a Committee with some rather large holes in it!

Fortunately, Francis had already found **James Trounce** (1976–79), who was prepared to come onto the Committee and straight into the role of Secretary. I



believe the handover process from Francis to James is still ongoing as unfortunately James did not retire quite as soon as he had hoped, so Francis has kindly kept an eye on things in the interim. That process should be complete by the time you read this.

We asked **Paul Webster** who was already on the Committee as Treasurer to take on the mantle of President, which I believe he was honoured to do. So then we needed a new Treasurer, who again we found within our own ranks, and **Charles Course** has agreed to take on that role from mid-2022. Paul will hold the purse-strings until then.

We were still lacking an Editor and had four vacancies on the Committee. After putting out a few pleas to the membership

to no avail, it was decided a direct approach was needed. In quick succession I am very pleased to say that we have brought **Michael Payne** (1978–81) and **Chris Baines** (1966–69) on board, both of whom have already proved themselves to be useful and proactive Committee members. More recently we have appointed **David Simmons** (1976–79) back on to the Committee. Thank you to them all for coming on board.

I am pleased to tell you that we now have an excellent Committee and despite all our meetings to date still being held on Zoom, we have robust, frank and I am pleased to say, amicable discussions!

I am even more relieved to be able to tell you that the post of Editor of the Journal has now been filled! After a little arm-twisting and much thought (from Martin!), I am delighted to tell you that **Martin Rickatson** (1994–97) has agreed to step back into this role. Martin is a journalist by profession and also edited the Journal some time ago, so knows what he is taking on. Please do all you can to help him by sending in articles for inclusion the the Journal, complete with photographs and as near to being ready for publication as you can.

So, apart from all these shenanigans, you may ask, what have we been doing?

Well, firstly, the debate about trying to keep the oldest Grade 1 and medieval buildings of the College within the public domain still rumbles on and now appears to be led by a group called the Wye Buildings Preservation Trust (WBPT). Whilst many Agricola and most of your Committee would like to support this, the greatest hurdle is that the property developers Telereal Trillium (TT), who own the site, do not seem willing to engage in any discussion on the matter. Wye Heritage are reticent

about supporting WBPT and since we are a founding Corporate member of Wye Heritage and they hold all our archives, your Committee at the moment cannot give WBPT their full support. The matter is ongoing.

Secondly, we need to address the size of the Journal and its future. Under John Walter's editorship it has grown considerably (I don't anticipate this one to be as large!). The biggest section, every other year, has been the address list. So, we plan at some point in the future to **move the address list online** with secure password access only. At this point **Data Protection** becomes an important consideration and we plan to create a **Working Party** to look into how to go about this. **If you have any expertise in this field, please do get in touch, as we would like to draw some skilled people together to handle this. Thank you!**

Thirdly, social events form an important part of what we do and a successful Annual Dinner was held in Wye last October (see 'Reunions' page 48 onwards). We are now looking forward to a Summer BBQ this year to held at Roves Farm, Sevenhampton, Swindon SN6 7QG, by kind permission of **Rupert** (1973–76) and **Jo Burr** on Sunday, 3 July 2022 at 12 noon.

At the moment we are following a rotation of a Annual Dinner (currently in Wye) one year, followed by a Summer BBQ the next. If anyone would like to express different views on the format of these events, then please do let anyone on the Committee know – all our contact details are on the inside back cover of this Journal.

Fourthly, we do hope to have some branded College garments to offer you

in the form of polo shirts/sweatshirts and gilets, before too long.

We are very hopeful that we might actually have a face-to-face meeting in April, which will be the first time in over two years and a first for me in the Chair!

It just remains to me to thank everyone on the Committee who willingly and freely give of their time to keep this Club going.

Moving on to an Editor's Report!

Well, at the time of John's retirement as Editor, we had no-one to take on the role. So by default co-ordinating this year's Journal fell to me as Chairman. Otherwise we would not have had a Journal at all! I am very grateful to my three sub-editors for taking on a fair amount of the work. '

My main fear when taking this on was that we would have nothing to actually print in the Journal, other than the usual rather mundane bits. However, after a few e-pleas to all whose emails we have, you have answered my calls for articles magnificently. I won't pretend that there are as many as in the last few years, but at least I hope a passable Journal has been produced.

My thanks go to my 3 willing sub-editors and our database manageress:

- Penny Roberts (1959–62)
- Stuart Whatling (1993–96)
from Tasmania, proving that distance is no obstacle!
- Gary Saunders (1986–2004)
- Also Sian Phelps, our long-suffering Database Manageress.

I would also like to thank our Production Editor, Marie Selwood, whom we pay to

do all the difficult bits such as laying the Journal out, ready for the printers.

They have all done sterling work, proving that editing the Journal does not have to be a one-man show!

As ever, we on the Committee strive to keep the fellowship of the Agricola Club together by organising an annual social event and keeping you informed of all developments at College or anything else of topical interest. We are here to serve you, so please feel free to contact anyone on the Committee (full list on inside of back cover).

Meanwhile, just before publication, the world has turned upside down with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. We see the horrors being inflicted on this peaceful nation unfolding on our screens nightly. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the resilient and brave people of Ukraine, and we wish them deliverance from the barbaric forces of Russia.

PLEASE CHECK AT THE BACK OF THE JOURNAL THAT WE HAVE YOUR CORRECT EMAIL AND POST ADDRESS. WE URGENTLY NEED THIS IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR COMMUNICATIONS WITH YOU – IF YOURS IS NOT LISTED OR NEEDS UPDATING, PLEASE SEND DETAILS TO:
database@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk.

Secretary's report 2022

James Trounce (1976–79) – Honorary Club Secretary.



Having read Francis's excellent and informative reports over the last 22 years, I have to confess this will be far briefer. Having assumed the role part way through the year I very much feel I should still be wearing L plates. I will never do the job that Francis has carried out so well over the last 22 years, but I will 'do different' as they say in Norfolk: 36 years here and married a Norfolk girl, so I am just about naturalised.

Perhaps I should introduce myself a little more. Not from a farming background and growing up in commuter-belt Kent, I was enlightened of the merits of Wye by **Phil Betts** – Ag (1976–79) (a long-standing school friend). I was at Wye between 1976 and 1979 as one of the rare breed of Agricultural Chemists (otherwise known as the 'Wain appreciation

society'). This was followed by an MSc in Soil Chemistry at Reading. As with many Agricultural Scientists a spell abroad came next with three years working in Zimbabwe on soil-productivity research. Returning to the UK in 1985 I joined NIAB as a trials officer based in Norfolk (**Graham Milbourn** chaired the interview panel – so no favouritism), and really set about learning crop agronomy. By the early 2000s things were changing, and it came time to move on – initially working as a crop specialist in potatoes for NIAB and then a varied few years of vegetable agronomy, environmental-permitting work before taking on roles as a Lecturer in Agriculture at Easton College (Norwich) and also working as a Red Tractor Assessor. This latter role I stepped back from just before Covid hit, but I still teach on a degree programme at Easton. I hope the programme which was revalidated last year reflects the ethos I gained at Wye – I will return to the theme of the Wye ethos later.

Committee activity

The Committee has met regularly throughout the year through the medium of Zoom and has also been canvassed for views by the Chair in the interim. Topics discussed have included the Club's interaction with Wye Heritage, Wye CRAG, TT (the site developers) and other interested parties in relation to the site. After the outcome of the planning appeal we became more focused on the other matters, particularly the Annual Dinner. We are exploring arrangements for a summer event in 2022, the possibility of holding a joint event with the Wye 70s (Magnay) group are being investigated.

Michael Payne (1978–81) and Chris Baines (1966–69) have joined the Committee as seconded members. The process of updating the Club website and email communication system has been initiated. This should make the sending of email newsletters far easier than the current Mailchimp system. Going forward there could be role for a website manager.

Moving forward

In these uncertain times the need for rational decision-making based on solid evidence is critical. Something I fear many lack. A few years back I was talking to a successful and innovative farmer from East Anglia, while doing a farm visit with a group of undergraduates. The discussion got to where we had studied, The comment came was 'people who went to Wye have an interesting way of thinking and are more open minded than those from establishments in Shropshire or Gloucestershire'. We need to keep this alive. It is currently – the Wye 70s Whatsapp group shows this wonderfully (must thank **John Magnay 1974-77** for getting this launched and keeping it going). **Robin May's** restored wet areas in North Devon are a perfect example. Those of us that knew Robin in the 1970s would not have picked him out as a natural conservation farmer.

I suggest the Club should look at starting an Agricola Club Talk/Lecture, where we get some of our graduates to deliver on a topic relevant to the wider industry going forward. This would be an online and recorded format. I would also encourage other cohorts to consider some form of discussion group for recollection of times at Wye and discussion of current topics.

Club Business

I would encourage you to read the report that Francis prepared and was published in the 2020–21 journal.

Club merchandise and publications

Apart from the items listed below, we are investigating some Wye College 'logo'-ed clothing. These include a gilet with the College shield, a polo-shirt with the College shield and a sweatshirt or hoodie with Theo the tortoise: samples were planned for the AGM but workload took over.

The stocks of Club merchandise are now held in the Wye Heritage Centre and can be supplied by return; current prices, inclusive of postage and packing, are as follows:

Ties	£18.00
Bow ties	£22.50
<i>The College at Wye – A Historical Guide</i>	£10.00
The Dennis Flaners print of front of College, limited edition (unframed)	£20.00

Please make cheques payable to the 'Wye Heritage Centre' and send your request to admin@wyeheritage.org.uk.

Thanks:

Finally, I must acknowledge the support of Jane as Chair, Francis as Retiring Secretary and Sian as Data-base administrator. Thank you, I could not have got by without your help.

Email: secretary@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk.

All change on the Agricola Committee

Jane Reynolds (Chair, 1973–76) writes: '2021 saw us bid farewell to three long-serving members of the Committee who have all taken on important roles within the Club and put in an immense amount of hard work on behalf of us all.'

Firstly, I must pay tribute to **Francis Huntington** (1961–64), Secretary of the Club for 22 years. I think it's fair to say that Francis has kept us all on the straight and narrow for all those years. He is a fount of knowledge on the Agricola Club (including all our Rules & Regulations!), the College and its history and also the village of Wye. Such skills will be hard to replace but, fortunately for us, Francis and Lucy still live in Wye and are happy to offer advice and information when we need it.

Francis unfortunately suffered a minor stroke only a week or two before the Annual Dinner, and so Francis and Lucy were unable to attend. However, your Chair, Jane Reynolds (1973–76) was able to visit them shortly afterwards in order to present Francis with an engraved jug for his years of service. I was also pleased to give **Lucy Huntington** (also 1961–64) a pot of lilies to thank her for all the support and hard work she always put into all the social events held by the Club.



Francis and Lucy Huntington in their garden in Wye



The jug presented to Francis for 22 years of service as the Club Secretary

Secondly, we said goodbye to **Dr John Walters** (1964–70) who has retired as Editor of the *Agricola Journal* after a mammoth stint of 12 years. John took the role on single-handedly to start with and then enlisted the help of **Gill Bond** (1964–67) who had experience of editing and production. As the *Journal* steadily grew, the Club decided to engage a paid Production Editor (Marie Selwood). The current (temporary!) Editor is very relieved and happy to say that Marie is still working with us and handles the production and laying out of the *Journal*.

I'm sure the whole membership of the Club will agree that John has brought the standard (and size!) of the *Journal* on by leaps and bounds, producing high-quality and interesting articles with some wonderful colour photographs. He has set the bar high and will be a hard act to follow!



John and Jane Walters in their garden with the gifts presented to them at the Annual Dinner



David Leaver, former President, with his presentation jug, also for 12 year's service



I am pleased to say that John has not fully retired as he is still a serving member of the Agrícola Committee.

Once again Jane Reynolds was on hand to pop into the garden of John and Jane Walters to take a photo of them with the decanter which was presented to John at the Annual Dinner. I was very pleased to also present Jane with a pot of lilies. Jane Walters did not go to Wye but has been made an Honorary Member of the Club because of the immense amount of work she puts in behind the scenes at all our social events.

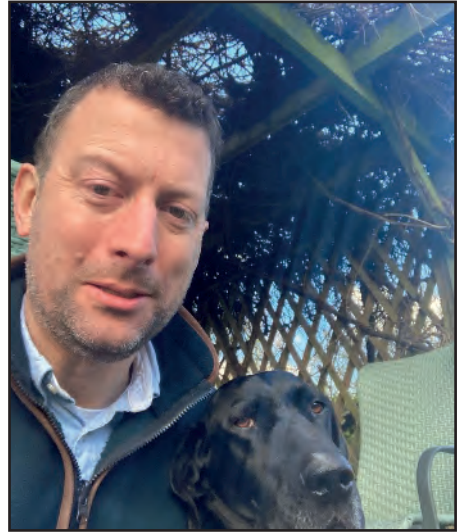
Finally, but by no means least, we have said goodbye to **Professor David Leaver** (postgraduate 1964–67 and staff) who has been at the pinnacle of the Club as our President for the last 12 years.

Whilst remaining quietly in the background at Committee meetings, David has always been on hand to offer firm opinions on many topics if he felt the Committee needed guidance. When your current Chair, Jane Reynolds took over in 2019, she was very grateful to David for his advice on some of the trickier issues facing the Committee, for which I remain most grateful.

I am delighted to say that all of these roles have now been filled:

James Trounce (1976–79) (left) has become the new Agrícola Secretary and we are very grateful to him for stepping up to the mark, since he is also new to the Committee.

We also welcome **Prof Paul Webster** (1964– and staff) (above right) as our new President. I'm sure Paul will be familiar to most of you as the Club Treasurer for many years, a role he has performed with great thoroughness and with a good business eye. I am glad to say that **Charles Course** (1983–84), a long-serving member of the committee,



will be stepping up very soon to take on the Treasurer's role.

Finally, I am delighted to announce that **Martin Rickatson** (1994–97) (pictured above right) has kindly agreed to take on the mantle of Editor of the Journal .

Martin is a journalist by profession and was also editor of the Journal for a few years, some years ago. So, whilst he is fully aware of what he has agreed to, may I stress that producing

the Journal can probably be made easier for the Editor if he has a team around him to help with editing, as I have done this year.

Despite this I know Martin is approaching the role with some trepidation, so please may I ask everyone to help make his life easier by submitting articles for publication, complete with photographs and as close to publication standard as you can manage. Thank you!

Call for contributions

Martin Rickatson, our new Editor, will need material for next year's Journal. So, do please think about sending something to him at:

jmr.agriculture@gmail.com

The Wye Heritage Centre: 'Our past shapes our future'

Karen Mitcalfe (Chair) and Francis Huntington (Hon Sec) of Wye Heritage Committee of Management review the year and look ahead to moving into new premises.

The New Wye Heritage Centre

Now that planning permission has been granted for the refurbishment and repurposing of the College, we can look forward to occupying the new Wye Heritage Centre. Work has started on the preliminary stages of the conversion and we are working with TT's architects on the details of the new Centre. We will have an independent entrance on the High Street, a small courtyard, entrance foyer, a main exhibition room, a large archive storage/study space, a kitchenette and servery, plus an accessible toilet. This will provide the permanent facility to which we

have been aspiring for the last 12 years and allow us to display the history and heritage of the village of Wye and Wye College.

Fitting out the new Centre

TT will be handing over the building as a 'shell', and we will be responsible for the 'fitting out'. We are currently working on the specification for the internal fixtures and fittings. Once the design work has been completed, it will be costed and an appeal launched in order to fund the work.

We very much hope that members of the Agricola Club will want to contribute to



The Heritage Centre will occupy the single storey building and the ground floor of the white building.

this exciting phase of the project. It is our intention to work to the highest standard possible, utilising the very latest techniques in museum and heritage centre layout and display.

Working with the Wye College Agricola Club

We look forward to continuing working with the Agricola Club Committee and the Club membership to deliver a Centre which displays the history and heritage of the College buildings and their varied uses, as well as capturing something of the College's ethos and endeavours 1894–2009. It is vital that all that was experienced and achieved in that period in the fields of agriculture, horticulture, animal and plant sciences, food production and the environment are properly recorded and celebrated.

The Centre is open to the general public on the first and third Saturday of each month.

Once again, we appeal to all alumni to gift, or share with, us any College-related documents, photographs and artefacts that they own and help us to record the diverse history of the College as a centre of learning of worldwide importance.

Archive Working Group

During 2021 we made great progress with cataloguing and filing the ever-expanding collections of documents, photographs and artefacts. Under the leadership of Lucy Huntington, our Archive Working Group, now numbering nine members, meets regularly on



Entrance to the new Heritage Centre

Friday afternoons. Thankfully the backlog of filing has been cleared, and we are now able to concentrate on cataloguing new accessions (gifts to the collections) and on selecting items for our regularly changing displays.

Regular displays

Each month we put together a new display highlighting a particular aspect of the life and times of the village of Wye and/or of the College. By doing this, we aim to extract material from the archives for all to enjoy.

The Centre is open to the general public on the first and third Saturday of each month. These Saturday morning openings have become very popular with a steady stream of visitors enjoying coffee and home-made cake and becoming immersed in the history and heritage of the village of Wye and Wye College.

22 years as your Club Secretary and other reflections

Francis Huntington (1961–64) – Retiring Honorary Club Secretary – looks back over more than two decades of in the Club's service.

One of my projects during the second and third 'lockdowns' has been to prepare the Club's physical and digital files for archiving and to provide key information for our new Secretary. This has led to my reading through AGM and Committee minutes, checking on dates and details of events in the Club Journals, and re-reading my own sundry jottings.

This exercise has reminded me how important it is to retain recorded history which is, in the main, contained within the Agricola Club Journals, the College Principal's reports and the published books and booklets chronicling the history and heritage of the College and its alumni.

My long association with Wye

I was a student at the College 1961–1964 and to my surprise was awarded a Second Class degree in Agriculture. The surprise was the result of having thrown myself into student social activities and student politics, finishing up as Student Union President, somewhat to the detriment of my studies. On graduating I spent three years as an assistant farm manager on a large estate in East Kent. Then, in 1967 I was recruited by Dunstan Skilbeck to be the College's farm manager and spent my early married life until 1974 living at Coldharbour and struggling with work/life balance, nevertheless, finding working with academic colleagues and farm staff immensely stimulating and, only occasionally, frustrating. We then moved to Devon and I

spent 1974–1982 as Farms Director for the Dartington Hall Trust, near Totnes. Then in 1982 we moved to Somerset and I left agriculture, launching and developing, with my wife Lucy, our own horticultural business focusing on garden design and garden design training. In 1998 we relocated ourselves and the business back to Wye, prompted, in part, by wanting to return to the community where our children were born and where we felt most at home. The move coincided with Lucy landing the job of part-time lecturer in Horticulture at the College. We had only been back in Wye for a few months when I was approached by the Club's President, John Hosking, asking if I would consider taking over as Honorary Secretary of the Agricola Club, from Charles Course who was keen to step down. At this point my narrative as your Honorary Secretary starts.

The birth of the Club

Firstly, a little about the Club's history. The Club came into existence in 1902, some eight years after the first South Eastern Agricultural College (SEAC) students arrived at Wye. Until 1946, the Club operated very much as a gentleman's club, and definitely had the air of privilege about it, members being drawn, in the main, from the families of wealthy landowners and farmers. The Annual Dinner was held in London during Smithfield week, usually at a prestigious London restaurant. Early Club Journals chronicle the close association between College and

Club, which has persisted over the whole of its life, but was disastrously broken in 2009 on the closure of the College. Post-World War II, major changes took place: SEAC became Wye College with a Royal Charter and the first women students arrived, as a result of Swanley College in North Kent being absorbed into Wye College.

The Annual Dinner was held in London during Smithfield week, usually at a prestigious London restaurant.

The evolution to become a more broad-based community took some while and, sadly, there was still an element of unspoken chauvinism amongst the male farmers and agriculturalists, who saw themselves somehow superior to female graduates, horticulturalists, environmentalists and, to some extent, postgraduates. Thankfully, attitudes changed in the 1970s and 1980s as courses in the land-based industries were broadened. Nevertheless, it is notable that today's Club membership is thin amongst those groups referred to above.

Club Secretary – 1999–2021

The negotiations for the merger with Imperial College were well advanced when I took up the role of the Club's Honorary Secretary, so there was an immediate need to review the post-merger arrangements between the Agricola Club and Imperial College at Wye. It was decided by Imperial that the Agricola Club would become a Constituent College member of Imperial Alumni. You might have

thought that there would be major benefits of being a part of a larger organisation, but trouble lay ahead. Firstly, we were required to hand over our membership database to Imperial Alumni and our members 'de facto' became alumni of Imperial College. Members were very unhappy with this arrangement as they saw themselves firmly as graduates of Wye College and London University. Imperial addressed their correspondence to Wye alumni as if they were graduates of Imperial – big mistake! There was further disquiet when Imperial's new 'vision' for Wye hove into sight in 2005/06 with the secret development of a plan (Wye Park), for a major research centre and at least 2,000 houses on the Wye College land.

Eventually, in 2006, with the Wye Park vision going nowhere, Imperial College decided to try and back Imperial College at Wye into the University of Kent at Canterbury (UKC), with the focus on Business Management. This heralded another change of the Club's affiliation and a move to be become a part of UKC alumni. This potential loss of identity was highly troubling and not at all what Club members had in mind when they joined the Club on graduation. At this point, we wisely reinstated our own membership database and abandoned the relationship with both Imperial and UKC and successfully negotiated with Imperial College to repatriate our substantial Club funds, which they held!

In 2008 the Club appointed a sub-committee to explore the long-term future of the Club and serious consideration was given to backing ourselves into an established body capable of holding the history of the Club and the College for posterity, for example the Farmers Club or the Worshipful Company of Farmers.

By 2009 the Committee was ready to put to the membership a proposal to secure the future of the Club, elsewhere than at Wye. However, many still felt that an inevitable loss of identity would follow.

Then in June 2009, on the closure of the College, the Club held an 'End of an Era Ball' at Wye. Nearly 800 people attended and College alumni expressed a huge affection for the College and all that it had contributed to their subsequent lives and careers.

Imperial addressed their correspondence to Wye alumni as if they were graduates of Imperial – big mistake!

Immediately after the Ball, Lucy and I had a bit of a lightbulb moment and realised that there was a high probability that all the history, heritage and personal experiences, could be lost in another 'merger', not a prospect that many of us wanted to contemplate. With this thought, the concept of the Wye Heritage Centre began to emerge. It was clear to us that whatever we did, the history and heritage of the College and village needed to be brought together – we needed to share our common interests and roots. We therefore created a structure for Wye Heritage which included Corporate membership, with the Wye College Agricola Club, the Wye Historical Society, the Brook Agricultural Museum and Wye Parish Church, becoming founding Corporate members. For the last 12 years this Journal has carried an annual briefing on Wye Heritage's progress and achievements. You can also find up to date information on the

Wye Heritage website www.wyeheritage.org.uk and elsewhere in this Journal.

So, after 22 years as the Agricola Club's Honorary Secretary, 2021 seemed the right year for me to relinquish my tenure and hand over to a younger group of members to sustain the Club into the future.

Fortunately, this coincided with the owners of the College, developers Telereal Trillium, being able to commit to a long lease for the Wye Heritage Centre within the College's Edwardian buildings.

I certainly hope that this marks a more certain future for the Club, with its spiritual 'home' being firmly within the Wye Heritage Centre, located in a part of the College buildings that many of us remember well.

Inventory of Architectural Features, Fitments & Furnishings of Historical Interest at Wye College in the Care of Telereal Trillium (as of 5 July 2021)

Compiled by Michael Payne (1978–81)

MAIN ENTRANCE

P00/30 THE COLLEGE ARMS, CHERRIES, HOPS AND NAME STONES

Description:

Centrally above the main entrance arch are carved and painted the Coat of Arms of Cardinal John Kempe, 1380–1454, Lord Chancellor of England, Archbishop of York and later Canterbury, Founder of the College of St Gregory, and St Martin at Wye, 1447. Following the re-foundation of the College in 1946 when the Coat of Arms was adopted the shield with three garbs, surmounted by a Cardinal Bishop's hat with fifteen tassels were carved in situ by Kevin Cribb in 1959. They were first painted in 1984 and again in 1989 and 1994. They replaced three Heraldic Shields previously carved in this location and comprising the Coats of Arms of the counties of Kent and Surrey and of John Kempe, which had been installed in 1914. They had been the work of Mrs Jenking, the wife of a student and The Gift of the Agricola Club.

The carved stone arch hood terminates in a square stone carving of cherries and hops at either end. Beneath these are set two rectangular stones with the carved and painted Arms of Imperial at Wye and Wye College, University of London to the left and right respectively. This was carved in Italian marble in 1984 by Ivor Hersey of Canterbury.

AGRICOLA (FRONT) QUAD

M18/07 DINING HALL LEAD RAINWATER FALL PIPE & HEAD 1954

Description:

Second Lead Rainwater Pipe with collection head dated 1954.

Outside east wall of the Dining Hall in the Agricola Quad

M18/08 DINING HALL LEAD RAINWATER FALL PIPE & HEAD 1954

Description:

Third Lead Rainwater Pipe with collection head dated 1954.

Outside east wall of the Dining Hall in the Agricola Quad

M20/13 AGRICOLA QUAD JONES WALL SUNDIAL

Description:

Bronze sundial on the gable wall to the north side of the front or Agricola Quad in 1968/69, opposite the main entrance. Engraved: 'In Memoriam 1899 EAJ 1958 I tell only the sunny hours'. Erected with fund provided through a bequest of Miss E A Jones, sometime member of the Governing Body.



M20/14 AGRICOLA QUAD VICKERS MEMORIAL SUNDIAL

Description:

A large armillary sundial mounted on a pedestal to the centre of the Agricola Quad. (above) Engraved: MAKE TIME SAVE TIME + WHILE TIME LASTS + ALL TIME IS NO TIME + WHEN TIME IS PAST Complete with four plaques: In memory of Vincent Vickers, Staff & Principal 1920-1950; Douglas Vickers RAF Student of Wye College Killed in action 1943; Vickers Memorial They are at ease Their duty done; Thomas Vickers RAF Group Captain DSO Founding Commander of 221 Squadron.

M20/15 AGRICOLA QUAD CENTENARY PLAQUE

Description:

Rectangular brass wall plaque mounted on an oak plinth to commemorate the centenary of the foundation of the Agricola Club.

South-east corner of the Dining Hall in the Agricola Quad.

P00/10 OLD LIBRARY ENTRANCE

Description:

Old Entrance to library, built c.1965 on east side of the front or Agricola Quad. A heraldic shield is carved and painted on either side of the doorway. To the left one with a representation of a Stream with Three Hearts, being that of Dunstan Skilbeck and to the right a representation of a Dolphin painted red, being that of Walter James, 4th Lord Northbourne. These two shields together represent the Principal and the Provost.

MIDDLE QUAD

M18/05 OLD HALL LEAD RAINWATER FALL PIPE & HEAD

Description:

Lead Rainwater Pipe with collection head and decorated with eight-pointed star & Fleur de Lis. Outside Old Hall in the Middle Quad. Collection head and branch now repaired.

M18/06 TWO DINING HALL LEAD RAINWATER FALL PIPE & HEAD 1954

Description:

Two Lead Rainwater Pipes each with a collection head dated 1954.

Outside north-west and south-west corners of the Dining Hall in the Middle Quad

M19/16 MIDDLE QUAD PAIR OF ANTIQUE LANTERNS

Description:

A pair of black painted antique lanterns, one over the entrance to the Department of Agriculture, resembling the two in the Cloister Quad being four sided and suspended by horizontal bar.

M19/17 MIDDLE QUAD 1906 IRON GRILL, GATE & NORTH GATE

Description:

An ironwork grill over the north-west corner exit gate bearing the date 1906, this being the date the quadrangle was built. Another north gate & wrought iron grill separates the buildings from the public footpath.

P00/11 THE ARMS OF HRH QUEEN ELIZABETH THE QUEEN MOTHER

Description:

The Arms of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, Royal Chancellor of the University of London, commemorating the visit of Her Majesty to the College, June 1980 (below). Carved in stone and painted on the south-west buttress to the Dining Hall. Erected at the expense of M D Nightingale of Cromarty, OBE, former student, University Bedell and Deputy Steward of the Royal Manor of Wye.



P00/12 THE ARMS OF HRH PRINCESS ANNE

Description:

The Arms of Her Royal Highness Princess Anne, Royal Chancellor of the University of London, commemorating the occasion of Her Royal Highness's visit to Wye College, June 1984. Carved in stone and painted on a west buttress to the Dining Hall. Erected at the expense of M.D. Nightingale of Cromarty, OBE, former student, University Bedell and Deputy Steward of the Royal Manor of Wye.

P00/39 MIDDLE QUAD HOSPITAL SUPPLY DEPOT INSCRIPTION

Description:

The lintel over the entrance to the former Department of Agriculture bears a Memorial Inscription: "During the Great War 1914–1918, The Wye Way Hospital Supply Depot worked in this building for the wounded of the Allied Armies."

CLOISTER QUAD

M18/03 EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LEAD CISTERN (GALLEONS 1757)

Description:

Lead cistern cast with galleons, anchors, and mermaids. Dated: 1757

Dimensions:

Diameter: 29"

M19/14 CLOISTER QUAD PAIR OF ANTIQUE LANTERNS

Description:

Two antique glazed four-sided lanterns under arches leading respectively to the SCR entrance lobby and H Block lobby. Depicted in illustrations of c.1890 and by C H Hodgeson. Painted black and suspended by horizontal bar.

P00/02 CLOISTER QUAD QUINCENTENNIAL WINDOW

Description:

Painted glass window with the Arms of the Founder of the College, Cardinal John Kempe, and dated 1447-1947. Presented in 1947 by J W Kennard, sometime Clerk to the Governing Body and being the work of C Oswald Skilbeck. It is set into the former front entrance to the College from the High Street via the churchyard, it being a small, formerly gated, archway.

P00/03 CLOISTER QUAD CHRISTINE WOODWARD MEMORIAL PLAQUE

Description:

Small plaque inset in the wall by the doorway from the Cloister Quad into the Parlour, engraved: 'In memory of Christine Woodward MA Librarian of Wye College 1945-47 who died in office on 25th July 1947.'

P00/04 FIFTEENTH-CENTURY DOUBLE DOORWAY TO CELLAR

Description:

Double doorway of fifteenth-century woodwork giving access to the cellars constructed in the underlying chalk. The Wine Cellar is mentioned in the sixteenth-century visitation notes and in the papers of Cardinal John Kempe.

P00/05 WORLD WAR I MEMORIAL

Description:

In bronze with oak surround and inscribed: Pro Patria 1914-1918. It is surmounted with a carved wooden shield bearing the College Crest of three wheat sheaves. The six bronze panels list the names of 127 former students. It was designed and made by WGV Glossop, Building Construction Master, and the crest was carved by Mrs Dunstan the wife of the then Principal. The Memorial was dedicated

by the Bishop of Dover on 11 November 1922, having been unveiled by Colonel (later Lord) F S Cornwallis, an original member of the Governing Body of the South-Eastern Agricultural College. It was originally located and unveiled in the Main Entrance, facing the Porters' Lodge.

P00/06 WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL

Description:

In Caen stone and inscribed with the coloured and gilded Arms of Cardinal John Kempe, the date 1939-1945 and the blue-coloured names of 62 former students by Barry Hart. It was unveiled by Sir John Russell FRS, sometime Lecturer, Fellow of Wye College and President of the Agricola Club, on 29 June 1948. It is located on the west wall, adjacent to the Chapel.

WEST QUAD

M18/04 EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LEAD CISTERN (BIRDS & BERRIES)

Description:

Lead cistern cast with figures, birds, and berries. Moved to the West Quad from Wheelroom Yard (below).

Dimensions:

Diameter: 26"



M19/15 WEST QUAD & NORTH QUAD ANTIQUE LANTERNS

Description:

Two black painted four-sided lanterns in each quad.

NORTHBOURNE ROOM (PRINCIPAL'S STUDY)

M19/01 NORTHBOURNE ROOM CAST IRON FIRE-BACK

Description:

Cast Iron Fire-Back with Wye College Coat of Arms. The Northbourne Room was formerly the Principal's Study and the fire-back, like others such as in the Parlour, Latin School and Registrar's Office, was commissioned by Principal Dunstan Skilbeck.

Dimensions: 18" x 22"

M19/02 NORTHBOURNE ROOM WROUGHT IRON FIRE GRATE

Description:

Wrought Iron Grate with scroll finials and fire dogs.

M19/21 SOUTH FRONT HALL LANTERN

Description:

Four-sided glass lantern in an iron frame suspended by a chain.

M19/22 SENIOR COMMON ROOM CORRIDOR LANTERN

Description:

Four-sided glass lantern in an iron frame suspended by a chain.

M20/11 NORTHBOURNE ROOM SIX BRANCH CHANDELIER

Description:

Brass chandelier with six scroll branches radiating from a central baluster of three spheres, chain suspension and electric fittings.

M20/12 NORTHBOURNE ROOM FIVE WALL LIGHTS

Description:

Five wall lights of two patterns; two of style A and three of style B. All have two scroll branches radiating from a central baluster of three spheres and with electric fittings.

P00/13 NORTHBOURNE ROOM PANELLING & BAS RELIEF CARVING

Description:

The Jacobean carved mantelpiece with wooden surround has been removed at some point since 1905 leaving a gap over the fireplace. The room clad in carved oak wainscot panelling which includes a Bas Relief carving to the upper margin on the left-hand side of the northern wall of a female head facing right with an upraised hand and index finger.

P00/14 NORTHBOURNE ROOM PAINTED GLASS WINDOWS

Description:

Various pieces of stained glass are inserted into the windows of the Northbourne Room on the south front of the College. These include the Arms of John Kempe or his nephew Thomas, as Bishop of London, quartered with two daggers, the Arms of the Diocese; 'NW' and the Flying Horse, the monogram and emblem of the Earls of Nottingham and Winchelsea, who once were the Lords of the Royal Manor of Wye and Hereditary Governors of Wye College until 1946, as well as having been former residents at the College for a period in the late seventeenth century to early eighteenth century. Other examples include an entwined lover's knot, the date 1635, a feather, the emblem of the Prince of Wales together with various other pieces.

The early stained glass from Wye College had later been dispersed, some to St Mary's

Eastwell where the Revd Philip Parsons had been the incumbent. He had also been the Master of the Grammar School and Perpetual Curate of Wye, 1761-1812. In 1952, after the ruinous church of St Mary's was decommissioned, some of the glass was recovered, being returned to Wye College, and restored in the south windows of the Northbourne Room and the Old Hall.

Some of the Eastwell glass, however, was never recovered from the Stained-Glass Studio of Canterbury Cathedral where it had been taken for safe keeping. The painted glass at York Minster in the East Window of the Zouche Chapel originally came from Wye, having been acquired at auction from Sotheby's in 1948. (See the Chapel, Wye College).

SENIOR COMMON ROOM

M19/03 SCR CAST IRON FIRE BACK

Description:

Cast Iron Fire Back, dated 1650, showing St George slaying the dragon but the text above and next to the figures, CURSIUS and NIL DESPERANDUM, are not descriptive. The date of 1650, however, being a year after the execution of Charles I, suggests that nil desperandum demonstrates sympathy with the Royalist cause. Other castings of this fire-back also bear the initials IM, which are likely to be those of the maker of the wooden pattern from which the sand mould for this casting was formed.

Several other fire backs dated to between 1641 and 1650 also bear the same initials and most carry Royalist symbolism. It is impossible to state when this fire-back might have come to Wye College.

Dimensions:

28" x 35"

M19/04 SCR WROUGHT IRON FIRE GRATE & GUARD

Description:

Wrought Iron Grate and fire guard.

M20/10 SCR PAIR OF EIGHT BRANCH CHANDELIERS

Description:

Pair of brass chandeliers, each with eight scroll branches radiating from a central baluster of three spheres, chain suspension and electric fittings.

P00/19 SCR FOUR CARVED WOODEN HEADS TO BEAM ENDS

Description:

A pair of carved wooden heads at each end of the north / south fifteenth-century centre ceiling cross beam in the SCR.

P00/20 SENIOR COMMON ROOM FIREPLACE

Description:

A seventeenth-century surround carved locally from Bethersden Marble. Similar surrounds are found in the Parlour and Latin School. Believed by Sir Albert Richardson to have been based on contemporary Italian pattern book designs.

N.B. There is apparently a small fifteenth-century carving of a lamb, inscribed with a mason's mark in a small, now obscured, recess beside the fireplace.

P00/21 SENIOR COMMON ROOM CORRIDOR CARVING (NOT LOCATED)

Description:

A carved grotesque face of fifteenth-century origin to the cross beam above the doorway to M Block lobby.

P00/35 SCR BUILT IN DESK**Description:**

A wooden desk built into the alcove of the south-west facing window. Twentieth-century with hinged lid.

CHAPEL**M19/30 SIX IRON DOUBLE BRANCH WALL CANDLELIGHTS****Description:**

Black double branch candle sconces with scroll ends to compliment black three branch electric chandelier.

M20/19 JONATHAN MACALISTER ZIMAN MEMORIAL PLAQUE**Description:**

A rectangular brass plaque mounted on the west wall to the right of the communion table engraved: 'In memory of JONATHAN DANIEL MACALISTER ZIMAN A student of the College who died on 1st June 1956'.

D00/01 CHAPEL PEWS**Description:**

Eleven early oak pew ends with moulded edges and ten finials carved with stylistic poppies. Fitted with modern oak seats to form three single pews and one right angled pew, leading to seven seats, two of which are fixed. Brass plaque fixed to pew in front of window, engraved: 'These benches were given by Mrs Armstrong in memory of her daughter Helen who was killed by enemy action at Swanley College on 2nd March 1944.'

The pews were located in the Chapel using a bequest from Mrs Armstrong in memory of her daughter, a student of Swanley Horticultural College who was killed there by a flying bomb.

Some of the pews are from St Mary's Church, Eastwell after World War II; others were

acquired from a Suffolk Church in 1950 by M D Nightingale, a former student.

D00/07 COMMUNION TABLE**Description:**

Converted from one of the original side tables from the Old Hall by increased height to its legs (below).

**P00/01 CHAPEL PAINTED GLASS WINDOW****Description:**

Designed and made by Farrar Bell in 1949 and was the gift of J W Kennard, Clerk to the Governing Body. The two lights have representations of King Henry VI and Cardinal John Kempe copied from the original fifteenth-century glass now in the Zouche Chapel, York Minster. This had been acquired by Mr Acton Surgey, one of the friends of York Minster, from a sale by Sotheby's in 1948, in memory of Mr Wilfred Drake.

Also incorporated into the window several times is the letter 'K', the Arms of the University of London and the wheatsheaf or garb emblem of John Kempe together with the broom plant, *Planata genista*, the Plantagenet's emblem of which King

Henry VI was the last monarch. In the original glass King Henry VI is depicted holding a broom.

A third panel has the representation of Thomas Kempe, nephew of the Cardinal and Bishop of London.

The Chapel was dedicated in 1952 by Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher, Visitor of the College.

P00/24 FIFTEENTH-CENTURY CHAPEL DOOR

Description:

Doorway with fifteenth-century woodwork and iron fittings leading into the Chapel.

P00/36 CHAPEL PAINTED SHIELD

Description:

A painted wooden shield with the ecclesiastical arms of St Gregory & St Martin. Painted by Clement O Skilbeck.

H BLOCK LOBBY & STAIRCASE

P00/08 LINEN FOLD DOOR (TO INNER PARLOUR)

Description:

A low carved linen fold panelled door originally giving access to the Inner Parlour and dating from the fifteenth-century found to the right of the lobby.

P00/09 JACOBEOAN OAK STAIRCASE

Description:

Described and illustrated in 'A History of Renaissance Architecture in England' by Sir Reginald Blomfield. The nine newel posts were originally surmounted by carved wooden Jacobean figures. Seven of these "Ancient Britons" still exist at the College but were removed sometime after 1890.

INNER PARLOUR



D00/06 INNER PARLOUR CUT GLASS CHANDELIER

Description:

Cut glass chandelier fitted with five scroll branches and with facet cut festoons and drops with electric candle fittings.

PARLOUR

M19/05 PARLOUR CAST IRON FIRE BACK

Description:

Cast Iron Fire-Back with Wye College Coat of Arms (above).

Dimensions:

18" x 22"

M19/06 PARLOUR WROUGHT IRON FIRE BASKET AND FIRE DOGS

Description:

Wrought Iron Fire Basket and Fire Dogs

D00/04 PARLOUR CUT GLASS CHANDELIER

Description:

Cut glass chandelier fitted with eight scroll branches and with facet cut festoons and drops with electric candle fittings.

D00/05 PARLOUR BOOKCASE, PANELLING AND SHIELD

Description:

Jacobean panelling and a bookcase with leaded lights either side of fireplace with cupboards below. Formerly these contained books from Crundale Rectory transferred to Wye College by Canon Dr. S G Brade-Birks, on his retirement as Rector in 1977.

The Arms are of Sir William Monyns, of Waldershare in Kent, who was created a Baronet in 1611, and of Jane, his wife, daughter of Roger Twisden Esq, of Rayden Hall, in East Peckham: NB W.S. Morris, in his book of 1842, noted at that time these Arms remained in the oak parlour. He was also strongly of the opinion that Wye College came into the possession of the Monyns in 1610 or previously, as these Arms must have been painted prior to the creation of the Baronetcy, from the absence of the distinguishing badge.

P00/28 PARLOUR FIREPLACE

Description:

A seventeenth-century surround carved locally from Bethersden Marble. Similar surrounds are found in the Senior Common Room and Latin School. Believed by Sir Albert Richardson to have been based on contemporary Italian pattern book designs.

OLD HALL

M19/07 OLD HALL CAST IRON FIRE-BACK

Description:

Cast Iron Fire-Back with thirteen shields of the arms of William Ayloffe (c 1535-84) of Hornchurch, ESSEX, AND HIS WIFE Jane, the daughter of Sir Eustace Sulyard and dated 1610.

Ayloffe, who was a Justice of the Queen's Bench, was descended from a family originally from Kent, their name being commemorated in the village of Boughton Aluph, near to Wye. The fire-back is one of a series on which the Ayloffe arms are displayed. Other known dated examples were cast between 1603 and 1633 and their distribution is in west Kent with a few in the adjoining part of East Sussex, which suggests they were the product of one of the furnaces operating in Kent. The reason they were cast is not known but it is possible that an original fire-back was made for the Ayloffe family and that the shield was subsequently reused by the iron founder to form the decoration on other fire backs cast for houses in the west Kent area. Most of the dated examples bear the letters C and T either side of the date, suggesting that they might be the initials of the founder. A couple of later ones have the initials R and S instead. Most of the dated ones are of considerable size, indicating that they were for impressive fireplaces like that at Wye College. It is highly likely that the Wye example, dated 1610, was acquired when the fireplace was built onto the Hall the following year, though there were not known to be any references to the fire-back before 1894. This was the date when it was displayed at an exhibition of heraldry at the Society of Antiquarians, Burlington House, Piccadilly. The fire-back is damaged in that

a vertical section about 11cm wide is missing from the left side, but this damage is likely to have occurred historically. A suggestion is that it was relocated to the Old Hall from the kitchen range when this was converted upon the acquisition by the South-East Agricultural College. If this were the case it might explain how it came to be on display at the Royal Society of Antiquarians in 1894.

Dimensions:

28" x 48"

M19/08 OLD HALL WROUGHT IRON FIRE DOGS AND BASKET**Description:**

Wrought Iron Fire Dogs and Basket with electric flame effect.

M19/19 OLD HALL CHANDELIER**Description:**

Circular Iron Hoop suspended horizontally from a ball by four chains, and from which hang four round lanterns with electric fitments. Believed to date back to 1894.

M19/20 OLD HALL NINE WALL LIGHTS**Description:**

Nine wall lights, each with two scroll branches radiating from a central baluster of three spheres and with electric fitments.

D00/02 OLD HALL SIX 'ANCIENT BRITONS'**Description:**

Six carved wood and painted, partially clad figures comprising two kilted and bearded chieftains and four female figures. Five of the figures have broken limbs. Originally from newel posts on the Jacobean Staircase.

Dimensions:

Two chieftains 6' high, four females 4'6" high

P00/15 OLD HALL ORIEL WINDOW WITH STAINED GLASS**Description:**

Three panels of painted glass are to be found in the Oriel Window. In the upper centre panel are the fifteenth-century arms of Cardinal John Kempe quartered with the Arms of the See of Canterbury and surmounted by a Cardinal's hat. This glass was purchased in 1952 on the disposal of the artefacts from St Mary's Church, Eastwell following de-commissioning after World War II bomb damage. It had formerly been at Wye but inserted in St Mary's by Revd. Philip Parsons, Rector of Eastwell, Perpetual Curate of Wye, and Master of Wye College, 1761–1812.

The lower centre panel is in memory of Dunstan Skilbeck MA, Principal of Wye College, 1946–1965. It was installed in 1960, devised by J Donald Sykes, designed by Gordon Davies with Michael Rust, and made at the Canterbury Cathedral Glass Studio under the direction of Dr Sebastian Ströbl, being painted by Bettina Kopperman.

The right-hand middle panel is in memory of Evelyn Dunbar, the only female World War II Artist and first wife of Dr R R W Folley. It was painted by John Ward RA.

P00/16 OLD HALL WALL BRACKET**Description:**

Mediaeval stone bracket with carved indentations to the east wall, right of the oriel window. This was probably the stand for a religious statue.

P00/17 OLD HALL OAK PANELLING**Description:**

Fifteenth-century wainscot panelling to the north wall of the Old Hall, separating it from the Parlour. It bears some initials possibly

carved by Grammar School pupils. There are also two small carved and painted angels, one at either end of the panelling, at a height of about ten feet.

P00/18 DANIEL HALL MEMORIAL PLAQUE

Description:

An oval plaque of blue slate, bearing the arms of Kent and Surrey (below). It was erected to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the first Principal of the South-Eastern Agricultural College, A Daniel Hall MA, who met with the first student members on 14 November 1894. It was designed and inscribed by Michael Rust, Sculptor of Hastingleigh and unveiled by the Principal, Professor John H Prescott on 14 November 1994.



DINING HALL

M19/24: DINING HALL BELL IN TURRET

Description:

Bell in turret above Dining Hall.

M20/09 DINING HALL PAIR OF EIGHT BRANCH CHANDELIERS

Description:

Pair of brass chandeliers, each with eight scroll branches radiating from a central baluster of three spheres, chain suspension and electric fittings.

P00/37 DINING HALL EIGHT PAINTED SHIELDS

Description:

Eight painted wooden shields hand painted with the arms of: Boughey, Northbourne, Surrey, Wye College (complete with cap and tassels), Middlesex (missing), Hardy, Kent, and the University of London. Painted by Clement O Skilbeck.

P00/38 DINING HALL TAPESTRY

Description:

A panel of Flemish verdure tapestry with female figures representing agriculture and music on a blue field.

Dimensions:

126" x 60"

WHEELROOM

M19/10 WHEELROOM WROUGHT IRON FIRE DOGS AND BASKET

Description:

Wrought Iron Fire Dogs and Basket with electric flame effect.

P00/22 WHEELROOM QUEEN ELIZABETH CORONATION WINDOW

Description:

A panel of painted glass to commemorate the 1953 coronation mounted to the centre window facing the High Street. It bears the Arms of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II enclosed by the Order of the Garter surmounted by the Crown and adjacent ER monogram. It is dated 1953 below and has a bell, the symbol of the designer Farrar Bell. N.B. Damaged by vandal late 2017 or early 2018.



**P00/23 WHEELROOM PAIR
OF CARTWHEELS**

Description:

Two wooden cartwheels, one suspended from the ceiling, one mounted in the apex of the north wall. These are the feature from whence the room gained its name.

REGISTRY OFFICE

M19/28 REGISTRY OFFICE FIRE SAFE

Description:

Steel Milner's fire-resistant single key lock safe mounted in chimney breast.

LATIN SCHOOL

M19/09 LATIN SCHOOL

CAST IRON FIRE BACK

Description:

Cast Iron Fire-Back with Wye College Coat of Arms.

Dimensions

18" x 22"

D00/03 LATIN SCHOOL

'ANCIENT BRITON'

Description:

Carved wood and painted, partially clad figure comprising a female figure mounted on a wall plinth (left). Formerly located in the South Porch Lobby, originally from a newel post on the Jacobean Staircase.

Dimensions: Height: 4'6"

**P00/25 LATIN SCHOOL PAIR OF
WOODEN FOUR LIGHT CHANDELIERS**

Description:

Two cruciform wooden chandeliers, each having four electric fittings.

P00/26 LATIN SCHOOL FIREPLACE

Description:

A seventeenth-century surround carved locally from Bethersden Marble. Similar surrounds are found in the Parlour and Senior Common Room. Believed by Sir Albert Richardson to have been based on contemporary Italian pattern book designs.

P00/32 LATIN SCHOOL PAIR OF WALL LIGHTS

Description:

Two carved gilt wall lights, each having two scroll branches with stylised acanthus leaf decoration radiating from a similarly decorated circular plinth and with electric fitments. North wall of Latin School.

P00/33 LATIN SCHOOL GRAMMAR SCHOOL MASTER'S DESK

Description:

Master's desk with hinged lid built in under the window ledge now on the south side of the Latin School lobby.

P00/34 LATIN SCHOOL WALL CUPBOARD

Description:

A cupboard with shelves and two ogee headed doors built into the wainscot beneath the westerly window on the south wall of the Latin School. Signs of original location of bracket hinges are evident.

LATIN SCHOOL GARDEN

M19/23 LATIN SCHOOL PERGOLA 1894–1994

Description:

An iron trellis-work pergola installed in the Latin School Garden in 1994 (together with a statue transferred from Withersdane). This commemorates the centenary of the establishment of the South-Eastern Agricultural College.

M20/18 LATIN SCHOOL GARDEN CENTENARY PLAQUE

Description:

A rectangular plaque located on the west end of the Latin School with black filled engraved inscription: THE LATIN SCHOOL WYE

COLLEGE Teaching first commenced here in 1447. In 1894 the South-Eastern Agricultural College was established. In celebration of its Centenary, this garden was redesigned and replanted with support from the Hardy Fund and the Worshipful Company of Gardeners.

P00/27 ITALIAN CARVED MARBLE FIGURE 'HARVEST'

Description:

Italian carved marble figure representing 'Harvest' on a cement plinth.

Dimensions:

Height: 50"

P00/31 LATIN SCHOOL GARDEN CARVED STONE

Description:

Located on the exterior of the Wheelroom Chimney at a height of about fifteen feet is an inset rectangular stone carved with two weathered features side by side, presumed to be Coats of Arms or figures and possibly representing the Arms of Monyns-Twysdens or St Gregory & St Martin.

WHEELROOM YARD

M19/11 THE QUEEN MOTHER WROUGHT IRON GATE 1958

Description:

Ornamental Wrought Iron Gate installed in 1958 commemorating the first visit of HRH Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother as Chancellor of the University of London.

EAST GARDEN

M18/02 FOUNTAIN & LEAD STATUE OF MALE INFANT

Description:

Figure in lead of a nude male Cherub holding a small bowl with three dolphin supports. The fountain was a memorial to M J R Dunstan,

Principal 1902-1922, and Mrs Dunstan, presented by their son Eric Dunstan 1968. Fountain vandalised Christmas 1995 and figure stolen. Lead fountain with dolphin feet currently in the Agricola Quad. Illustrated by C H Hodgeson in 'A Visitor's Guide to Historic Wye College'.

Dimensions: Total Height: 4' 9"

M19/29 EAST GARDEN WROUGHT IRON GATES

Description:

Pair of wrought iron gates between the East Garden and the Service Yard, one mounted to a brick pillar, the other on a cast iron post.

P00/07 EAST GARDEN WALL PLAQUE

Description:

Limestone plaque set below the Oriel Window of the former. Inscribed: 'THE FOUNTAIN IN THIS GARDEN WAS GIVEN IN GRATEFUL MEMORY OF MALCOLM DUNSTAN PRINCIPAL OF WYE COLLEGE 1902 – 1922 AND OF EDITH DUNSTAN HIS WIFE FOR THOSE TWENTY YEARS THEY DEVOTED THEIR LIVES TO WYE AND ALL THOSE WHO LIVED THERE'. Erected in 1968, relating to the presentation of the fountain by Eric Dunstan in memory of his parents.

N.B. The East Garden was created in c.1950 on the site of a former storage yard.

GUINNESS HOP LABORATORY BUILDING

P00/29 GUINNESS HOP LABORATORY FOUNDATION STONE

Description:

Foundation Stone set in west end gable wall of the former Laboratory Building inscribed: 'The Guinness Hop Research Laboratory opened by the Right Hon. the Earl of Iveagh C.B., C.M.C., on Oct. 5th. 1935'.

JUBILEE BUILDING

P00/47 JUBILEE BUILDING 1977 DEDICATION PLAQUE

Description:

Engraved plaque to mark the opening in 1977.

BOTANY LABORATORY

P00/40 BOTANY LABORATORY EXTERNAL TERRACOTTA PANELS

Description (South to North):

- a) Cricket & Spider
- b) Hen & Chick
- c) Adam & Eve
- d) Sheep & Scull
- e) Beetle & Beetle

ZOOLOGY LABORATORY

P00/41 ZOOLOGY LABORATORY EXTERNAL TERRACOTTA PANELS

Description (South to North):

- a) Three Bulls
- b) Hedgehogs & Shrews
- c) Five Birds

NEW LECTURE THEATRE

P00/42 THE COLLEGE ARMS

Description:

Three garbs carved in stone and mounted on the wall facing Olanteigh Road.

RUSSELL LABORATORIES

P00/43 RUSSELL LABORATORIES OPENING CEREMONY PLAQUE

Description:

Terracotta plaque on wall of internal courtyard from the opening of the Laboratories by Director of the ARC Unit, Louis Wain, in 1969.

P00/44 RUSSELL LABORATORIES 1968 FOUNDATION STONE

Description:

Rectangular stone engraved: 'THE RUSSELL LABORATORIES 1968'.

P00/45 RUSSELL LABORATORIES EXTERNAL TERRACOTTA PANELS

Description (South to North):

- a) Brassica
- b) Rain gauge, anemometer & thermometer
- c) Night & Day
- d) Pests & Pollinators

STUDENTS UNION

P00/46 STUDENTS UNION DEDICATION PLAQUE

Description:

Engraved plaque mounted on wall to the left of the female toilets(!): 'This Building was opened on 27th June 1974 by The Most Reverend. His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury Arthur Michael Ramsey, P.C., D.D. Visitor to the College'

NOTA BENE

CHURCHYARD MEMORIAL PLAQUES

Memorial Plaques (currently 19 and 3 missing) to former members of staff located on the churchyard side of the west wall to the Latin School Garden.

©Michael D Payne 9 December 2021

Please note the following:

Most of the artefacts should remain within the College buildings even when it is developed. The original list was compiled 7 July 2018 and submitted with regard to the planning application so most of the artefacts should be regarded as fixtures and fittings that would be protected by listed building status and planning conditions. The developers are aware of their responsibility for the safe custody of other more movable elements and have worked with Wye Heritage to ensure this continues to be reviewed.

We owe Michael Payne (1978–81) huge thanks for collating and recording all these items, which must have taken hours of work. They are now recorded for posterity, thank you – Ed.

The redevelopment of the College Campus

Francis Huntington (1961–64) – Wye village resident and Agricola Club member.

In order to update Club members on the various parts of the former College Estate, I have set out the current 'stage of play' for each site, as far as I understand it.

[I] Telereal Trillium (TT)

The Main Campus

TT received planning permission to convert the Medieval and Edwardian buildings to residential accommodation following a public enquiry in February 2021. Work started last autumn and the stripping out of the buildings and the demolition of 1960s additions was completed during February this year. TT's architects are now working on the detailed plans for the conversion and the essential archaeology which goes with this type of development. If you want to find out more details, they can be found on the Ashford Borough Council's planning portal, using the reference 17/00567.

Squires Hostel

TT have been granted planning permission to convert Squires to four individual cottages with associated parking as a part of the planning permission referred to above.

Wolfson Student Hostel.

TT sold this property to a local builder with planning permission to demolish the hostel and replace it with a terrace of six houses, these are now occupied and have fitted into the streetscape remarkably well.

30–32 High Street

Work is proceeding on this development to provide three refurbished houses and three new builds. The completion date is not known.

ADAS Site

This site was included in the February 2021 planning enquiry, whilst most of the objections were dealt with by the inspector, there is an outstanding matter of the treatment of sewage and English Nature's concern that additional housing in the Stour valley will adversely affect the water quality downstream and in particular at Stodmarsh, west of Canterbury. TT have resubmitted their applications, with an 'on-site' package treatment plant, to try and overcome this problem.

Occupation Road – formerly part of Wye College's Horticultural Department

Like the ADAS site, this site was included in the February 2021 planning enquiry, whilst most of the objections were dealt with by the inspector there is an outstanding matter of the treatment of sewage and English Nature's concerns over sewage treatment referred to above. TT have resubmitted their applications with an 'on-site' package treatment plant.

Wye School

As previously reported TT have leased the Kempe Centre site, including the old hop garden, to 'Wye School', the new secondary school. Pupil numbers have now reached their maximum. All the students are now taught in permanent buildings which include a very fine sports hall and equally impressive assembly hall and the new multi-use games area.

Outside school hours, the excellent sports and assembly halls and other facilities are available for community use. A number of successful events have already been held there, including our own Club Dinner. It is anticipated that once Covid19 restriction have been fully lifted, these assets will be a valuable addition to the village's resources.

Other TT property yet to be developed

The 1960s and 1970s laboratories, the Carr lecture theatre, the squash courts, the Russell laboratories, and the Student's Union building have yet to be considered for development. Doubtless planning applications will come forward in the next few years.

[II] Imperial College's land and property not sold to Telereal Trillium

The list below summarises the state of play at the point of going to press.

Farmland

It is understood that the main block of farmland has been sold to the previous agricultural tenant.

Coldharbour

Coldharbour farmhouse, farm buildings, three bungalows and the adjacent land have now been sold. The new owner's plans have not been disclosed.

Beagles Kennels

The kennels site has received planning permission for a domestic dwelling.

Former pig unit, sheep unit and poultry unit

These have all been sold. The new owners are in the process of the submitting various planning proposals, some of which have been granted, some of which have been refused.

Silks Farm

The parts of the site not previously in private ownership have been sold to a group who have lodged a planning application to convert the remaining farm buildings into further private housing.

Withersdane

Following Promis Clinic's withdrawal from the site, the buildings and gardens have been sold by Imperial College to a private Italian University by the name of Niccolo Cusano Italian University London. They have been granted the planning permissions that they need to operate. Renovation was well advanced when the pandemic hit. However, it is still unclear when the first students will arrive. (See page 191 for a picture of Withersdane House in its Victorian heyday.)

Harwood House

This former housing for postgraduate families has been sold to a London-based developer who has submitted plans to reconfigure and add to the dwellings to make them a profitable investment to sell or lease. The current tenants are not having their leases renewed or have been served notices to vacate.

Corrections to and comments on the previous Journal

We are grateful for the following contributions from members: please keep them coming!

A 1950s cricketer ...

Joy Larkcom (1954–57) identifies:

Many thanks to Jane and the support team for keeping the Journal afloat. Do hope you succeed. RE requests for the names in photos. On p 119 of the 2020–2021 issue, top photo of a 1950s men's hockey team, 2nd left in front row is Keith Chilton. I hope that is the correct spelling, rather than Chiltern. He was a fellow student on the 1954–57 Horticultural course, and later returned, I think, to do a Rural Environmental course.

Was this a sign?

Tim Threadgold (1954–57) clarifies:

As regards the photo on page 217, John Walters obviously used editorial artistic licence – maybe to encourage some correspondence from others – as I sent him the photo. It was a real-life incident, not a prank. The bus for some reason had been on the wrong side of the road, got too close to the Old Flying Horse, and collected the pub's hanging sign before coming to a halt. I don't think the two people were students.

Also from Tim Threadgold:

The photo on Page 83 is from 1956 when Brian Lovelidge won Victor Ludorum with 51 points from David Hopcraft. Standing next to Brian, the Victrix Ludorum with 57 points was Jennifer Whetter (1955–58) who also shared the title in 1957. The other two in the photo are presumably the runners-up – David

Hopcraft (1955–58) with 49 points and Cynthia Wright (1954–57) with 45 points. The local *Kent Messenger* published a photo of the two winners.

Comments

Dr Bill Silvey (pictured below) FRSA, JP (Qual) (1960–63) writes:

Dear Chairwoman Reynolds

Congratulations to all the stalwart and exuberant Members of the Wye College Agricola Club Committee for keeping and preserving the legacy of a great fraternity and the esteemed status of the graduates for over 100 years. It is through reading about



the stories and roles of graduates that gives one pride that a 'can do' attitude had been imbued into our professional and personal lives having been a product of the College.

In writing this note I really want to express my personal gratitude for the education, sense of social responsibility and scientific honesty I received and experienced at Wye College. These attributes have served me well over my 60-plus years since graduation. I was equipped academically, physically (especially the hands-on-skills derived from my 'forced' stint and jobs as a farm labourer in the UK) and with a high degree of confidence to succeed in an array of jobs as a leader, innovator, educator and investor in my entire working life.

Despite all sorts of challenges, please keep up the good work!

PS: Please convey my best wishes to my peer, Francis Huntington, who may vaguely remember the Eurasian from Hong Kong.

Agricola Club Members and Rotary International

Sent in by **Murray Mylechreest** (1955–58):

Rotary International was founded in 1905 in the USA and now has 1.4 million members in over 200 countries worldwide. It would not be surprising if there were Agricola Club members who were also members of Rotary International either overseas or in Great Britain and Ireland.

I have travelled to many places at home and overseas and met many fellow Rotarians and a few Agricola Club members but none to my knowledge members of both organisations.

Rotary has aims to serve communities at home and overseas. For example, a major project is to help eliminate Polio by raising funds for vaccinating people. The success of

this project over 35 years has been to bring the situation to where the disease is now only present in two countries, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Each Rotary Club also assists its local community in its own projects such as providing food parcels at Christmas to people in need. There is also a social side to each Club.

Agricola Club members (both men and women) who might be interested in joining or assisting are able to find out more about Rotary clubs in their area by contacting one of the following:

- 1 Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland, Kinwarton Road, Alcester, Warwickshire, B49 6BP.
- 2 Rotary International, One Rotary Centre, 1660 Sherman Avenue, Evanston, Illinois, 60201-3698, USA.
- 3 A local Rotary club or Rotarian known to them.
- 4 I am a member of Worcester Rotary Club and would be very willing to be contacted by any Agricola Club member.

Might I suggest any Agricola members who are already Rotarians should contact Murray. A whole new group with a common interest could be formed! – Ed.

Finally ...

Catherine Chatters (née Black) (1983–86) would like to point out that on p 202 of the 2019–2020 Journal (the one before last) that she was referred to as Mrs Caroline Chatters, which is obviously incorrect as her name is Catherine! We apologise to you!

Agricola Club

Summer Hog Roast

Sunday, 3 July 2022 at 12 noon
Roves Farm, Sevenhampton, Swindon,
Wilts SN6 7QG

By kind invitation of Rupert (1973–76) & Jo Burr
with salads, puddings, cheese,
bar & hot drinks all included

Please do come and join us for a big social gathering in a barn.

Please pay & book in advance:

**Application form on a green page at the back of the Journal or to
book and pay online please contact.**

Ali Wright (née Gunner) on
aliwright8@aol.com

Non-Agricola Wye Alumni also very welcome
Closing date for applications Monday 13 June 2022

Wye College Agricola Club AGM

Minutes of the 69th Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 30 October 2021 at 5.30pm at Wye School, Olantigh Road, Wye.

Present

David Leaver (President and Chair), Malcolm Alexander, Chris Baines, Berkeley Hill, Michael Payne, Jane Reynolds, Gary Saunders, James Trounce (Secretary), John Walters, Paul Webster (Treasurer) and c. 20 Members.

The Chairman welcomed Members to the meeting.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Sue Atkinson, Charles Course, Ken Crundwell, Chris Dove, Buster Humphreys, Francis Huntington, Richard Long, Ian Lucas, John Mansfield

2 Minutes – confirm the Minutes of the 68th AGM published in the Journal

It was resolved that the Minutes of the 68th AGM were a true record.

3 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4 Chairman's Report

The Committee Chairman, Jane Reynolds, introduced herself briefly and gave a summary of her life and career since Wye. The past year had been a turbulent one for the Club; there had been some conflict over the development of the College buildings, involving WyeCrag and Wye Heritage, with the Club trying to maintain a neutral path.

There were changes within the Committee; Francis Huntington had resigned and David Leaver was standing down as President, with John Walters also leaving his role as Journal Editor. Jane

thanked them all for their many years of service to the Club. There were two new Committee members, Chris Baines and Michael Payne.

David Leaver agreed there had been changes in the last year, but that was not necessarily a bad thing.

5 Secretary's Report

The Secretary, James Trounce, explained his background before, during and after Wye. He had taken on the role of Secretary from Francis Huntington part-way through the year and was still learning the ropes. He paid tribute to Francis for his 22 years as Secretary, and referred members to Francis' last Secretary's Report, published in the Journal.

Committee business had continued, with meetings held via Zoom because of the coronavirus pandemic. The College development plans had played a large part, involving interaction with Wye Heritage, WyeCrag and Telereal Trillium.

Since completion of the planning appeal, the Committee had focused on other issues, such as planning the AGM and Dinner, and looking forward to a summer event in 2022, possibly a joint occasion with John Magnay's Wye 70s group.

Two vacancies on the Committee had been filled by Chris Baines and Michael Payne, and the process of updating the Club website and e-mail communication system had been initiated – the latter would make the sending of e-mail

newsletters far easier.

Raising the point that Wye students had been recognised for their interesting way of thinking and open-mindedness, JT suggested that this spirit needed to be kept alive. One thought might be an Agricola Talk/Lecture, where Wye graduates would speak on topics relevant to the wider industry going forward – these would be in online and recorded format. He also encouraged other cohorts to consider forming discussion groups to recollect times at Wye and talk about current topics.

As well as the existing Club merchandise as detailed in the Journal, Committee were considering clothing items such as a gilet and polo shirt with the College shield, and a sweatshirt or hoodie with Theo the tortoise.

The Secretary concluded by acknowledging the support of Jane Reynolds (Chair), Francis Huntington (Retiring Secretary) and Siân Phelps (Database Administrator).

6 Treasurer's Report and to receive the Club accounts for 2020–2021

The Treasurer, Paul Webster, presented the examined Club accounts.

Some new members had joined, so subscription income was slightly up from last year.

There had been no Dinner or Hog Roast, and few sales.

The main expenditure had been on the 2020/21 Journal (£19.1k so far, contribution from Memorial Fund).

There was a small surplus of £231.

The accounts were accepted and approved by the meeting.

7 Memorial Fund – Trustees Report and Accounts 2020–2021

The Treasurer confirmed that the Trustees had already approved the accounts at an earlier meeting.

Because of the coronavirus situation, none of the activities usually supported had taken place, so there had been no payments.

The Treasurer asked members to be in touch if they knew of any Club members in need of financial help.

The examined Accounts for the Memorial Fund as a whole showed a deficit of £8.5k on a net dividend income of £12k, but this was outweighed by an increase in the value of the investments of over £75k (compared to last year's loss of £52k) because of improvements in the stock market and changes in the portfolios.

During the year, the Trustees had been in discussion with their advisors, Messrs Candour, with a view to diversifying the holdings, particularly because the Fund was considered over-weighted towards UK stocks. Due to their advice, some of the Charifund holdings were moved to European units.

Chris Baines raised a query about investing in ethical funds. The Treasurer explained that had been looked at some years ago, when there were a variety of member interests, it had not been proceeded with. The present division was working well. Chris Baines mentioned the possibility of less risk by utilising exchange-traded funds. The Treasurer summarised with the statement – 'Nobody beats the market!'

8 Appointment of Independent Examiners of the Accounts for 2020–2021

The Treasurer again recommended that Chavereys be reappointed as they had served the Club well and each year, they

deduct part of their bill as a contribution to the charity. Agreed.

9 Journal Editor's Report

John Walters was retiring as Editor to pursue other interests. The Chairman thanked him for his efforts and congratulated him on behalf of the Club for the Journals he had produced; these sentiments were endorsed by all present.

Jane Reynolds explained there was currently no Editor as such – for the coming year, she would be co-ordinating a team who would divide up and edit the content, and send it on to the Production Editor to make ready for publication.

10 Elections

Committee: 2 vacancies had been filled, but 2 remained – there had been no further nominations so far..

President: 1 nomination had been received, Paul Webster. David Leaver affirmed that he couldn't be more pleased. It had been a pleasure to hold the post of President for over 12 years. He detailed some of his experiences since arriving at Wye from Newcastle in 1964, and confirmed that he had come across the influence of Wye wherever he went.

Vice Presidents: Dr Graham Milbourn was elected for life; there were no other nominations.

Honorary Membership: No nominations had been received.

11 Future plans for Club events

Jane Reynolds reported that a BBQ was being considered for next year's event, and that members should 'watch this space!'.

12 Report on Wye Heritage Centre

Francis Huntington had supplied a brief summary report which was read by James Trounce. Members were referred to the

report published in the Journal for a detailed account.

The Wye Heritage Committee were pressing ahead working with Telereal Trillium's architects to deliver the long-hoped-for permanent Centre, which would be the focus for members and a 'home' for the Club for the future. It was hoped to be opening in 2023/2024. The outline plans were published in the Journal, and had been on display in the Heritage Centre during the afternoon.

13 Update on the redevelopment of the Wye Campus

Francis Huntington had again supplied a brief summary report, which was read by James Trounce. Members were referred to the article in the current Journal.

Work had started on the Medieval and Edwardian College buildings, and clearance of the 1950s and 1960s buildings at the rear to make way for car parking.

Discussed that there may be scope for conversations between WyeCRAG and Telereal Trillium to explore if any access concessions might be obtained

In response to a question from the floor, Chris Baines explained about the two planning applications other than the main College site, which had been turned down by the Planning Inspector. This was due to a general block on local planning applications, resulting from water quality issues at Stodmarsh Nature Reserve. The main College site development was not affected as the level of occupation did not constitute a change.

14 Any other business

There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 6.45 pm.

Wye College Agricola Club – Notice of Annual General Meeting

Please note that the 70th Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday 30 September 2022 on Zoom at 5.30 pm. Details will be sent out later via e-newsletter or contact the Chair on info@janesgardendesign.com

Agenda

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Apologies for absence | 8 Appointment of Independent Examiners of the Accounts for 2021–2022 |
| 2 Minutes – confirm the minutes of the 69th AGM published in the Journal. | 9 Journal Editor's Report |
| 3 Matters arising | 10 Future plans for Club events |
| 4 Chairman's Report | 11 Report on the Wye Heritage Centre |
| 5 Secretary's Report | 12 Update on the redevelopment of the College Campus |
| 6 Treasurer's Report – and to receive the Club accounts for 2020–2021 | 13 Any other business |
| 7 Memorial Fund – Trustees Report and Accounts 2020–2021 | |

News of members

The following pages bring both good and sad news: deaths and general updates, followed by obituaries.

Deaths

Margaret McKendrick (1945–48) died peacefully on 11 January 2022 after a short illness. *See Obituaries.*

Peter J Adams (1946–49).

Eric Vidal (1946–49).

Jean Elsie Cockett, formerly Hull (née Dobell) (1947–50) died 7 October 2021. *See Obituaries.*

Eric Aldie Neilson Mercer (1948–51) died 17 October 2019 aged 93.

Vera Medley (née Brand) (1948–51) died on 18 July 2021 after a short illness. *See Obituaries.*

Dr Mary (Molly) Duckworth (née Pybus) (1951–53 and staff 1953–1958) died May 2020. *See Obituaries.*

Michael Tollemache (1951–54).

Thomas Ross Houghton (1951–54) died 20 September 2017.

Francis James Jolley, known as 'Sam' (1951–54) died on 22 January 2021.

Ken C Baxter (1953–57).

Shirley Palmer (nee Cureton) (1953–56) died 20 January 2020. *See Obituaries.*

John Michael Daleymount (1954–57), died October 2021. *See Obituaries.*

Dr James A Nott (1955–58).

Betty Balmain (1956–60). Betty died on 7 April 2021 following a number of strokes. She was a lecturer at Newton Rigg in the Forestry Department until she retired; she remained in Penrith for the rest of her life.

Elizabeth Walker (1957–60) died peacefully at home after a losing battle with cancer on 31 October 2021. *See Obituaries.*

David Collinge (1957–60) died 10 October 2021. *See Obituaries.*

Mike Edge died June 2021. He was on the staff in 1957 and worked on the Pig Unit.

Tony E H Gardener (1957–1960) died on 29 August 2021, aged 84. *See Obituaries.*

Lawrence D Smith (1958–61) died on 7 February 2021. *See Obituaries.*

Prof Bill Hill (1958–61) died on 17 December 2021 in Edinburgh at the age of 81. *See Obituaries.*

Roger Hobcraft (1958–61) died on 16 April 2021. *See Obituaries.*

Tony Biggs (1958–61) student and staff, died July 2021. *See Obituaries.*

Christian Curtis (née Curle) (1959–63), 5 May 1939–12 September 2021. *See Obituaries.*

Frances Biggs (1960–63) wife of Tony, pre-deceased him in 2016.

Malcolm Withnall (1962–64) died on 20 October 2021 after a long battle with progressive supranuclear palsy. He is survived by his wife **Anna (née Whyte)** (1962–67), two daughters, Rebecca and Victoria, and four grandchildren. A service of thanksgiving paid tribute to his 50-year contribution to the British fruit-growing industry as a grower, a college lecturer and a writer of articles and books.

David Atkinson (1965–68) died summer 2021, aged 76. *See Obituaries.*

Dr Sue Hunter (1965–68) died April 2021. She came to Wye as a Postgraduate, working in Prof Louis Wains' lab. She was married to **Chris Hunter** (1962–65), who became Head of Biology at the University of the West of England. Chris died in (approx) 2011.

Mary Blustin (née Evans) (1966–69) BSc Plant Science, died 6 January 2022. See *Obituaries*.

Dr Malcolm Levett (1967–70) died on 28 April 2010. See *Obituaries*.

Richard Tustian (1968–69) died on 30 March 2020. See *Obituaries*.

Vicky Lambert (née Charlotte Victoria Wheeler) (1969–72) died March 2021.

Sheila Masterman (née Clarke) (1969–72) died September 2020. Affectionately known as 'Clarke'E'.

Kevin Witherby (1970–73) died December 2021. See *Obituaries*.

Paul Kentish (1972–2009, staff) died February 2022. He started at Wye in January 1972 as Advisory Programmer and progressed

to Head of IT Services for the College. He oversaw the development of computing and the networking of computers at Wye for the next 35 or so years. It was down to him that the College kept abreast of the technical developments in the world of computing. One of his later projects was the involvement of Wye in the construction of a Metropolitan Area Network linking all the universities in Kent by microwave data transmission. It was, of course, known as the Kentish MAN.

Bill James Mawson Howe (1973–76) died in February 2021 from a sudden and unexpected heart attack.

Will George (1976–79) died 14 August 2021. See *Obituaries*.

Gillian Mellor, née Duckworth (1978–81) died November 2020. See *Obituaries*.

Joanna Pazowski (1991–94) died in 2020.

Jo Elaine Tinkler (1991–94, then staff in the Estates Dept) died in 2020.

Sue Cheveley (1993–96) died suddenly of a heart attack in 2020.

Members' news

1950s

Olive Aburrow (1950–53) has clocked in to say she is dependent on other people now and is housebound.

John Palmer (1953–56) wrote to say that his wife Shirley (née Cureton) 1953–56) had died in January 2020. She is survived by three children, (Malcolm, Kate and Mark) and four grandchildren. John commented on how much he enjoys the Journal and he thought it much improved.

Betty Tensen (1956–59) wrote from her home in Alberta, Canada, where she lives,

I understand, in a retirement home. She is glad to report that everyone there has been triple-vaccinated so now enjoy more freedoms than before. They were able to attend Christmas services, and she is now learning to play hand drums and other rhythm instruments.

Betty is still driving but also has a scooter so was able to enjoy a trip to Valley Zoo in Edmonton last summer. She admits to walking very slowly these days and only with a walker. Betty is fortunate in having lots of family who live near enough for her to visit at weekends. She also has a garden which she enjoys tending in the summer. Last

year her Amaryllis flowered in August and September. It has to be remembered that this part of the world has hot, dry summers with rain coming mainly as thunderstorms. Snow generally covers everything from November through to March

Caroline Thompson (1957–60) writes: 'I am now fully retired and living in Woodstock where I am able to walk to all the services I need and also enjoy the local area.'

Revd David Gooday (1957–61) would like to mention that he now lives in Eswatini!. He doubts that anyone has ever heard of it but would like to point out that it is the new name for Swaziland (and he has not moved house!). He mentioned that he intends to try and raise trout in the Eswatini highveld!.

Last year David raised the question about whether the Agricola Club should amalgamate with another like-minded body such as the Worshipful Company of Gardeners. David is concerned that in time the Agricola Club will cease to exist and has therefore brought the subject to our attention again this year and widened his suggestions to include possibly merging with other Agricultural Colleges/Universities that are still thriving.

Jane Reynolds, the Chair of the Club would like to re-assure David that this subject will be brought up at the next Agricola Committee meeting for discussion. However, by way of reassurance, she would like to point out that long after the final Alumni of Wye has departed, it is planned that our legacy will live on through the Wye Heritage Centre which although currently based in the Latin School, will soon be moving into more spacious premises within the old College buildings. Wye Heritage currently holds all the Agricola archives and is the custodian of all the history of the College and village of Wye. Hopefully, 100 years from now, our descendants will

still be able to go and view old photographs and written documents about the wonderful College that their forebears went to!

1960s

David Knight (1968–69) (see 'Life after Wye' pagew 196 and 214) writes that he met up recently with **Ian Darling** (postgrad 1968–69) and **Kate Darling (née Pearman)** (1968–70). They celebrated their golden wedding, after the event due to Covid. David was their best man. Ian had a career as a property surveyor based in Edinburgh and Kate is still active in marine research with links to Scottish Universities. Ian is a past Chair of the RSPB and an expert ornithologist.

Graham Milbourn (1961–staff) – whom we have just made an Hon Vice President of the Club has written to us. A short while after last year's Annual Dinner, Graham suffered a stroke: 'Yes, I flaked out on the morning of Louise's 90th family dinner party for 20 in Christ's College, Cambridge! I was hardly aware that firemen carried me downstairs. 11 days in hospital but fortunately only a small stroke leaving me a bit weak and wobbly. So should build up again. Have great memories of a great dinner in Wye.'

Graham and Louise sadly missed their grandson's wedding in Germany as well. I'm sure the whole Club join me in wishing Graham a full recovery.

... and **Malcolm Alexander** (1963–67) sent in the following: 'Dr Graham Milbourn suffered what he said was "technically described as a stroke", early in December 2021. He had to be carried downstairs by firemen and then spent 12 days in Addenbrooke's Hospital while various tests were carried out – rather slowly!

I'm pleased to say that he was soon back home and has no speech loss or physical

Revd Geoff Dodgson (1970–73) (pictured on the right) with **Richard Whitlock**, Master of the Worshipful Company of Farmers



impediments, but feels rather weak at the moment (that was January 2022). Unfortunately, the stroke meant that he missed his wife Louise's 90th birthday party on 4 December in Christchurch College, Cambridge and a grandson's wedding in Berlin.

I'm sure you will all join me in wishing him a very speedy recovery.'

1970s

Geoff Dodgson (1970–73), Curate, The Papworth Team Ministry, who was ordained

in 1919 (see last Journal), was appointed Hon Chaplain to the 2021 Master of the Worshipful Company of Farmers, Richard Whitlock. Here pictured at the Company's annual installation service in St Bartholomew the Great, Smithfield. With Covid restrictions on public gatherings, Geoff led the Company's 2020 Carol Service via Zoom. Geoff is also Chaplain to the British Guild of Agricultural Journalists and organises an annual Harvest Festival service in St Bride's, Fleet Street for the Guild.



*A recent photo of **Prof Ian Lucas** (on left), Principal 1977 onwards, with his wife **Helen** and **Dr Gerry Flack** (Hon Agricola Member). Photo taken by Sally Leaver.*

1980s

Catherine Chatters (née Black) (1983–86) has informed us that, in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2021, she was awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) for 'Services to Biosecurity'. We offer her many congratulations! She adds: 'Before working for Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife

Trust, I worked for nearly 22 years for the Nature Conservancy Council, English Nature and Natural England. I thoroughly enjoy my current role and it's very satisfying to feel my project is really making a difference.'

Call for contributions

Martin Rickatson, our new Editor, will need material for next year's Journal. So, do please think about sending something to him at:

jmr.agriculture@gmail.com

Come to the Agricola Hog Roast!

**Sunday 3 July 2022
at Roves Farm,
Swindon, Wiltshire.
See Green Form at
back of Journal.**

Agricola members' reunions in 2021

Once lockdown rules were relaxed last year, a good number of meet-ups finally happened with fellow Club members, family and friends. We bring you a round-up of a few of these long-awaited gatherings.

The 1971 intake ... 50 years on

Bud (Rosemary) Mills (1971–74) reports on a Reunion, five decades on:

On 4 October 1971, 90 teenagers (well mainly) arrived at Wye College to start a land-based degree course that was likely to influence their careers and their lives.

Wind forward to Sunday 4 October 2021. Thirty of those students met up at a hotel in Rutland. For many of us, it was the first time

we had seen each other for 50 years. Badges might have been useful initially, but once someone said their name they were easily recognisable and voices and mannerisms change little! Memories and stories of our time at Wye flowed, but it was also fascinating to find out what people had been doing over the last 50 years.

We enjoyed an excellent meal in the barn at Barnsdale Lodge Hotel with many adjourning



Wye Reunion: the cast of characters: William Alexander & Caroline Alexander, Maggie Angood (German) & Richard Angood, Mindy Appleby, Mike Astley-Arlington, Jill O'Brien (Dart) & James O'Brien, Dave Barker & Dianne Barker, Hew Blair-Imrie, Carole Broster (Lavender) & Geoff Broster, Richard Bruce-White & Susan Bruce-White, Ian Burton & Liz Burton (Bourne), Simon Butcher & Sally Butcher, Adam Cade & Mary Cade, Simon Daniels & Felicity Daniels, James Grant, Liz Harding (Nutting), Chris Levett & Sheena Levett, Alyson Linnegar (Foster), Bill Mayne & Jacqui Mayne, Bud Mills, Peter Shipway, Joan Smith, George Streatfield & Amanda Streatfield, Neil Valentine & Rachel Valentine, Linda Way (Drewett) & Ed Way, Ian White. We leave the reader to identify who is who!

(in true Wye student fashion) to the bar until the early hours. Unfortunately, at 4.30 am we were all awakened by the fire alarm going off (thoughts of College Stirs, but no one would admit to it!). After gathering in the courtyard in our jim-jams we were eventually allowed to return to our rooms only to be woken again at 6.30! This time the hotel laid on coffee and bacon sarnies, but there was no going back to bed after that!

Jaded OAPs spent Monday exploring Rutland (a fabulous county despite its size), strolling down to Rutland Water and catching up on much-needed sleep. Several accepted a lunch invitation from William Alexander's sister who lives in a nearby village.

Monday evening was a less formal meal in the hotel conservatory but no less enjoyable. Everyone had a great time with lots of reminiscing of stirs that had taken place

during our three years at that wonderful institution, Wye College!

Sadly, there were some people from Australia and elsewhere in the world who had hoped to join the celebrations but were prevented by Covid travel restrictions. I think we were very lucky to actually be able to hold the event. Planning for it began well before anyone had heard of Covid-19, and we just happened to have organised it for a time when we were allowed to get together.

Goodbyes were inevitably accompanied with the question 'When are we going to do it again?' Possibly in three years to celebrate our graduation? Neil Valentine, Carole Broster (née Lavender) and I really enjoyed the planning of the event despite several hiccups along the way! If there are any volunteers to help organise the next one, I have the list of email addresses!



Ankola cow, photographed by John Magnay (19 74–77) in Uganda

Who are the Bald Old Gits of 1978–82?

George Hosford writes:

Chris Woods and I, along with Kevin Willis, have in recent years found ourselves in the company of a dodgy bunch of old Wye mates, known amongst themselves as the Bald Old Gits, we meet a couple of times a year to drink beer, toddle about on each other's farms or in remote parts of the Peak district and relive the best bits from 40 years ago. Last October we made our way to Yorkshire, via Lincolnshire, to explore the flavour of Tom Mellor's Wold Top Beer, followed with a Spirit of Yorkshire chaser.

A photo montage of our journey follows ...

We assembled on Friday night near Waddingham in north Lincs, home of the Warden Empire, run by Meryl and Steve Ward and their offspring, where they farm pigs, arable, AD, and a bit of bitcoin mining on the side using power from the AD plant, to keep the business solvent, or so Steve tried

to explain. None of us could make head or tail of it, but it did seem to do a good job of keeping the office warm. In the morning Steve gave us a whistle-stop tour around the farm, ending up in their very fine Uncle Henry's farm shop, a better example of farm-based retail you would need to travel a long way to find. Talking amongst ourselves behind Steve's back we decided that Uncle Henry's was the cash cow, all the other stuff was to keep Steve and Meryl occupied and out of the way in early retirement.

After the farm tour we all decamped northwards, across the Humber Bridge, heading for Mellor country. Since leaving Wye, Tom and Gill (née Duckworth), have built their own empire on top of the Wolds near Hunmanby in east Yorkshire. The farmhouse is surrounded by a beautifully planned and kept garden, open to visitors for much of the year, Gill's pride and joy until very sadly she passed away in 2020, after a long battle with cancer. The garden is very much a testament to her skill and experience,



Steve Ward showing off his magnificent pumpkins at Uncle Henry's farm shop.

and her knowledge of plants, a beautiful place to visit. In the farmyard – which I would like to say has a whiff of beer about it, but Tom being such a tidy fellow there is nothing out of place – there is a range of farm buildings which house a terrific secret. They contain a brewery, a bottling plant, and sheds full of booze, a Wye college graduate's vision of heaven. Not only this, but down the road in Hunmanby, they have a distillery! A natural fit with a brewery, as we were to discover.

Tom treated us to a long walk around the farm, where he is demonstrating up-to-date methods of regenerative farming, such as growing cover crops and direct drilling. The newly sown crops were in great order, as was the whole farm, which Tom has worked hard to streamline over the years so he can concentrate on the more important matters in life, such as brewing beer and distilling whisky.



Ricco demonstrating his skill and experience handling modern hi-tech farm equipment

Some bald old gits greeting the early morning visitors to Uncle Henry's in time honoured fashion





From left: Alex Dyke, George Hosford, Steve Ricco (Richardson), Tom Mellor, Phil Gladwin on a special leave passport from Essex, Steve Ward, Lester Bowker, Chris Woods. But where is Kevin?

*Ricco
demonstrating his
familiarity with the
Countryside Code*





Locked in at the Wold top brewery tap, what could we do but quality-check all the beers and empty the snack dispensers ?



*Sunday morning
on Filey beach*



On the farm, there is a brewery, a bottling plant, and sheds full of booze, a Wye college graduate's vision of heaven. Not only this, but down the road in Hunmanby, they have a distillery!

Final stop on our tour was the Spirit of Yorkshire Distillery. Tom gave us a guided tour of the distillery, which is a maze of beautifully polished copper boilers, stills and pipes, with a jaw-dropping amount of newly bottled whisky on site, and he generously shared with us many of his hard-learned tips on how to make the best whisky outside of Scotland anywhere, before cunningly guiding us through the Visitor Experience (shop) to buy souvenirs of our weekend on the way out. Grateful thanks to Tom, Meryl and Steve for a cracking weekend.

Come to the Agricola Hog Roast!

**Sunday 3 July 2022
at Roves Farm,
Swindon, Wiltshire.
See Green Form at
back of Journal.**

Last but not least ... the Agricola Club Reunion Dinner

Agricola Club Chair Jane Reynolds (née Shackleton) (1973–76) describes the evening that 90 members arrived in Wye for the Annual Dinner after a covid-imposed three-year delay.

Nearly 90 Agricola descended on Wye towards the end of the year for this event. It is normally held every other year but due to Covid, it had been a three-year gap this time.

There were a couple of events happening in Wye during the afternoon. Wye Heritage opened its doors in the Latin School to welcome folk in to see the plans for the new Wye Heritage Centre that will be created within the College buildings. This will be to the left of the front of College with access directly off the pavement. Tea and brownies were on offer as well as a chance to dip into the archives of the College and Club that have been painstakingly put together by Francis and Lucy Huntington over many years

and which will be held by Wye Heritage, hopefully, in perpetuity.

WyeCrag also held an event in the Wye school to thank people for supporting them in their quest to secure the Grade 1 and medieval buildings of the College for public use. You will have gathered in last year's Journal that the Public Inquiry in January awarded full planning on these buildings to Telereal Trillium (TT), the developers, so the WyeCrag quest was ultimately unsuccessful.

At 5.30pm the Agricola AGM was held in the school buildings, where **Prof David Leaver** (1964–67) who has been our President for 12 years, stepped down, and we welcomed **Prof Paul Webster** (1964 and staff) as our



The evening began with pre-dinner drinks.

new President. I am pleased to report that **Dr Graham Milbourn** (1961–staff) was in attendance and we were able to award him the title of Honorary Vice-President.

And so to the Dinner ... drinks and canapés were served, and we all sat down in the School Hall to a three-course meal with coffee & mints. The College Grace was said which you may remember:

God be praised for all His mercies

God preserve the Queen and the Realm

And this, our Free and Learned Society

And grant us His grace all the days of our life.

We decided that a speaker was not necessary at such events as folk just want to chat and catch up with contemporaries, and the level of noise attested to that! We probably spanned nearly 40 years of College life and had large turnouts from a mid-60s group and also from a late 60s/early 70s group.

However, a microphone was available for those who wished to say something, and **Chris Baines** (1966–69) came forward to thank all those who had supported WyeCrag (of which there were many) in their ultimately failed bid to secure the oldest buildings of the College for public use. The fight still continues, possibly through the Wye Buildings Preservation Trust.

The Agricola Club Chair, Jane Reynolds, then had several thanks to give.

Firstly to **Francis Huntington** (1961–64), our Secretary for the past 22 years, who retired last year. Francis really personified the Agricola Club. Over those many years he has accumulated a vast knowledge of the Club, the College and (largely because he is a local resident), the village of Wye. He will be sorely missed by the Club and the Committee and we owe him a huge debt of thanks. Jane was prepared with a gift for

him, but unfortunately, Francis had suffered a minor stroke only two weeks before the Dinner, and so he and Lucy, his wife, were unable to attend. Jane was able to visit him the following week to take the gift of an engraved water jug to him, and I am happy to report that he was already well on the way to recovery. Lilies were also presented to **Lucy Huntington** (1961–64) for the many years of work that she has always put in to all the Agricola events that have been held.

Secondly, thanks and an engraved decanter were given to **John Walters** (1964–70) who had stepped down after 12 years as Editor of the Journal. I think you will all agree that John has taken the Journal to new, glorious and colourful heights and will be a hard act to follow. He has put an immense amount of work in every year to present us all with such an informative Journal, full of memories of Wye. **Jane Walters**, who is an Honorary member of the Club, was presented with a pot of Lilies as she too has always been a tower of strength behind the scenes, helping with all the Agricola events.

Finally, but by no means least, Jane thanked **Prof David Leaver** for his 12 years as President of the Club, with another engraved water jug. David has provided quiet but firm leadership through that time, offering support to the Chair whenever needed. Jane admitted to being particularly grateful for this during the first somewhat turbulent tenure of her term of office.

Our new President, Prof Paul Webster, then presented Jane with an arrangement of flowers to thank her for organising the Dinner.

Formalities over, including a toast to the Queen, we all stood and sang all three verses of *A Farmer's Boy*, accompanied on the keyboard, by **John Meadley** (1965–68).

The following photos are all from the camera of Geoff Goodson (1961–64) and unashamedly depict the large group of 1964 (or thereabouts) graduates who attended.



Naming from the right in the fore ground: Iain Stowe, Sue Youngs, Judy Goodson opposite Geoff Goodson, Ann Batho, Jean Stowe and Richard Batho.



From the left in the fore ground, Roger Shippey, Elizabeth Foss, Peter Youngs, Gilly Myram (talking to the waiter), Phillip Charlton, Richard Foss, Tessa Paul, Colin Myram and Pam Shippey



Tim Finn-Kelcey, Peter Youngs, Geoff Goodson



Roger Shippey (1962–65), Elizabeth Foss and Peter Youngs (1961–64)

And from the camera of **Michael Payne** (1978–81) ...



Your Chair, **Jane Reynolds** (née Shackleton 1973–76), with **Jane Walters** (Hon Agricola member)



From left: **Margaret Williams** (Chair of the School Governors), **Sally Leaver** (Hon Agricola member) with **Richard** (1963–66) and **Eileen Long**



Philip Charlton (1962–65) and John Virgin (1965–68)



Mary (1966–69) and Robert Macaulay (1967–70), with Sally Emmerson (1966–69) and Libby Scott (1966–69)



Sue Youngs and Tessa Paul (née Durie) (1961–64), with Chris Reynolds (1968–69) in background, left) and James Holdstock and Tamsin Green (née Lane) (both 1973–76) background, between the 2 ladies)



Peter Johnson (1965–68), John Betty (1965–68) and John Walters (1964–70)



Iain Stowe (1961–64) and David Leaver (1964–67 and staff)



Do you recognise either of these two thespians taking part in Wye theatricals? We think one of them might be Dave Scarisbrick who sent in this photo and also the one on page 131. If you know, get in touch with our new editor Martin Rickatson Email: jmr.agriculture@gmail.com

Obituaries

In these pages we celebrate the lives and legacies of Agricola Club members who have passed away, with words and images provided by their friends, colleagues and loved ones.

Professor W G (Bill) Hill, FRS (1958–61): Wye's most distinguished scientist of recent generations

This tribute to Bill was written by Rex Walters (1968–73).

Bill Hill was one of the world's leading geneticists, with a distinguished research career spanning 40 years. He was born in 1941 and raised on a Hertfordshire farm, then studied Agriculture at Wye from 1958 to 1961. He then took an MSc at the University of California at Davis and then moved to Edinburgh to pursue a PhD in population genetics. Apart from occasional periods abroad to work with his many collaborators, he stayed in Edinburgh for the rest of his life.

Bill's research used mathematical and computer models of the behaviour of genes in populations. His contributions have included studies of how genetic variation is maintained in natural populations and how selection changes the structure of genetic variation. In addition to his purely scientific work, he made many important contributions to the application of genetics to modern farming, which have had a major impact on the livestock breeding industry.

Among his many honours were:

- Doctor of Science from Edinburgh in 1976
- Elected to the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1979
- Elected to the Royal Society of London in 1985



- President of the British Society of Animal Science 1999–2000
- Dean of the Faculty of Science and Engineering at the University of Edinburgh until his official retirement in 2002
- Editor in Chief of the Proceedings of the Royal Society B from 2005 to 2009
- Appointed OBE in 2004, in part for his contribution to the UK animal-breeding industry
- Awarded The Royal Society's Darwin Medal in 2018
- Awarded The Genetics Society Mendel Medal in 2019

Bill was a brilliant scientist who always thought of the potential practical application of his research. Despite his 'fame', he was modest and always gave very generously of his time, experience and considerable intellect to young students and senior colleagues alike. He wore his brilliance lightly and was gregarious and humorous too.

Although aggressive intellectually, he was never condescending. He often attended the international pig genetics workshops (Pig

Breeders' Round Table) held at Wye for some 30 years before the College closed – he will be affectionately remembered by the attendees for his habit of pretended sleep through presentations, then 'waking up' with a few key questions or comments to set everybody on the right course for establishing 'truth' and, importantly, the practical implications of research.

Bill died on 17 December 2021 in Edinburgh at the age of 81.

Christian Curtis (née Curle) (1959–63)

Christian first arrived in her 'beloved Ethiopia' at the age of four-and-a-half. Her father, Lieutenant Colonel A T (Sandy) Curle, was stationed at Jimma in the south-west of the country as Provincial Advisor to the Ethiopian Government and she was to meet him for the first time.

Christian travelled with her mother, who had not seen her husband for five years, on a passenger ship from Glasgow to Aden. It was an uncomfortable trip for everyone, alleviated by entertainment from Wilfred Thesiger, who happened to be travelling on the same ship. From Aden, she and her mother sailed to Djibouti on an Arab dhow, which had even fewer creature comforts. There she finally met her father, and they travelled together to Addis Ababa and on to Jimma, where the family spent a happy 18 months.

Sandy later became Consul, seconded to the Foreign Office at the British Legation in Addis. Christian was educated at the Sandford School and told fabulous tales of visits to Daniel Sandford's farm at Mulu, land assigned by Emperor Haile Selassie. Days spent riding out on the Entoto Hills with just a groom

for company formed part of what was an idyllic childhood, these experiences making Christian as much at ease with Ethiopians and various foreigners and dignitaries as her own nationality. Parties abounded and, being a very sociable person, Christian later kept up contact with many of the people she grew up with.

Christian eventually returned to England and boarded at Wycombe Abbey, before arriving at Wye to study Horticulture. Here, she met John Curtis, who was reading Agriculture, who was to become her husband, following their marriage at St John's in Jedbergh. Their first home was at the historic Trimworth Manor in Godmersham, before moving to Challock. Whilst Christian was raising their three children, all born in Kent, John set up a farm management accounting business, before working on sailing barges in the Thames estuary and in the coastal trade across the North Sea.

In 1977, with Christian's father wanting to step back from managing their Scottish smallholding, they moved to the Borders and the Curle family home. Together they set up a number of enterprises, including producing soft fruit and award-winning cheeses from their dairy herd.

**Christian
(née Curle)
(1959–63)
and John
Curtis
(1959–62)**



However, Christian's love of Ethiopia and its people had not diminished, and, in 1994, when it was possible to visit again, she embarked on a grand tour of the country. Following this initial visit, several trekking and exploratory trips to remote areas followed, including the Gheralta in Tigray, at the time seldom visited and with little infrastructure. This visit was inspired by Georg Gerster's book *Churches in Rock: Early Christian Art in Ethiopia*. His depictions of the paintings of the interior of Abuna Yemata at Guh as well as the exceptional position of the church was a challenge to be undertaken, and included an almost vertical climb up a rock face. More travels to the south to retrace her father's footsteps followed.

Christian assiduously edited the letters sent home by her father (see 'Book reviews', page 227). The three volumes provide a legacy for

Anglo-Ethiopian friendship and fascinating insights into Britain's colonial heritage in Africa.

Christian was a great supporter of the Anglo-Ethiopian Society and would often travel to London from the Scottish Borders to attend lectures. She was exemplary in keeping up with her Ethiopian contacts and took an interest in all aspects of the country, its art, history and culture. She was a wonderful wife, mother and grandmother and a marvellous friend, as well as being a very keen and knowledgeable gardener.

Her funeral, held in Hobkirk Churchyard, with pipes played by her grandson, was well attended, with many of her Wye contemporaries present. Christian is survived by her husband John.

**Christian Curtis (née Curle): 5 May 1939–
12 September 2021**

David Atkinson (1965–68)

A tribute to David in two parts, the first by Peter Johnson, the second by David's wife Cathy.

David died in summer 2021 but his contemporaries recall his big, quiet presence at all functions that had a high pulse rate over their three years together. Since then he and Cathy have seldom been in the UK. He arrived at Wye via an Oregon gap year from Rossall to join his schoolfellows John Hudson (1964–67) and John Milne (1964–66) to read honours in Agricultural Sciences – as he put it 'to get a bit of science into farming'. With his school skills he soon retired to the ordinary Agric degree course. There was nothing ordinary about his rugby. Already a first-class player at Rosslyn Park, David was an ever-present in the university side and helped Wye punch well above its weight in annual Gutteridge Cup competitions in what were halcyon days of College rugby. Seeing him set off to play in his tiny A30 was the equivalent of toothpaste being reintroduced to a tube. John Virgin, his diminutive scrum half, recalls a big, reassuring presence guiding the tactics and playing at Dorchester and Bath when living in Dorset. 'How those fingers ever embraced a lab scalpel was a wonder.

Mick Slater remembers that:

'a good place to be was immediately behind the big fellow as we jostled to enter Hall at the same time for dinner; for two or more years after Wye I worked on a large estate growing sugar cane, rice, citrus and cattle in northern Swaziland. One evening I was in the club when I walked David who was with Shell in Manzini, seventy miles of dirt road away. I introduced him to the senior staff, and he left a couple of days later with a full order book and a big expenses claim.'



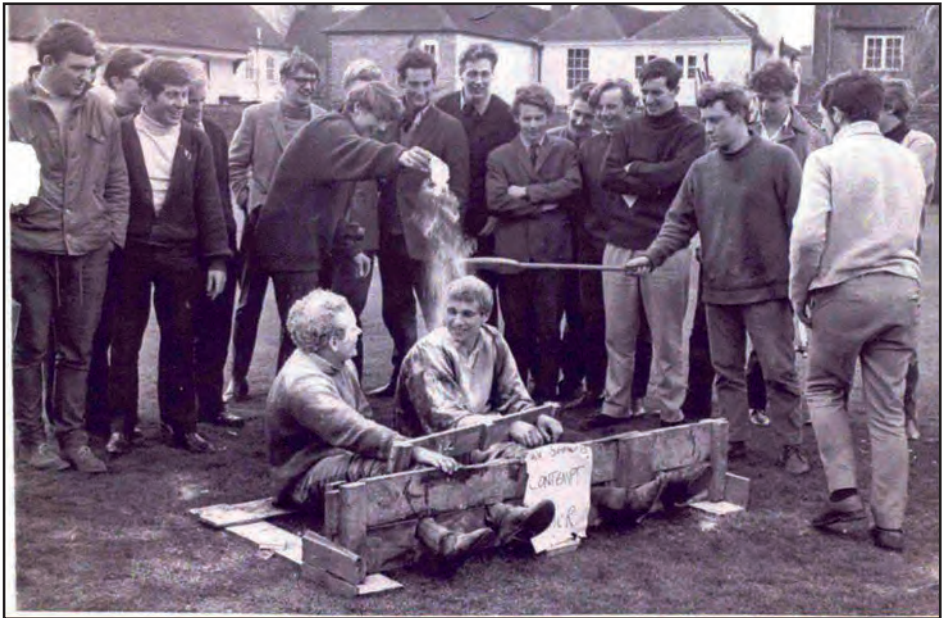
Three years sharing the same dining table with other Pelicans made a lasting impression on him as remembered below by Cathy, wherever in the world they were.

This has come from David's wife Cathy and their family in California:

David Atkinson was a student at Wye College from 1965 to 1968. He was a member of the Pelican Club and has had lifelong friends from his time at Wye. He met his wife the summer after graduation on an island in Greece on holiday. Cathy is from Santa Barbara, California. His first job was with Royal Dutch Shell in the Agri-Chemical Division based in Dorset where they lived. After two years, the pair headed for South Africa with Shell and soon after were posted to Manzini, Swaziland where he worked with chemicals, fertilizers and ag products in sugarcane and citrus crops plus a special project eradicating Bilharzia in the rivers. Shell then moved David to the head office in Johannesburg with one child in tow, born



A montage, including some memories of Wye in 1967



JCR 'activities' during David's time at Wye!



David, pictured outside the College during his time there in the 1960s

at a missionary hospital in Manzini. After two years, a position with Shell came up in Blantyre, Malawi, to head the sales in this country. He built a warehouse, worked with tobacco farmers of Indian origin and had a session with King Sobhuza trying to organise a fertiliser plant with Shell's help. The twins were born in the Adventist mission hospital in Blantyre. Shell Centre London was his next destination, and the family purchased a 500-year-old cottage with three acres near his family in East Horsley, Surrey. Their

fourth child arrived, born 11 pounds at St Luke's Hospital! The family was longing to go abroad again and next headed to Bangkok, Thailand, where he was Shell's Vice President of sales and marketing for the Far East. It was an amazing posting, and the family loved the expatriate life, complete with five servants!

David always loved Santa Barbara and the American entrepreneur spirit, so Cathy's family sponsored David to move to California. A seed company had a position open as Vice President of International sales, so for 11 years he worked with PetoSeed company. He was then eventually headhunted to become CEO of Sunseeds by a venture capital firm near Palo Alto and was there for three years as he led the company to a successful takeover. The family purchased 40 acres in the Montecito foothills where they built a stone adobe with views of the Pacific. He loved his small ranch of mostly olive trees and vegetables; his love of growing was a major activity! They also purchased an old mas in Provence near their eldest daughter and family where they visited for almost a decade. David consulted for Monsanto during this time, purchasing European companies for them. In retirement, he has enjoyed his family, travelling, growing vegetables and golfing.

His passing, at age 76 came on the island of Iraklia, Greece, after a week of sailing with his wife and a skipper. It was a paradise of a trip where he hiked, swam, ate at tavernas, and discovered the out of the way islands of the Cyclades, a full circle from the couple's beginning in Greece over 50 years ago! David was proud to be a graduate of Wye College and so grateful for his lifelong friendships made there.

David Collinge (1957–60)

A tribute written by David's family.

David was born to Cyril and Mary at Queen Charlotte's Maternity Hospital London, on 5 June 1937. His twin brother Jonathon sadly only survived for a few days. Cyril and Mary adopted brother, Tim, but when mother Mary died when David was eight years old, David and Tim were sent to stay with family and friends: David going to Mrs Roberts in North Wales for six months. This Celtic experience, along with his mother being partly Welsh, gave him a Welsh identity of which he was always very proud. Mrs Roberts, who kept the local village shop, returned with David and her grown-up son Griff, (who came for better work opportunities) to Marshalwick Lane, St Albans, as housekeeper, until Cyril remarried, to Grace in 1948.

David grew up in St Albans, attending the local school and singing in the Abbey Choir with his school friend Douglas Ridpeath. He was an all-round sportsman and Fulham football fan, regularly going to see games at Craven Cottage with Mrs Roberts' son Griff. A keen gardener, he tended the large vegetable garden at the family home, learning much of his vegetable-growing skills that he would use in the following decades. David became big brother to Jane, who was born to Cyril and Grace in 1952.

David passed all three sciences at A level, and this, combined with working on a local farm, enabled him to study Agriculture at Wye College, part of London University. His first year was spent playing more cricket than studying which resulted in him failing his end-of-year exams. Although we still have the cricket ball signed by all his teammates from a match in which he took all 10 wickets! Fortunately, he was allowed to repeat his first year. In his second year he met Susan Wills



David loved the outdoor life and was proud of his Welsh identity.

(1957–60) and got his agricultural studies back on track.

They both graduated with degrees in agriculture, and David also got a Diploma in Agriculture. That summer they went on an overland trip with friends in two cars to the 1960 Rome Olympics. On their return they married, and there began a family and working partnership that thrived for nearly 61 years.

Shortly after their marriage, they started work with a cattle dealer in Lincolnshire, before moving to Sussex to work on the family farm of a former university friend. David and Susan were set on starting up their own farm, despite the general view that, unless you had a family foothold in farming, this was almost impossible.

This they achieved by buying six milking cows from a herd David had milked in Sussex

and a small farm in 'the bog of Devon' near Halwill Junction. Life at Stone Quarry farm was spartan, and wet, with farming activities or growing vegetables filling the days. Three sons, Simon, Martyn and George, arrived during the Stone Quarry farm period.

The family moved to Stephen Gelly Farm in 1971, a base in the middle of Cornwall and that bit closer to the Cornish coastline that David enjoyed so much. David's parents moved to Bideford in North Devon and Susan's parents moved to Wembury near Plymouth. Having had three sons, they guaranteed a daughter by adopting Angela in 1973.

David was a willing participant in Susan's involvement with the Children Country Holiday Fund, providing Cornish summer holidays for children from London: several of these children became lifelong family friends.

Life at Stone Quarry farm was spartan, and wet, with farming activities or growing vegetables filling the days.

The next 20 years saw David combining the busy schedule of a dairy farmer, assisting with the hosting of numerous children, playing cricket at Pencarrow and regular visits to the north coast for a surf or a swim, usually driving a Landrover laden with children! He also developed his stamp collection and accumulated an extensive library of books over these years.

With the mortgage paid off, in the late 1980s and the trend for three times a day milking emerging, the decision was made to stop milking and keep a suckler herd – this gave

more time for David to develop his love of wildlife, and birdwatching in particular, combining this with trips to Africa and Asia. At this time, he also became a Fulham Football Club season-ticket holder, regularly travelling up to London on the train to watch games. He also assisted Susan with sharing their spacious home (now that their children had flown the nest), with more young children, getting involved in respite fostering. This included providing a long-term base for Dave Pearce through his teenage years.

David's retirement years saw less long-haul travel, more enjoyment of his beloved Cornwall, walking, sea swimming, birdwatching, and many hours in his large garden.

As many of you know, David's last few years were hampered by the onset of dementia and, ironically, as he wasn't much of a socialite, he became more involved with the local village community in this period, taking part in an indoor bowls group, choir and a memory café, regularly. The completion and opening of the Lanivet 'One for All' Community Hall and its associated facilities came at a perfect time for him.

To close – last week I received a short handwritten condolence letter from the doctor on the ward where he spent his last week, although much of this time he was heavily sedated, the letter included this sentence:- 'In his calmer moments he would talk fondly about farming and his enjoyment of playing cricket for Pencarrow.' This is how I will remember him.

Jean Elsie Cockett, formerly Hull, née Dobell (1947–50)

This tribute to Jean, who died on 7 October 2021, is from her children and grandchildren.

Liverpool and Wye

Jean Elsie Dobell was born in a terraced house in Liverpool to working-class parents. Her father, Fred Dobell, who had served in the First World War, was a buyer for a firm of Liverpool stone merchants. He could never really explain to his bright, inquisitive daughter what had caused Britain to fight the Germans, to her huge frustration, she said to us later.

Georgina Dobell was a seamstress who, as an older daughter, had cared for many of her mother's 12 children before leaving home, marrying Fred and having Jean. Georgina had a miscarriage that almost killed her, so Jean was an only child. This had a marked effect on Jean's personality.

At Wye, Jean was known as 'Dobby', and met lifelong friends.

Jean survived Liverpool's bombing in the Second World War and did well at school. The headmistress at Holly Lodge School saw that she could have a better career than working in a Liverpool office and encouraged the naïve 17-year-old to apply for a university place. In her teenage years Jean had cycled round the surrounding countryside including the foothills of North Wales to go plant hunting. This developed into a deep love of nature, especially flowers, and she knew the names of nearly all the native species, retaining these until dementia finally took them from her.



Because she loved botany, Jean chose horticulture at Wye College near Ashford, which started her love affair with Kent, and was the main reason she and Tony, our Dad, returned there in 1960. But, before going to university, her parents made her work in a plant nursery on the Wirral for a year.

At Wye, Jean was known as 'Dobby', and met lifelong friends whom we four children have known all our lives; women such as Joyce Pound, Patricia (Peach) Allen, Chris Barnitt and Gar Pearson. They became the 'aunties' we never had, since Mum was an only child and Dad had just one brother, who lived in Iran. She also met the men who had often served in the Second World War and travelled across the world. Tony Pearson, Geoff Withers, Nigel Robinson and Geoff Perry became firm friends. We still have her Dance Card from the student Ball in the first term of 1947, when her very first dance was with one Tony Hull, our Dad.

Africa

After College Mum got a job as a teacher in Folkestone, while Dad – bless him – took five years to complete his degree. He had no

science education at school and only applied to Wye because Bulmers Cider in Hereford had promised him a job running their apple orchards, although he never got that job. Eventually he passed his degree, and Jean and Tony were married at Wye in 1953, two weeks before their great friends Tony and Gar Pearson. They returned from their honeymoon stony broke. Dad got a job in West Africa, where they lived for the next seven years, supervising the planting and harvesting of oil palms which produced oil to make food, paint and soap. Mum entertainingly describes their life in the last days of the British Empire in her book *The Planters Wife*, which her second husband, Mike Cockett, helped put together years later.

Both coming from small families, they wanted a large family, so they had four children in

five years. This was a risky undertaking for Mum; she was one of the first white women to use the local African facilities to give birth to Jonathan and Susie in pretty rudimentary circumstances. This was typical of Mum's attitude to life: she took life's challenges head on and expected to win. Her feisty nature would see her through many of the challenges to come.

In 1954, before she started her own family, Mum founded a small primary school on the veranda of their tiny house, with just seven pupils, but following a proper 'PNEU' curriculum. The school was for the children of the white managers in Dad's company. When some parents objected that she was going to admit the children of a 'coloured' Indian doctor, Mum said she would teach any child who was 'clean, dressed and



Jean Dobell (Dobbie), as a student, taken at a Wye College Beagle Ball in Charing 1948 with Tony Hull. Tony died in 2004, aged 92

intelligent'. Jean could not abide racism and treated everyone equally. Subsequently in her career she focused on the children who were not so 'intelligent'. In 2001 Mum, Dad, Jo and Mark returned to Cameroon, and found her school still there, still following the PNEU curriculum. It had become the best junior school in the area with a formidable headmistress who was also the local MP. It had around 700 local pupils, and Mum was honoured as its Founder.

England

Mum and Dad returned to an austere England in 1960, where it was hard to find jobs. Mum had found a semi-derelict Jacobean house in Lenham High Street, called it Honeywood House, and had it fitted up for a family of six. 2021 was the 400th anniversary of the house, and it remains a well-known landmark.

It was a very happy house and we all had marvellous childhoods digging up the garden to make dens and playing in old wooden packing cases. Mum grew asparagus, so we appreciated different tastes from a very early age. She had been keen to promote the principals of organic gardening because one lecturer, Louis Wain, had made such a deep impression on her at Wye. This remained with her throughout her life. So, we each had our own garden on a south-facing wall, getting our hands into that precious thing called soil (NOT dirt).

Dad got a good job selling horticultural chemicals to Kentish fruit growers, and Mum started a new career as a teacher, home schooling – since Nick was an infant and they couldn't afford childcare.

Over the course of the next 25 years Jean built a career in education, teaching in every conceivable kind of school, including Borstals, and 'Centres for the Severely

Subnormal', as they were then called. Mum loved the downtrodden of society and saw great opportunity for education to provide a much better future – as it had for her. When we went with her into those schools, we saw her care for the Downs Syndrome children as normal kids.

'You can't go home now,' retorted the irate Guide, 'You don't know the way!' 'True enough,' says Mum, 'but the horse does!'

During our teenage years Jean did an MPhil in Education at Cambridge, before becoming Deputy Head of a school for Children with Learning Difficulties in Ashford. She and the Head, Roger Bishop, developed the first curriculum for Special Schools in Kent. Before that, most educators thought a curriculum in Special Education was a waste of time. Together Jean and Roger devised Individual Learning Plans for every child in the school, paving the way for what is now standard practice in all Special Schools.

Mum and Dad's early days in Africa enhanced their love of musicals and jazz as they whiled away the long dark evenings listening to their cherished records. They both loved dancing and drama, so they both helped found the Lenham Players Amateur Dramatic Society. This involvement with Lenham village meant a great deal to Mum, and she pursued many local projects to help improve the village. She pushed for a playground to be built on the edge of the Cricket Club land, so children could play safely; led the creation of a pond

in the village, so that it could be enjoyed by all, especially the local wildlife; helped preserve the limes in the Square, a feature that was nearly destroyed; and in later years helped design the new Village Hall.

Mum wasn't greatly fond of pets but put up with the cat and many rabbits that we had as children. On one famous occasion we were Pony Trekking in Wales and Mum wasn't impressed. She had agreed to come under duress and half-way round the trek she got saddle sore: she lost her patience with the Leading Guide and exclaimed loudly that she was going back home. 'You can't go home now retorted the irate Guide, 'You don't know the way!' 'True enough,' says Mum, 'but the horse does!' and off they trotted. She was home long before us, enjoying a cup of tea when we finally joined her.

In 1974 Mum and Dad's relationship had deteriorated, so they divorced. For Mum the next career step was to become a University Lecturer in Special Education, so she took a job at Bretton Teacher Training College in Yorkshire, where she lectured for five years. She had met Mike Cockett, a businessman, who was to become her second husband. In the 1980s she became an Inspector for Special Education in south-east London and moved back to Honywood with Mike, whom she married in 1990.

Retirement

On retiring, she and Mike spent happy years together, including a year living in Arizona. They developed a beautiful Japanese garden in Honywood, and Mum visited Japan three times to study Japanese culture and gardens. This combined her love of gardens with a new interest in Buddhism and its focus on the circle of life. Mum and Mike spent much of their time travelling to Asia, the United States

and Europe enjoying the sights and tastes of many diverse places.

She became a governor of the local school and an energetic Parish Councillor. Her passion for Education and Lenham remained to the end.

By the mid-1990s she had 10 grandchildren and they would like to say something ...

Nana

Being 'Nana' was always a conundrum for Mum. She loved the idea of spoiling her grandchildren but her desire to teach and improve often got in the way of this. All our children can remember very fondly the drive to learn and do better but also her feisty way of telling them off when they overstepped the mark.

She offered them the unusual, new things with different tastes and experiences, especially in art and sculpture. She loved being round them at the many parties. Her love of dancing and music remained until the end. She was still dancing energetically with the best man at her grandson's wedding in her middle eighties.

She thoroughly enjoyed her great grandchildren, even though at times she was not sure of who was who, and who belonged to whom. She remains a legend to them; a photo on the wall is still spoken of in reverential tones of 'Great Nana' by the four- and five-year-olds.

She achieved much herself, but also passed on to us and many others the inspiration to go out and do whatever drives you, and don't let the buggers grind you down.

So, goodbye Mum, our love, passion and inspiration.

John Michael Daleymount (1954–57)

A tribute from John's daughter, Julie Barritt (née Daleymount).

It is with deep sadness that we inform you of the passing away of our dad, grandad and great-grandad John Michael Daleymount.

John moved to the then Rhodesia in 1957 after his wedding to his beloved Mariel.

They had many wonderful years in Rhodesia with John working for Windmill Fertilizers as initially an agronomist and eventually the MD. Paul was born in 1959 and Julie (me) followed in 1960.

John and Mariel then moved to Malawi in 1979 where he started a new venture in agricultural chemicals eventually bringing his grandson Stephen into the fold. In 2003 John and Mariel then moved to Durban where their daughter Julie and family live.

John's passion for horseracing grew and he loved watching his own horses running at the racetracks. He also continued playing golf until his knee replacements at the age of 79 and 80! He really was remarkable.

Mariel passed away in 2012 which was a huge blow for John, but he was surrounded by his family and a great circle of friends.

John continued life to the full and had many years of wonderful travel seeing the world.

Paul and Bev still live in the UK, and it was so sad that due to Covid he hadn't seen them since 2019.

We will all miss him dearly, but he had a wonderful fulfilled life to the end.

John is survived by his son Paul and Bev, daughter Julie and Bruce, five grandkids and eight great-grand kids that he loved dearly.

RIP Dad.



John loved horseracing, golf, seeing the world and living life to the full.



William (Will) Winstone George (1976–79)

A tribute to Will, who died on 1 August 2021, from The Commercial Greenhouse Grower, October 2021.

Will George, who died in August aged 69, was one of the nursery stock sector's larger-than-life characters. A fine nurseryman in his own right, having established and run the successful Sussex herbaceous perennials nursery Prenplants in partnership with his wife Sylvia, he was highly influential to a whole generation of growers through his work as an ADAS consultant and for the HTA's Nursery Business Improvement Scheme (NBIS).

He was also instrumental in developing the AHDB-funded Pro-Cost costings tool. 'The business side of running a nursery was something he was always keen to get growers to focus more on,' said ADAS consultant David Talbot. 'He always shared his knowledge freely and with great friendliness, something I especially appreciated when I started in the industry.' Nurseryman Patrick Fairweather was an early NBIS member. 'He was focusing on costings at a time when many growers were not really getting their own minds on it, and was ahead of the game in that sense,' he said. 'He could see a lot of people were struggling to make a profit and used his experience of running a nursery to develop really practical costings tools that took the emotional attachment to plants away from the decision about what crops to grow and what to change. That's still very pertinent today. 'His help developing our own nursery costings system has proved invaluable. Every time I use it, I think of him playing the spoons or chatting at the bar during a social event, he was always great company.' AIPH general secretary Tim Briercliffe was at the HTA when he worked with Will.



Will was a keen volunteer on the Somerset and Dorset Railway, working in the signalling department!

'We tried many different group chairs for the NBIS groups but Will outlasted them all. His well-grounded judgement and the sharing of his own experiences meant group members never wanted to change him. We'll all miss him.'

Will continued consultancy work after retiring to his home county of Somerset in 2014 where he enjoyed spending more time watching his beloved county cricket team and pursuing his love of steam with the Somerset and Dorset Railway where he worked in the signalling department and organised several 'real ale trains' using his local brewery contacts.

Kevin Witherby (1970–73)

This tribute to Kevin was written by Martin Hoskins (1968–71).

I don't know much about Kevin's early life except that his parents, of whom he was very fond, lived in Devon and he had a sister. He went to Wye College in 1970 which was a couple of academic years after us, but, as was the norm at Wye, the beer, rugby, JCR etc made this irrelevant and a lifelong friendship was born. Kevin was a 'bright boy', and in his laid-back way he did well at Wye.

Our paths crossed again a few years later when we moved from Kent back up to Herefordshire. Kevin was working for Griffiths and Hartlands, an old-established agricultural firm in Hereford that had been taken over by Ranks. Kevin was ideally suited to Herefordshire. His no-nonsense practical and fair approach resulted in him building up a wide number of farming customers, who became friends and continued to do business with him for years. Although, unfashionable in modern times, many customers never even asked him to quote a price, knowing that they would always get a fair deal. Kevin was not into technology!

He enjoyed it so much that he milked the cows of a friend in Shropshire at weekends for many years.

He resisted spreadsheets and emails and preferred to write everything down. He had a phenomenal memory and always amazed me as he was always able to recall cropping and agrochemical history when we were out crop walking.

Kevin was content with what many people would regard as a simple life. When he moved to Herefordshire, he initially lodged with a farming family, and it turned out he stayed with them for over 20 years until he bought

a property and moved to Richards Castle, Shropshire. He was a gentleman in both senses of the word. I never saw him get angry, and he was always willing to help and do his bit for the community and friends. He loved the rural life and farming. He enjoyed it so much that he milked the cows of a friend in Shropshire at weekends for many years. He was a keen shot and, shooting was a large part of his winter. He was good company, and his sense of humour and dry wit were a joy.

He was not really interested in travel and was content trundling around Herefordshire and Shropshire. I can recall in the 1990s him telling me that he had not been on a motorway for 10 years! Love came relatively late for Kevin. He married a widow, Dorne, but sadly their marriage only lasted for a few years as she had a bleed on the brain and passed away. In the 1970s we used to organise skiing trips, which always involved friends from Wye. For several years we persuaded Kevin to join us, and it was great fun. He was not a natural skier and did not like heights, so getting up the slopes on cable cars and chairlifts was as much of a laugh as skiing back down again. Kevin was godfather to our youngest daughter, and typically he was always interested in what she was doing and developed a great relationship with her.

In 2020 Kevin was taken back into hospital after being in remission with cancer for several years. Sadly, during the covid lockdown in December 2020, he died.

In summary, he was a great friend who will be missed by his many friends and acquaintances. I will always have an image of him sitting in our kitchen, with his pipe and a cup of tea putting the world to rights - God bless.

Lawrence Dennis Smith (1958–61)

This tribute to Lawrence who died on 7 February 2021 was received from his son Andrew.

Lawrence was born on 8 March 1939 to parents Catherine and Bertrum. He was the youngest of six brothers. In age order – Jack, Dick, Bill, Michael and Robin.

Lawrence was brought up in Stotfold, Bedfordshire. He went to Stotfold Primary School and from there Bedford Modern School. He was a member of the village church choir.

During WWII both his father and eldest brother Jack were away in the war. Catherine, his mum, was left to bring up the five remaining brothers.

Jack tragically was killed during action.

His father survived the war but suffered PTSD and passed away in 1951 (same day as King George VI) when Lawrence was only 12.

As a teenager Lawrence worked for a market gardener (probably where the love of vegetable gardening came from) and also the local Stotfold mill, heaving sacks of wheat.

On leaving school, Lawrence had to undergo a year's practical work before being allowed to start his university course at Wye College. He worked for Levington Research Station – a fertiliser research institute in Suffolk.

From 1958–1961 he was at Wye College doing an honours degree in Agriculture. Whilst there he met Mavis (née Evelyn Stead) 1960–63) who was two years younger. From Wye College Lawrence went on to Oxford University to carry out a Bachelor of Literature, but he wasn't awarded the degree because what he wrote about at the time was 'too new'. It is of course regarded as mainstream economics nowadays.



Lawrence's many years in Scotland meant the he was 'a keen supporter of Mackies ice cream!'

He remained at Oxford University for another three years as he was offered the role of Departmental Demonstrator. During this time, he visited Tanzania, Nigeria and Iran with the Plunkett foundation – 'We help communities to take control of their challenges and overcome them together' – and hence his love of Africa was born.

In 1963 he married Mavis and they set up home in Headington, Oxford. Andrew (son) was born in 1965, and they then moved to Woodstock where Helen was born in 1966.

In 1966 Lawrence accepted a post at Glasgow University lecturing in Political Economics and Agriculture as it had better promotion opportunities, and the department practised in pure economics rather than just agricultural economics. The family moved to live in Bearsden. In 1968 Lawrence was seconded to the University of Nairobi for the following three years to head up a UK team of economists to work with an American

Lawrence and Mavis on their wedding day in 1963



team on priority Government projects (on the back of Kenya's independence). The family moved out to be with him, during which time Sara was born (1970).

On returning to Glasgow the family moved to their family home 'Craigspark' where the children went to the local primary and then secondary schools. Hence why you hear Andrew, Helen and Sara speak with Scottish accents, but Lawrence and Mavis maintained their English accents. For Andrew, Helen and Sara it was called 'survival tactics' as it wasn't the done thing to attend the local primary school with an English accent. Lawrence's career progressed at Glasgow University. In 1972 he was promoted to Senior Lecturer, in 1977 he was promoted to Reader and in 1990 he was awarded his Professorship.

During all this time Lawrence took groups of agricultural students to tour European farms

– often setting off in minibuses. He also set up a Diploma course at the University which allowed foreign students to come over for a year. And during vacations a lot of time was spent doing consultancy work in a number of countries – Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Nepal, China and Egypt. He also held a directorship at the Scottish Agriculture College – which covered the colleges of Western Scotland (Auchencruive), Eastern Scotland (Edinburgh) and Northern Scotland (Aberdeen). And this is the reason for Lawrence being a keen supporter of Mackies ice cream!

In 1998 Lawrence took early retirement from Glasgow University and moved to Stowupland with Mavis. However, he wasn't quite ready for full retirement and was commissioned by the Oxford Policy



And Mavis and Lawrence in later years

Management company to carry out further consultancy on behalf of the Governments' Department of International Development (now called Foreign, Commonwealth and

Development Office) in various countries in Africa, Armenia and Egypt.

Unfortunately, he had to fully retire from his consultancy work in 2008 due to heart problems.

In July of 2008 he had a heart valve replacement and in November 2013 he underwent a second heart valve replacement.

Although retired, at this time he volunteered his time to the church. He was asked by Bishop Nigel to co-chair the Parish Share Review Panel. He travelled all over Suffolk, visiting Benefices, talking to treasurers, trying to explain the

need to pay the Parish Share (the amount of money that each Church has to pay which covers the cost of the vicar).

He died on 7 February 2021.

Elizabeth Walker (1957–60)

This tribute to Elizabeth who died on 1 November 2021, is from Rosemary Clark (1957–60).

Elisabeth died on 1 November 2021, after a two-year battle with cancer. She was able to be nursed at home by her son and daughter-in-law who lived locally, and by her two devoted daughters who came over from Australia. During her last months and days, she was an amazing example to all, of brave, pragmatic and cheerful acceptance of her destiny.

Despite a suburban/urban childhood, living just inside London's Green Belt, it was her

deep-felt affinity for Cornwall, acquired from annual childhood holidays, that shaped the greater part of her life. So, it was to here she returned to raise her three children.

Her first-class degree in Agriculture obtained at Wye prepared her well for her subsequent interest and developing expertise in all things botanical, particularly National Trust and many other Cornish Gardens.

Her own garden at Ivy Cottage, Bissoe, was simply a joy – both to herself and all who came to visit. A sanctuary for many species of flowers, trees and birds, from the common to some of the most unusual and rare; not forgetting the homegrown fruit and vegetables.

Her 'work' was her pleasure – the polytunnel and garden her workplace. Her time off – spent visiting other gardens, excursions with Cornish gardening clubs.

She will be sorely missed not only by her devoted family, but by her many Wye friends and colleagues, lifelong childhood friends and Cornish gardening friends.

Elizabeth - whose garden was 'simply a joy'



Shirley Palmer (née Cureton) (1953–56)

A tribute to his late wife who died 19 January 2020, written by John Palmer (1953–56).

Shirley's maiden name was Shirley Barbara Cureton which she told me is from Shropshire. She was born in Leeds but at the age of three moved to Surrey. She studied Horticulture at Wye 1954-1957.

As you know she died last year on 19 January in QMC Nottingham after going into hospital on Christmas Day. She had not been well for several years due to heart failure.

We met at Wye and eventually moved to North Lincolnshire. We moved from Surrey to a small village (North Cotes) having moved from Surrey Woods to the Feeding Marshes of Lincolnshire where there was little shelter from winds coming from Russia.

We had three children Malcolm, Kate and Mark. We were a bit short of cash with the children, so she became a teacher which was

the only thing that fitted in. She also wrote articles for several magazines including Farmers Weekly.

After four years we moved to Melton Mowbray where we had a new house built- there were no houses available at the time plus a national shortage of bricks! The idea was to find a house with a large garden as soon as possible, but with the children at school it was 17 years before we moved here where I have now lived since 1979.

Shirley was always involved seriously with plants, and, in addition to running a very small nursery, we became members of many plant organisations. She told me that she learnt a great deal about local plants from the time she spent at Tattenham Corner adjacent to the Downs. She became Chair of different plant organisations over the years.

I feel that I have lost a truly great plants-person with her death.

Dr Mary Blustin (née Evans) (1966–69)

This celebration of Mary's life (1947-2022) was sent in by her son Alexander Blustin.

Mary came to Wye in 1966 to embark upon a BSc in Plant Science, having done a year's work experience as a council gardener in Bath. There had been a scientific tradition in her mother's family: her grandfather was chief marine engineer at Philip's shipyard in Dartmouth; great-uncle Frederick Gymer Parsons was head of anatomy at St Thomas's Hospital medical school, and her great-great-grandfather had been a surgeon. Mary's father was, however, the reluctant managing director of City wine merchants Southards, who tinkered with inventions in his spare time.

At Wye, Mary joined the Beagles, and learned to appreciate the value of the compulsory

academic gown at dinner in keeping out the cold. During vacations she visited Southards' wine growers in South Africa, travelled around the USA by Greyhound bus (working as a lab technician at Purdue for a while), and took part in Experiment in International Living, spending a few weeks staying with a family in Japan.

Leaving Wye with a first-class degree, she moved on to Darwin College at the University of Cambridge to pursue research in plant pathology. There she met her future husband Peter Blustin, a theoretical quantum chemist, and became passionate about science education. By the time her PhD on 'Investigations on the pathogenicity and control of eyespot disease of cereals in relation to the carbohydrate status of the host' was awarded in 1974, she had moved on to Chelsea teacher-training college for a PGCE.



Mary (centre) in Japan (1969), visiting a garden with her host family



Mary, enjoying her delightful garden in Reading in 2020

Mary taught secondary biology and chemistry in Yorkshire and Cheshire for three years, becoming a head of department by the final year. She considered returning to teaching after raising her two children, but by then had found a successful niche in voluntary work. After serving as vice-chair of the governors at two schools and in local educational campaigning, she spent a decade as Secretary of the Earley Volunteer Drivers Bureau, a charity which transported elderly and vulnerable clients to medical and other activities. In this capacity she was the organisation's driving force and guiding hand, substantially responsible for its achievement of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (the 'voluntary MBE') in 2016. She was finally forced to retire from EVDB due to cancer, to which she would succumb on 6 January 2022.

Throughout all of this, Mary never left her horticultural roots. She spent 40 years transforming a small suburban garden into a

magical retreat, somewhere between cottage garden, forest clearing and wilderness. Over the course of the seasons, magnificent specimens of cherry blossom, wisteria, daffodils, lilac, tulips, passionflowers, roses, clematis, magnolia, hollyhocks, fuchsia, foxgloves, rhododendron and many others appeared against a backdrop of beech, eucalyptus, conifers, grape vines, bay and ferns. In summer, citrus and elephant ears came out onto the terrace from the conservatory. Gardening, for Mary, was a managerial form of creativity. In this, as in her charity roles, she led from behind the scenes, quietly pulling the strings; proceeding with determination, charisma and an uncanny sixth sense about plants and people.

Richard Tustian (1968–69)

This tribute to Richard who died 30 March 2020 is written by David Knight (1968–69).

Richard Tustian first came to Wye College in 1968 after completing an agricultural degree at Reading University. He took the Diploma in Farm Administration (FBA) and afterwards remained friendly with **John Walters** (1964–70) and **Geoff Pullen** who were fellow students. He took the slightly unusual step of transitioning from student to staff as in 1969 he became a researcher on the annual Farm Business Survey for South East England.

Although I (David Knight) was also a Wye student, I followed one year later on the MSc Agricultural Economics course under Ian Reid and John Nix. We didn't really meet up until we both joined the Cheveley and Company consultancy business based in Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Richard's childhood home had been a small mixed farm near Brackley in Northamptonshire. His practical work with

the sheep was thereafter ingrained in his love for livestock and the land.

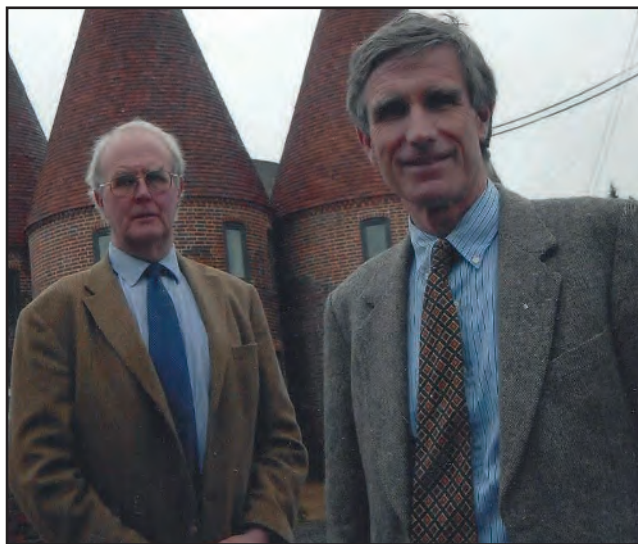
From Tunbridge Wells he and his wife Ros moved to a farm at Eynsford on the North Downs with a dairy herd and cereals. He acted as manager for Michael Cheveley for some years, but his next move was to a family-owned farm at Epwell near Banbury in 1982. Here he had great scope and built up his own sheep flock which he ran together with the arable cropping. He was very much back in his home territory to the extent that distant family members came together for a 'Tustian' cricket match at Great Tew which is still played every few years.

In 1988 Richard and I took over the consultancy business which then became Knight Tustian and ran for the next 20 years until being merged into AKC, based in Devizes, Wiltshire. Richard was working part time until his untimely death in March 2020, and I had the privilege of working alongside him as either colleague or partner for 50 years. He leaves his widow Ros, sons

James and Patrick and daughter Mollie together with grandchildren. In his last couple of years, he had overseen the transformation of the old stone barn used as a workshop and for lambing into a magnificent new house.

Richard is well remembered for his organisation and leadership of the Oxford Sheep Group who had an annual visit to other parts of the country to see not

Richard (left) with friend and colleague David Knight



only sheep farms in the UK and Ireland but the odd winery and even our apple orchards in Kent.

As a consultant, Richard had a wide spread of clients, large and small, predominantly in the South East and the Midlands but also further afield. He was highly regarded and his guidance much valued over many years. To quote from condolences: 'My life was empowered by knowing him. At least I know how to lamb now and how to deal with awkward neighbours'; 'It was typical of Richard to be thinking of and helping others rather than himself'; 'He and my late father got on very well and that's where it all started. My Dad was a cantankerous bugger at the best of times, but they just clicked and likewise there was no difference when I took over.'

Everyone remembers his friendly opening line on the phone after the 'Hello, Richard' and recognition of your voice 'Yes, David', 'Yes, Peter', 'Yes, Judy' a positive start to the conversation. Although you might not always agree on something, there was never a dispute.

He was an active member of the British Institute of Agricultural Consultants (BIAC) and was their Chairman for two years in the mid-1990s. He greatly enjoyed the link with fellow consultants and always valued the training sessions and conferences. Over the span of his life the farming world has transformed from the relatively traditional methods in the 1950s to the highly efficient businesses of today. He enjoyed the ongoing challenges, though emails and the internet remained somewhat of an exception.

Tony Biggs (1958–61)

*A tribute written by **Norman Coward** (1958–61), **Bill Cale** (1958–61) and Tony's daughter.*

Tony was born in a mining village in Warwickshire, UK. He studied horticulture at Wye and led a very active life there. He was a strong student and especially enthusiastic in all the practical aspects and applications of the science he was studying. He was also active in soccer and cricket. In the J block where he resided, he always stood his ground perfectly against the other residents who were studying agriculture.

At Wye, Tony met Frances who was to become his wife. The relationship thrived despite the student sexual segregation and the half-mile uphill walk to Withersdane Hall to meet his beloved for that short period on Sunday afternoons when intermingling in rooms was allowed. The couple married in 1963.

After graduating Tony attended Bristol University doing research on blackcurrants. He subsequently worked at Swanley Research Station and Hadlow College, and in 1974 he became a lecturer in Wye with some consultancy roles outside the university. He and Frances lived in Hastingleigh where their two children, Karen and Ian, were raised. Over this period, he took a particular interest in the developing science of hydroponics.

Following this successful period of teaching and research in the UK, the family emigrated to Australia over 40 years ago. There, he became Head of Horticulture in Hawkesbury Agriculture College and subsequently was appointed to be Principal Horticulturist – Vegetables with the New South Wales Department of Agriculture in the mid-1980s. He had a big impact at both organisations and on their staff.



He was an excellent communicator and had a particular flair for translating and editing scientific research and results into everyday applications. Early in his career in the UK, Tony authored his first book *Vegetables* – a practical reference work for gardeners published by the Royal Horticultural Society. He also jointly authored *Principles of Vegetable Crop Production*. After he left the Department, he became Founding Editor of *Good Fruit and Vegetables* magazine (pictured above with a copy, supported by Frances). They produced 200 issues over the next 13 years and the magazine survives to this day with recent articles on 'Flying robot apple picker', 'Labour difficulties with Covid quarantine' and 'Planting bee-friendly shrubs' etc. A recent report in the Australian *Produce Plus* magazine reports that: 'Tony travelled extensively across Australia, seeking out stories in many diverse areas, building a wide network of colleagues and friends in the process.' His travels also included Hong Kong

and the USA on fact-finding missions and covering conferences for the magazine.

Tony and Frances had their own consultancy company – Cardinal Horticultural Services (CHS). Through this, he became R&D coordinator of the mushroom industry, and he established the Australian Potato Industry Council for which CHS became the secretariat.

Tony had a particular flair for translating and editing scientific research and results into everyday applications.

The work which Tony had started and developed in the UK in hydroponics continued over the years in Australia. He was largely responsible for the Australian Hydroponics Association, and Cardinal provided the original secretariat for that. There are many other credits to Tony's achievements, including founding member, and then elected President, of the Australian Society for Horticultural Sciences, together with his numerous individual consultancies. Alongside this, he was made a Director of the Horticultural Research and Development Corporation for nine years from 1991.

In many of these roles he was greatly supported by Frances, whose Wye experience was invaluable to CHS. Sadly, Frances died in 2016.

The overall theme of all Tony's work has been the practical application of science for business and the dissemination of knowledge. That is surely what he would wish to be remembered for.

Tony E H Gardener (1957–60)

Geoff Dixon (62–68) wrote this short tribute to Tony (15 March 1937 to 29 August 2021).



Tony's passing is recorded with the very deepest regret: he was a good friend, colleague and bon viveur for many of us.

He studied horticulture at Wye College 1957 to 1960 and previously attended Sherborne Boy's School.

His father, Eric Gardener, was a very active and politically prominent horticulturist whose market gardening business used French techniques of highly labour-intensive organic hot beds covered by frames and cloches at Sutton Benger in Wiltshire. Tony inherited the business, married Jan and they had three daughters, Charlotte, Sophie and Emma.

He also inherited deep social awareness, industriousness and Christian Faith. He nurtured the Eric Gardener Foundation, which over many years provided seed-corn funding, particularly helping Nuffield scholars.

Tony, pictured at his wedding to Jan 'a good friend, colleague and bon viveur for many of us'

Widely he also supported and served the National Farmers Union, the Horticultural Education Association, which translated into the (now Chartered) Institute of Horticulture, the National Vegetable Research Station Association and the local Lackham College.

Latterly, he helped found and administer the Professional Horticulture Group South West which provides a focal centre for discussions and visits for those interested/fascinated by the subject in the region. Recreationally he was an avid tennis player, expert grower and gardener especially of floriferous herbaceous perennials.

Socially, Tony supported and funded numerous local initiatives, especially for his beloved All Saints Church, Sutton Benger where he has found rest and been reunited with Jan.

Malcolm Withnall (1962–64) sadly died on 20 October 2021 after a long battle with progressive supranuclear palsy (PSP).

He is survived by his wife **Anna (née Whyte)** (1962–67) two daughters, Rebecca and Victoria, and four grandchildren.

A service of thanksgiving paid tribute to his 50-year contribution to the British fruit-growing industry as a grower, a college lecturer and a writer of articles and books.

Roger Hobcraft (1958–61)

A tribute to Roger received from Chris Ireland-Jones (1977–80), with help from Pat Goode (1974–78).

Roger was born in 1939 in Bromley, so his early years were shaped by the outbreak of World War II, dodging the German bombing raids and the V2 rockets. His refuge was an air-raid shelter built under the vegetable patch in the garden and his Mickey Mouse Gas mask was a mandatory part of his school equipment and the envy of his sister Brenda. In wartime there were no family holidays, so he filled his time playing ball outdoors and listening to the wireless (as it was known

then). He went to school at St Dunstan's College in Catford where both his father and grandfather were also educated. He became a scholar, Queen's Scout and obsessive sportsman, even playing a cricket match for his school at the Oval. When his father returned from active war service in 1946, they holidayed in Salcombe Devon. This was to become an annual summer event, and it is where in 1949 he met the Foden's family. The two families got on so well that they holidayed together for the next six years, and the rest 'is history'.

After leaving school, a career in Agriculture beckoned, not perhaps obvious given his



Roger is seated fifth from the left; Phil Keene, the farm manager is standing at the back, second from the left; Dunstan Skilbeck is standing to the right of Phil. Tractor drivers Tony Hicks, Harry Danton and Viv Booth are seated around the far end of the table. Prof Wally Holmes is standing on right.

origins in South London (but it was in his mother's background, and still is a theme of the wider family). Roger graduated from Wye College in 1961 (despite playing too much cricket and football) then went on to be assistant manager at the Wye College farm, under Phil Keen and married Liz Foden in February 1962. They lived in a cowman's cottage at Silks Farm during one of the coldest winters of the century. Liz remembers a two-bar fire and a 'hopeless' back boiler! But Roger chose for the wedding to be in February as it allowed him to be on the farm for the lambing season yet didn't 'mess up' the Cricket season.

For 20 years he played the Pantomime Dame to raucous applause

They moved to Thanet in 1963 for him to take up the farm manager post at Cleve Court Farm an 850-acre large-scale vegetable farm, with a large number of casual workers. (He promised Liz it would only be two years in Thanet!). He continued his association with Wye by inviting student tours of the farm with Phil Keen and John Nix, and subsequently he employed young graduates as assistant managers – David Easton, Pat Goode, Chris Ireland-Jones and Ian Veale, among them. Pat Goode remembers the two of them playing in the Agricola match in 1979. They had spent the morning lifting spuds, and Pat had also been at the Commem Ball the night before! Roger was a good man-manager, encouraging employees where they did well and so far as possible avoiding micro management. Wit and a quick jest were all that was needed if things didn't go quite so well. He continued to mentor them after they moved on and encouraged them to follow their interests.



Roger as 'the Dame' in later years in the Minster panto

In 1978 Roger gained a Nuffield Scholarship to study and research vegetable growing and irrigation in California concentrating on onions and Iceberg Lettuce. On his return, he found he enjoyed lecturing and gave talks showing slides to many farming groups. He became Director of the Sandwich District Growers Co-operative, and he later also became a Governor at Hadlow College and Chairman of the Canterbury Farmer's Club where he remained a regular attendant at the Chairman's farm walk. He also became involved with, and for a couple of years chaired, the CMA (now FMA) farm management discussion group that John Nix started. His last visit to Wye was very likely at John's funeral and the wake that was held in the Latin School.

He left Cleve Court in 1994 when he 'was retired' from farm management by the then owner, but he worked instead for the ATB and continued lecturing on man management and farming subjects in the UK and Spain. At this point he began to develop many of the talents that had helped him in his management and lecturing, and a new world of opportunities opened up for him.

He became a wedding photographer (about 160 weddings, the first of which was for Pat and Cherry Goode). He also became chair of the Friends of St Nicholas Church where he organised the biennial Open Gardens which

raised about £13,000 each time. He became involved in the Golf Club, Cricket Club and Rotary Club, organising charity events and mowing churchyards. He was even awarded the Paul Harris Fellowship, a rare honour, by the Rotary Club for his outstanding service to that organisation. Perhaps most bizarrely, for 20 years he played the Pantomime Dame at the Minster Playhouse to raucous applause.

Eventually he developed Parkinson's and, although for the outsider looking in, life seemed intolerable, he remained stoic and thankful for all that he had had and a 72-year long friendship with Liz.

Malcolm Levett (1967–70)

This tribute to Malcolm who died in 2010 is from information collected and supplied by Liz Gibbons (1967–70).

Malcolm Levett was born and raised in Kent before moving to London to commence a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Chemistry at Wye. Soon after the completion of his BSc, he undertook a botanical expedition with Liz Gibbons, **Bob Gibbons** and Sue Favell (not a Wye alumnus) to Afghanistan, spending several months there. After this he moved to New Zealand to take up a PhD scholarship

at Lincoln University in Christchurch. He completed his PhD in 1978 and married Linda shortly before moving to Papua New Guinea (PNG) to take up a position in 1981 with the Department of Primary Industry (later the Department of Agriculture and Livestock). A few years later he and his wife moved to the Laloki Research Station (now part of the National Agricultural Research Institute, NARI). They moved again in 1986 so Malcolm could take up a new position at the Highlands Agricultural Experiment Station at Aiyura. In late 1987, he and his (growing)



Malcolm with wife Linda, who accompanied him on his many and varied travels

family moved to the Lowlands Agricultural Experiment Station at Keravat (now also part of NARI) and not long after transferred to Vudal College. In late 1989, Malcolm and his family moved to University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), where he became Head of the Department of Geography and ran Unisearch. In mid-1997, he left UPNG but continued

his work in PNG with the Swiss firm SGS. In January 2010, afflicted with a debilitating motor neurone disease, Malcolm left PNG with his family and moved to Cairns. On 28 April 2010, Dr Malcolm Levett passed away. He is survived by his wife Linda and their four children.

Margaret McKendrick (1945–48)

A tribute to Margaret from information received from her cousin Norman Brown.

While lecturing at Hadlow College Margaret was involved with the NCCPG (National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens) now Plant Heritage and carried out an enormous amount of research on ©©Anemone (Japanese), comparing her plants with published descriptions and comparisons of living material. She photographed flowers, leaves, undersides of leaves and pollen. Her records are deposited at RHS Wisley. She wrote articles and contributed to books, rediscovered lost cultivars and exhibited plants from her collection.

Margaret was awarded National Collection status for Anemone (Japanese) in 1982. One of the original National Plant Collections, and the earliest awarded collection in private ownership, under the NCCPG. The collection was housed for some years at Hadlow College under Margaret's ownership and curation. In recent years she brought the collection back to her own garden.

In 1989 Margaret exhibited plants from the National Collection at the RHS Great Autumn show and won a Silver Gilt Lindley Medal. In 1998 Margaret exhibited at the 3rd International Symposium of Cultivated Plants at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh (RBGE). Margaret was awarded Scientific

Collection status in 1999 – for her work and research on the genus. Nominated by the Kent Group of Plant Heritage, she was recipient of the prestigious Brickell Medal in 2016 – presented by Chris Brickell at Hampton Court, July 2016.

Margaret continued with her work on naming and verification in the early years of the 21st century analysing leaf and flower shapes. CDs of her records were made and sent to RHS Wisley. Always embracing new ideas to further knowledge, in 2015, in her late eighties, she adopted the use of Persephone, a botanical plant database for Collection holders, when it was first launched.

Margaret wrote scientific articles, working for decades with plantsmen and women across Britain and Europe to further understanding and verification of naming of Japanese anemones, collaborating on articles and working with organisations such as the Natural History Museum, RHS, RBGE. She retired formally as a National Collection holder on 2 December 2021.

She lived in the village of Otford where she was involved with many activities in the village, particularly with the guides, bell ringing and helping to care for the local church. She took great delight in the cleaning of the brass candlesticks which are used to hold the lighted candles for candle lit events in the church.

Dr Mary (Molly) Duckworth (née Pybus) (1951–53 and staff 1953–1958) and Gill Mellor (née Duckworth) (1978–1981)

A double tribute from Tom Mellor (1978–81)

Wye is an extremely special place for our family. Not only did I meet my wife, Gill, there whilst studying as undergraduates in the 1980s, but her parents met there too, lecturing in the 1950s, and Gill spent her early childhood years living in the village.

It's with great sadness therefore that I write two obituaries for this year's journal. In May 2020, Molly Duckworth (née Pybus) died of pneumonia. After four years of keeping cancer

at bay, Gill Mellor (née Duckworth) followed her in November 2020.

Molly Duckworth (1951–58)

Molly was born in 1928 at Larkenshaw Farm, Chobam, Surrey. The farm was a dairy farm, with Guernsey cows, and she and her sister Anne had a happy childhood there.

When WWII broke out, Anne and Molly were offered the chance to be evacuated to Canada. With about three days' notice, they packed up and headed to Liverpool where they boarded a ship to Toronto. In Canada, Molly attended Bishops Strachan School and enjoyed a traditional Canadian upbringing. She attended summer camps, played ice



Molly, with a new addition to the family – she is 'greatly missed' by all.

hockey, learnt to skate and generally had a lovely time!

On returning to the UK, Molly headed to Cheltenham Ladies College to finish her exams, and then onto Royal Holloway to read Organic Chemistry. She moved to Wye for her PHD in Applied Plant Chemistry, where she also taught, and it was here that she met **John Duckworth**, another Wye lecturer.

They married in 1958 and due to this, Molly had to leave Wye as a lecturer as Senior Common Room members couldn't be married. They remained in Wye though, and in 1960 welcomed their first daughter Gillian to the family. A second daughter, Jane, arrived in 1962, and with her the family was completed. After this, Molly taught Chemistry at Ashford School for the next five years. Wye was always what Molly and John considered their 'true' home.

They left Wye in 1969 and moved to Aspley Guise as John changed jobs to work for the MLC in Bletchley. Molly also changed careers and became a maths teacher, teaching in both Bletchley and then closer to home at Bury Lawn.

John and Molly shared a great love of golf together and also loved sailing. Indeed, Molly never worked on Tuesday afternoons as that was ladies' day at the Golf club! As her eyesight failed Molly then took a step back from the golf course and took up bridge, her sharp mathematical mind being perfect for this game.

Grandchildren arrived in the late 1980s and 1990s and Molly was always a great asset to maths homework! Family was extremely important to both Molly and John; they weathered many storms together, the hardest being the illness and eventual death of their youngest daughter Jane in 2012 from MS. Fortunately, John never knew about Gill's

cancer, but Molly faced it with her customary stoicism.

Molly was even fortunate enough to meet the next generation, and she is greatly missed by us all.

Gill Mellor (1978–1981)

Gill was born in Canterbury on St George's day 1960 and grew up, until 1969, in Wye. Growing up amongst the hop fields and orchards of Kent was quite an idyllic rural childhood, and together with her younger sister Jane family holidays would alternate between her grandparents farm in Surrey and sailing and walking holidays either on the Norfolk or Devon coast. It was during this time that she began to recognise plants and birds and take an interest in the wider natural world.

In 1969 the family moved to Aspley Guise, just outside Milton Keynes, and Gill went to School in Leighton Buzzard where she tended towards the Sciences and Maths as well as playing hockey, the piano and flute. It was here she started working at the local Garden Centre, Frosts, at weekends and during the holidays and learned to look after and nurture plants for sale. I think it was here that unwittingly perhaps she started to compile her eventually encyclopaedic knowledge of both plants themselves and their Latin names.

Gill found numbers easy to work with and studied Maths (both pure and applied) along with other sciences and achieved straight A's at A level. It was at this point that she shocked the family by announcing at the last minute that she wasn't going to study Accountancy, for which she had a place at Exeter, but was going to study for a degree in Horticulture back at Wye.

It's fair to say that John and Molly were



Gill who, among her many talents, had an 'encyclopaedic knowledge of both plants themselves and their Latin names'.

secretly pleased that Gill had chosen to return to her roots and continue the connection with the college.

It was at this point we met.

Having chosen the same College, but to study Agriculture, my first recollection of Gill was on the second day of term. I was still unpacking and I was somewhere between trying to remember where the dining hall was and wondering whether I was going to be bright enough to keep up academically when **Gill Duckworth**, **Alison West (Boughen)** and **G Coffin (Walton)** waltzed into my room demanding to know everything about me. Where was I from, what did I like, what music did I listen to etc etc? ... as well as demanding

coffee and that they were happy to wait whilst I unpacked the kettle! This was scary stuff ... my Mother had warned me about forward women, but she didn't tell me that they came in threes!

That first term in 1978 saw many of us develop friendships and bonds which are still as strong over 42 years later, but it was close to the first Christmas break when, during a Sunday night gathering in the pub and with chairs at a premium, Gill eschewed the offer of a bar stool and said she would prefer to sit on my knee. From that moment my fate was sealed!

After graduating in 1981, Gill got her first job as head gardener to Rosemary Verey at

Barnsley House, near Cirencester. Mrs Verey was an adviser to Prince Charles amongst others and as well as having a great knowledge of classical garden design was an absolute stickler for straight lines, sharp edges and purpose in every part of the garden. It's easy to see her influence in our garden at home!

Mother had warned me about forward women, but she didn't tell me that they came in threes!

The next job couldn't have been more different as Gill moved to Faversham where she worked at the national fruit trials in a Science laboratory using tissue culture to propagate new plants.

Both Cirencester and Faversham are a long way from Hunmanby, so we decided to call a halt to the weekend travelling and married on 30 April 1983. In those first few years we reared calves together, and she did some part time lecturing at Askham Bryan along with catching and wrapping fleeces for a local sheep shearer. She drove tractors with various implements on the back and was an integral part of the harvesting team although one day she tipped both the grain and the trailer into the intake pit!

Whilst all this was happening, she began creating the garden, pretty much from a paddock, which we see today. Starting with fences to mitigate the wind, she developed a series of rooms which form the basis of the overall structure. She raked barrowfuls of stones from the soil to create borders and lawns and then bit by bit filled the various areas with all manner of plants whose Latin names rolled off her tongue without thinking.

In all of this not only did her character and attention to detail shine through but also her creativity and ability to spot an opportunity to make that part of the design unique. Of the many tributes that I received over the weeks following her death, the appreciation by people and friends whose gardens she had helped to frame and develop shone through, so that they had something that no one else had.

When the girls arrived, first Kate in 1987 followed by Jenni in 1989, she adopted similar principles in that whatever they did had to be to the best of their ability but never to the extent that it stifled either enthusiasm or creativity.

'A gracious and talented lady, Gill's influence is visible in everything which has been achieved at Hunmanby Grange'.

Throughout this period the garden continued to develop and she was always on the lookout for features to enhance the planting. Whether it was a few large stones from the banks of the Wharfe or large millstones when the local Blacksmiths closed down. Family holidays with our trailer tent always involved visiting gardens, and we rarely returned from anywhere without a car full of plants. She liked nothing better than planning a new border, the outline of which was always determined using an old hosepipe.

This enthusiasm led to us opening our garden to the public via the NGS for the first time in 1993 and continuing to do so for the next 26 years and for the last 15 as

a county organiser. During that time we've had thousands of visitors, raised thousands of pounds for various charities and enlisted the help of many friends. She was in her element, chatting and explaining the reasoning behind this border or that plant. In 2002 the garden and Gill were featured on BBC's Gardeners World.

When we started the brewery in 2003, she set about learning the meaning of marketing and dragged us along to this show or that and made full use of the skills she had developed when talking about plants. As we started to export, especially to Italy, she loved the excuse to visit new places and customers: however, not content to allow conversations to remain in English she set about, with Kate, to learn Italian. As with everything else she took it seriously and this culminated in her doing a tasting explanation to a full restaurant in Milan entirely in Italian, at the end of which the whole audience gave her a standing ovation!

I'm sure it was qualities like these which led to her accepting a role as a Deputy Lieutenant of East Yorkshire in 2016.

Maintaining family ties across the world was paramount in her philosophy. She was far more interested in people than material things, and she was devastated when her

sister Jane died in 2012 and for the rest of her life regarded herself as a proxy mother for her niece and nephews. She became a lovely (and respected, of course) mother-in-law and then an amazing Granny and Great Aunt, following the development of all the next generation with pride and enthusiasm. I have no doubt that this love of family and the support of a close-knit group of like-minded friends (many from Wye) was crucial to her accepting of the illness which finally took her life.

Of the many wonderful cards and letters I received, the following sums her up beautifully:

'A gracious and talented lady, Gill's influence is visible in everything which has been achieved at Hunmanby Grange, especially her beloved garden. What an amazing legacy she leaves.'

For more about Hunmanby Grange and the brewery and distillery business built up by Gill and Tim Mellor together, please see George Hosford's article about one of last year's Wye reunions on page 52.

Vera Medley (1948–51) died on 18 July 2021 after a short illness. She wrote a large number of articles on horticultural themes for local papers in Wiltshire to add to the articles and editorials she wrote for the house magazines of Fisons Ceylon and Tata Fison India which she edited for a number of years.

Call for contributions

Martin Rickatson, our new Editor, will need material for next year's Journal. So, do please think about sending something to him at:

jmr.agriculture@gmail.com

BSc Agric: a degree for all occasions

David Jackson (1961–64) describes how his General Agric degree led to an unexpectedly diverse career in terms of both locations and areas of expertise.

Looking back at my three years at Wye College, I have to say they were fulfilling in many ways, not least of which was that they provided me with an opportunity to meet so many fellow students from different backgrounds and farming experiences. Apart from the lectures and practical periods, the College provided a full range of activities including sports, athletics, exploration and many others. I met a great bunch of students there, some of whom I am pleased to say I still keep in touch with.

Two significant visits to the College by past Wye students who had chosen overseas careers occurred during my time there. **Dr Francis Shaxson (1952–55)** had spent a few years in Malawi and during home leave came to give a lively and inspiring talk to the Students Union on his experiences of working in that country. Secondly, **Stephen**

Carr (1948–51) gave us an update of his work, firstly in Sudan, followed by his work with developing smallholder tea gardens in southwest Uganda for teachers who, after Ugandan Independence, did not meet the Government of Uganda's teaching qualifications and thus were disqualified from government teaching jobs.

Since Stephen was working for the Church Missionary Society, the College had adopted him as a mission partner to whom money from fund-raising events could be channelled.

Both these inspirational talks decided that I would initially apply for an overseas appointment, which in the end lasted for some 25 years. This came soon after I qualified in the form of an Agricultural Officer with the Ministry of Agriculture in Uganda. At the time, the Government was looking to move away from smallholder



Stephen Carr learned straw thatching during his practical year in Norfolk.



*Stephen Carr,
re-grinding
his Renault R4
engine valves*

*A view of
Stephen's home
with newly
planted tea
bushes*



slash-and-burn farming systems to more settled production. This included introducing mechanical cultivation and the establishment of co-operatives for mainly cotton and maize. This involved bush clearing around 1000 acres

on which some 150 farmers would be settled. Due to my General Agriculture degree, I was appointed to the Land Planning Department. This was a wonderful introduction to tropical agriculture and seeing the beauty and

David Jackson in his jeep



diversity of Uganda. My home for two years was a caravan in the bush whilst I worked with a colleague who organised the heavy bush clearing with D8 caterpillar tractors and ship's anchor chains. My job was to map out the land to be cleared, using a plane table and aerial photographs and setting out the roads, soil conservation measures and field plots. A fellow newly qualified Agricultural College student took over the farms and handled the tractor cultivations and management of

the Group Farm. Meanwhile I transferred to another part of the country to begin clearing other new lands.

One of the places I visited was near Lake Kyoga in the centre of Uganda to clear 800 acres for a citrus farm based on irrigation from the lake. I learned much about citrus nursery work and grafting from the Israeli citrus expert who was managing this part of the scheme.

David's caravan in the bush in Uganda where he lived for two years





Citrus seedling on the estate where David worked in Swaziland (now Eswatini)

Over Christmas 1966 I was able to meet up in Kenya with **Colin Dickerson** (1961–63) (sadly now deceased) who was working with Huntings in Sudan and **Alan Smith** (1960–63) an Agricultural Research Officer in Arusha, Tanzania. Christmas was spent with my relatives in Nairobi, and together we drove to Mombasa for a few days by the sea.

Many pests attacked the fruit trees, including red scale, woolly aphids, spider mites, thrips and fruit flies.

After two years in Uganda, I noticed, whilst on leave in the UK, an advert in the *Farmers Weekly* for an Agronomist in Swaziland (now re-named Eswatini) working on a development scheme in the Swaziland bushveld. This

was managed by the Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC). I might have been appointed to work on any one of the development schemes operating there. These included sugar, livestock, rice or citrus. As it happened, I was allocated to the citrus-growing team developing a 1000-acre citrus estate producing mainly oranges and grapefruit for export and local markets. Other crops were also under investigation such as mangoes, avocado pears and macadamia nuts. Thus, my interests changed from tropical agricultural crops to those more related to horticulture.

During my time there I was fortunate to meet other Wye graduates working in Swaziland, including **Lewis Wallis** (1957–60) a CDC smallholder settlement manager growing sugar cane. Lewis and his lovely wife, Heather, were very good to me as a bachelor, inviting me round for Sunday lunches and other events. I also met up with **David Gooday** (1957–61) who was working

at the University of Swaziland. We spent a memorable three-week trip over Christmas and New Year in 1968 touring Lesotho, Cape Town (climbing Table Mountain on Christmas morning) and back along the South Africa Garden Route to Durban and returning to Swaziland.

After four years of working on the citrus estate, my job changed to that of managing the citrus crop-spraying programme. Many pests attacked the fruit trees, including red scale, woolly aphids, spider mites, thrips and fruit flies, not to mention fungal diseases such as phytophthora, Melanose and greasy spot. Feeling I needed further education to handle my new role, I wrote to **Professor Louis Wain** (Head of the Chemistry Department at Wye) for advice about a suitable course. He kindly replied suggesting I apply to Silwood Park Field

Station, which is linked to Imperial College, to undertake a MSc in Applied Entomology which I succeeded in completing in 1970.

During the year of my studies, I became acquainted with Angela, a student nurse at Barts Hospital in London and by the end of the year we became married. We then returned to Swaziland for a further four years with me as Pest and Diseases Manager for the citrus estate, whilst Angela became involved with a Red Cross feeding programme amongst the Swazi young women.

Leaving Swaziland in 1976 with two young children, we spent a couple of years at an Adventure Centre in the Weald of Kent before getting an ODA contract as a Research Officer at the Agricultural Research Station in Lesotho. Here with my BSc Agric and MSc Applied Entomology degree under



Wye alumni Colin Dickerson, Alan Smith and David Jackson

my belt, I began working on a horticultural research programme looking at vegetables able to cope with widely fluctuating diurnal temperatures in the highlands of Lesotho as well as essential oils crops. How I wish I had attended the voluntary statistics lectures at Wye. It would have helped me so much more working out significant differences of 3X3 factorial experiments! It was here I met up with **Andrew Spurling** (1958–61) (now no longer with us) and **Daphne Spurling** (1959–62) working at the same research station.

This is a fascinating country where true hospitality by the local smallholder farmers was so appreciated.

Following this, life took a different turn when I moved to St Lucia in the Eastern Caribbean as a Regional Tree Crop Adviser with DFID for five years. By now we had three children and life in beautiful St Lucia was a wonderful place in which the youngsters could thrive. I was now working with smallholder farmers to mitigate the regular destruction of banana crops due to hurricane damage to diversify to more resilient tree crops like mangoes, citrus, avocado pears and coffee.

In 1987, the opportunity came to visit North Yemen for three years on a DFID-funded

multidisciplinary programme. My input as the horticulturist on the team was to enable local farmers to plant deciduous fruit tree crops such as apples, peaches and plums in the highlands and sub-tropical citrus, coffee and mangoes in the middle belt. Tomatoes and salad crops were often interplanted with the fruit trees. This is a fascinating country where true hospitality by the local smallholder farmers was so appreciated. Sadly, the country is now in disarray with geopolitics playing a major part.

For the final 10 years of my working life, I returned to the UK and took a home-based job in farming systems research at the Natural Resources Institute based in Chatham. By this time, my career path had made a complete circle, as I now returned to working with agricultural field crops such as maize, peanuts, beans etc with short visits to Kenya, Ghana and Tanzania. This involved linking with national research centres in those countries and supporting them with finance and technical help from UK universities.

I and Angela are now retired and living in the far west of Cornwall overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. Thankfully, we both keep well and, possibly due to our four married children growing up overseas, three of them are now abroad in various occupations.

One thing is for sure, when I graduated with a General Agric degree, little did I know it would lead me into both field and horticultural crops, and with God's help, it has been rewarding and fulfilling.

A life in pictures: from Wye to Western Australia

Richard C G Smith (1961–64) charts his path from studying as a third-generation Smith at Wye to the publication of his book on satellite remote sensing and its use in the fight against climate change.

My grandfather, Cuthbert Smith, was a lecturer at Wye and my father, Gordon Smith, and his brother, Alan Smith were horticultural graduates from Wye College. They were fruit farmers, but I disliked pruning apple trees, so

was persuaded to do agriculture. In 1965 I graduated BSc Agric (first-class honours), which automatically gave me a Ministry of Agriculture scholarship for post-graduate study.





Captain of Wye Tennis Team – 1964. Richard is front row, third from left.



In Wye Rugby Team 1963-64. Richard is backrow, third from left



Richard climbing in the Swiss Alps with fellow Wye student Colin Dickerson in 1963/64: on the summit of the Rimpfischhorn 4199m

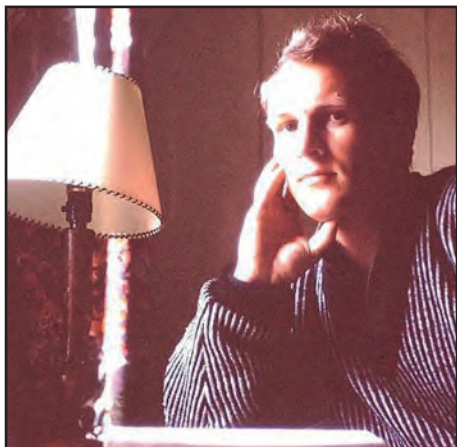
Having studied enough, I selected the shortest possible course, a one-year Diploma in Agricultural Economics, at Oxford University.

While there the *Farmer's Weekly* advertised exciting developments in Western Australia for private farm economists. Rather than return to working on the family farm, I expressed interest. Back came a telegram appointing me Farm Management Consultant, to the Broomehill Farm Advisory Group, south Western Australia (WA0).

So, aged 23, I was advising 35 farmers managing over a million acres of sheep-wheat agriculture in a Mediterranean environment quite unlike anything in the UK. My job was to create financial plans for farmers to gain bank credit to expand production. My tools were a hand adding machine and slide rule – no hand-held calculators or computers.



Richard as a student at St John's College Oxford outside lodgings in Museum Road



At St John's College, Oxford, pondering a future as a Farm Management Consultant in Western Australia

After two years, economics seemed a dismal science so, in 1968, I switched back to agronomy with an Australian Wool Board Scholarship, to do a PhD at the University of Western Australia on grazing systems with a thesis on 'Early Growth of Annual Pasture and Live Weight Gain of Sheep in South-Western Australia'. With rising interest in systems theory, in 1971 I was awarded a CSIRO Postdoctoral Studentship to the University of California, Davis, to learn the mathematical modelling of dynamic ecological systems through the numerical solution of sets of non-linear differential equations. This was achieved using Fortran 4 on a mainframe computer via decks of punched 80 column Hollerith Cards.



Above: in Israel in 1979, Agricultural Research Organisation, Volcano Centre, Bet Degan, Israel, course on Micro Irrigation Science

Left: as Farm Management Consultant to the Broomehill Farm Advisory Group, South Western Australia – 1966. Looking professional with a brief case!

As Research Leader, CSIRO Irrigation Research, Griffith, NSW 1980

Next (1972–80) there was a Senior Lectureship in Agronomy and Soil Science, in Rural Science at the University of New England, New South Wales (NSW), teaching final year students, Theoretical Agriculture.

After a sabbatical year in Israel, the Netherlands and Texas USA, I became (1980–88) Research Leader in Irrigation Research at CSIRO Griffith, NSW.

The task – to improve the efficiency of irrigation water use. My research was on infra-red thermometry for remote measurement of crop water stress. Then, in 1989, I was invited, with a Senior Research Associateship, to NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Maryland, USA, to scale up my research from field to continental scale using satellite remote sensing.

At this time the Western Australian Government was introducing the new technology of satellite remote sensing. I transferred back to the West with CSIRO in



1990 and worked for the WA Government developing applications for management of renewable resources and managing the WA Governments Satellite Remote Sensing Centre until retirement in 2006.



Receiving an award for sales of Landsat data from the Manager of the Australian Centre for Remote Sensing 2000



Consulting with members of the Indonesian Forest Fire Protection in Palangkaraya in Central Kalimantan



Consulting on the installation of a Sea Space X-band antenna for reception of data from the Terra and Aqua Satellites

The story is told in our book – which I co-authored with Henry Houghton – *Eyes in the Sky: Surveillance for Survival*. Emphasis on future applications is on climate change, since the only surefire way to extract CO₂ from the

air is by photosynthesis of which Western Australia has no shortage of land and coastal waters for this purpose using the principle 'To measure is to manage'.



After retirement, researching the History of Satellite Remote Sensing in the WA Government in 2016



Presenting a copy of Eyes in the Sky to Professor Siddique, Director of Institute of Agriculture, University of Western Australia where I did my PhD 1968–70.

For more information about *Eyes in the Sky*, see the Book Review, page 244 and the publisher's website: www.australianauthors.store/richard-smith-and-henry-houghton.

Call for contributions

Martin Rickatson, our new Editor, will need material for next year's Journal. So, do please think about sending something to him at:
jmr.agriculture@gmail.com

Come to the Agricola Hog Roast!

**Sunday 3 July 2022
 at Roves Farm,
 Swindon, Wiltshire.
 See Green Form at
 back of Journal.**

More than just farming

Prompted by all the reminders, Richard Symes (1970–73) thought it was about time to contribute to the Journal.

Do something before it is too late!

I was one of the eight College students who went on the 1972 Malawi expedition, and sadly there are now only six of us still above ground: **Sam Kent, Bob Berry, Pete Overton, Pandora Thoresby, Ann Caffal (née Hargreaves)**. We have lost **John Nursaw** and **Hugh Synge**. Still a team of eight, their funerals were well attended by the rest of us.

My career has been an arable farmer in East Suffolk. Lucky to start with 140 acres (following the sale of my Dad's business) and this grew to about 400.

Fairly conventional arable, wheat, rape, peas/beans mostly, but also woodland and Stewardship schemes. For many years my agronomist was **Ed Brown** (1963–66). Interesting life maybe, but an article about conventional farming in East Anglia would probably bore the pants off any Agricola Club member.

I had three years between leaving Wye and starting farming. I have always enjoyed DIY on a large scale – making furniture, repairing buildings and erecting new ones. The first year was spent renovating a dilapidated cottage, subsequently sold when the farming started. **Richard Cooper** (1972–75) was my lodger there. Still see him, we go sailing together.

During the next two years I helped convert an old fishing boat into someone's home, helped my brother on his farm and signed on with a small craft delivery company. I had always sailed from childhood, so the latter was great fun. Delivering commercial tugs, one from the UK to Libya. Off-loading an Admiral's Cup

yacht from a freighter in Le Havre, rigging it, and bringing it across to Southampton and several other trips.

After a few years farming, I married Debbie. She loves dogs and horses and, more recently, roses.

She has collected old and unusual roses for our garden which now has some 460 different varieties. We love our garden and in June it is amazing.

**At the other extreme
I raced a 505 dinghy
with a great friend
... There were calms,
storms as well as
thrills and spills.**

Her main passion has been riding dressage, so the first farm diversification was an equestrian centre. We converted redundant buildings for stables etc, and put down a sand arena.

Soon after that we built an indoor riding arena. I found some cowboy demolition guys who sold me a huge secondhand steel frame with all the cladding. They even came here and put it up. Together with more DIY we ended up with a bargain and over the years since have had training events with some of Europe's top trainers, hosted many competitions and championships.

Early on in my farming career I joined a local farmer cooperative. One thing led to another,

and I became a director. There were mergers of cooperatives, which I encouraged, and I ended up on the main board, of what is now Fram Farmers (www.framfarmers.co.uk). I probably remained a director for too long but the group's journey to become one of the country's foremost farmer groups was fascinating.

During these years I kept sailing. Shared a little 25-foot old gaff-rigged boat with my brother. Something with 'character' even if slow. Old gaffer festivals, single-handed round the Thames estuary and trips across to France.

At the other extreme I raced a 505 dinghy with a great friend. A partnership that lasted 30 years until he suddenly died a couple of years ago from a brain haemorrhage. He was two years younger than I am. There were calms, storms as well as thrills and spills.

In 2009 I gave up in-hand farming and contracted out the arable work to my neighbour. This turned out to be a good decision, helped by an excellent agreement set up by **David Bolton** (1970–74) who I see regularly and take sailing.

I keep doing the conservation work myself. We have about 18% of the farm in woodland or various stewardship options. I coppice the woodland and heat our house and two others with the wood. We also dry all our wheat by burning straw.

Encouraged into renewables by Hugh Synge (who was also on the Malawi Expedition), I installed a 275kw wind turbine in 2012.

It has had its fair share of problems, but they are now in the past and currently we have a



One of Richard's favourite past-times is ski-touring with the Alpine Ski Club

profitable enterprise which makes the whole farm net carbon neutral.

Another pastime in the winter has been skiing. Debbie gave up after a few years, and I got into off-piste skiing and then ski touring. This has taken me all over Europe. As well as numerous trips to many parts of the Alps, I have ski-toured in Norway, Poland, the Pyrenees, Kosovo and Montenegro. Way out in the back country, on glaciers, abseiling down the odd couloir, standing on many summits.

Now secretary to the Alpine Ski Club (www.alpineskiclub.org.uk), I ski with friends who have ski-toured in Greenland, Antarctica, Alaska, Himalayas. Just organised a very posh dinner for them at The Savile Club in London!

With a bit of spare time after offloading the arable farming, I applied to join the East of England Advisory Board of the National Trust. To my surprise they accepted me, and I spent six years on the inside of that organisation. They are, after all, the largest landowner in the region and the country, so as a farmer I was not out of place.

Met lots of fascinating people and occasionally might have contributed something useful, but I will never forget my first meeting which had an agenda item to approve the cost of renovating a pair of gates. £750,000 seemed more than enough to a humble farmer.

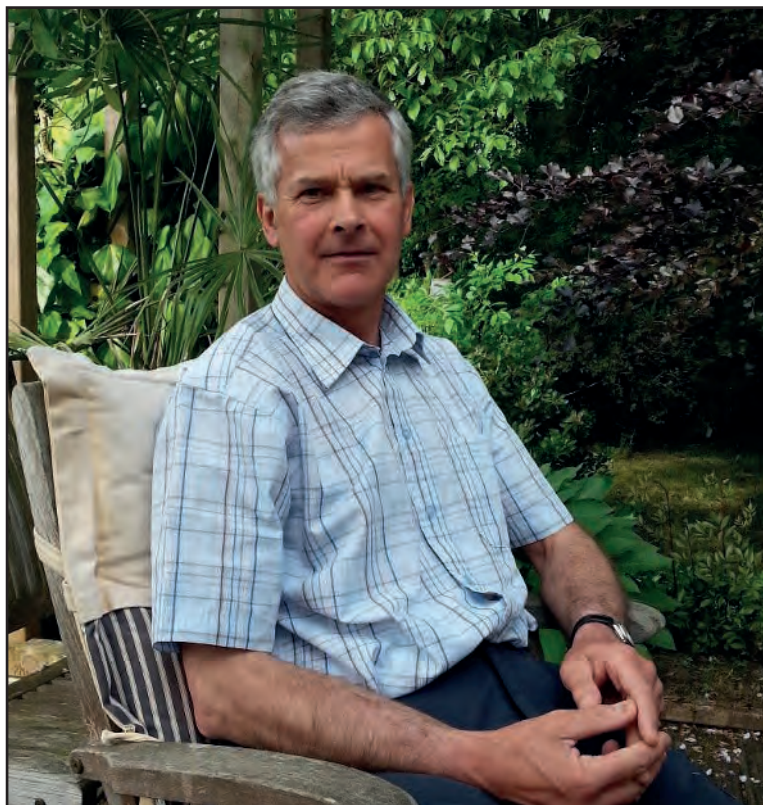
I continue to volunteer for the Trust and have researched the history of my local property,

Dunwich Heath. The Trust thought nothing had ever happened there, but I've changed that. Smuggling, Coastguards, shipwrecks, a WW2 radar station and practice area for the Normandy landings is just some of it (www.nationaltrust.org.uk/dunwich-heath-and-beach/news/hidden-history-to-be-revealed-at-dunwich-heath).

They are currently building a history exhibition there and have too many stories and not enough space. I now give illustrated talks and walks to interested groups.

Sutton Hoo, another Trust property near here, was featured in the recent film *The Dig*.

I had been aware for a while of this project to build a replica of the Sutton Hoo ship



Richard's current goal is to use an axe to make an oar from a tree from his farm and eventually use it as one of the 40 oarsmen to row the finished replica Anglo-Saxon ship down the river Deben.

at Woodbridge, just across the river from Sutton Hoo. This is an independent project, not a National Trust one (<https://saxonship.org>) Not something I thought I needed to get involved with. This is living archaeology. There is so much they don't know about the ship and the only way to find out is to build one the Anglo-Saxon way. For a start the Anglo Saxons did not have saws!

Graham said to the girl behind the bar: 'When I last came in here it was one and sixpence a pint!'

Last Spring after all the research and design, they began to build the ship (which will take three years) and I discovered they hadn't got any wood. As a practical chap this seemed to me to be a rather fundamental problem! It is a 27-metre wooden boat. This bunch of archaeologists and shipwrights had no connections with any landowners.

I said they could have a tree from the farm. They were delighted. Then I learnt that timber for this type of ship building is somewhat demanding in specification. I had hardly got anything suitable. We don't grow ship-building timber in this country anymore.

Not deterred I thought others might also like to donate a tree. With no idea of my chances of success I started sending emails, calling in favours, renewing old contacts. It worked, and today I have secured the bulk of the timber they need and am hopeful of getting the remainder. All donated and worth about £100,000.

My personal goal is now to use an axe to make an oar from a tree from my farm and

eventually use it as one of the 40 oarsmen and help row the finished ship down the river Deben.

I meet up with **Graham Rawlings** (1970–73) occasionally for a walking trip. Pre-covid we did about 30 miles around Wye over a couple of days. We stopped at The Compasses in Crundale for a lunch break and two pints cost £6 or more. Graham said to the girl behind the bar: 'When I last came in here it was one-and-sixpence a pint!' The girl didn't know what he was talking about, and for a brief moment we felt rather old!

To get back to farming, another recent project is leading a farm cluster (www.farmerclusters.com). Trying to herd all the local farmers into a group and work with Suffolk Wildlife Trust so we can deliver landscape scale 'public goods' for public money. We are off to a good start and should be well placed to embrace the new era of farming. Started a while ago with just three farms and now about 20.

We have a lot of farm ponds around here, newts galore, but SWT has discovered we have a stonewort, *Nitella Capillaris*, growing in a few ponds. Extraordinary, as it is listed as extinct in the UK, having last been seen near Cambridge in about 1953.

All in all, an exciting journey that goes full circle because one of the new members of our cluster is Jonny Vaughan MBE. He is also CEO of the Lilongwe Wildlife Trust (www.lilongwewildlife.org) which today cares for the wildlife in Malawi.

Fifty years ago, eight of us from Wye did some of the initial research work on the Nyika plateau which led to the expansion of the National Park. Jonny was delighted when I gave him a dusty old spare copy of our 1972 report!

My years as a black sheep ... and what happened next

Andrew Betts (1985-88) takes the opportunity to take some time out to reflect on life at and after Wye.

With a fulfilling and challenging job that (a bit like the man-eating plant in *Little Shop of Horrors*) consumes every minute of my time, aging parents and two teenage children gearing up for their GCSEs and A levels, I never find time to 'reflect' on anything. So, the invitation to write something for the Journal was a welcome prompt to do so. Here goes ...

Life at Wye (1985-1988)

I was drawn to study Agriculture by an interest in biology, a love of the outdoors, a desire to do something practical and the genes imparted by my mother, who was a Lincolnshire farmer's daughter. Visits to Sutton Bonnington and the old Nissen which housed Reading University's Agriculture Department were swiftly forgotten when I stepped off the train, crossed the river and walked up the hill to this picture-postcard village on the North Downs. Was this for real? My choice was made.

What a place to study it proved to be. Among the abiding memories of my time at Wye were visits to the College farm, walks on the Downs in search of bee orchids, multi-legged races in the quads and Auntie Jeanne's legendary Sunday roasts at Withersdane. Now just how many different vegetables can you cook in a galley kitchen, and cram on to a dinner plate?

Jeanne Ingram wasn't the only character on the staff. **Paul Burnham** was eccentric but had a heart of gold. **Mike Copland** managed

to make entomology interesting by adding theatre to his lectures, extending his arm from his nose to demonstrate the snout of a weevil. My Director of Studies **David Scarisbrick** took a genuine interest in my wellbeing and provoked me to defend my beliefs. When attendance at one of his lectures was poor (perhaps there'd been a party the night before?), he asked me to take a register of students – only to discover that I too was absent – and therefore in trouble! A laugh was had and forgiveness extended.

I was a bit of a black sheep on the Agriculture course. Many of my peers were privately educated farmers' children destined to work on their family farms after graduation. My closest friends were largely drawn from the RES course, Africa (there was a huge intake from Cameroon in my year) and the Christian Fellowship. Looking back, I think I hung out with people who leaned politically further left than most members of the JSF or Rugby Club. I moved out of Withersdane to lodge with other students a few miles out of Wye in the magnificent home of the ex-Dean of Canterbury Cathedral and his hospitable wife.

While famine raged in Ethiopia and Geldof asked impolitely for donations, I learnt how to produce 10 tonnes of wheat per hectare in lectures on Crop Production – and how to deal with the surplus thus created in lectures on Agricultural Economics. Hearing about how post-war agriculture had caused the loss of 95% of the UK's wildflower meadows,

I did my 'Special Study' on how to create them again.

My interest began to turn towards Africa where food was in shorter supply, and I lobbied, unsuccessfully, for the module in Tropical Agriculture to be made eligible for my Agriculture degree. Bizarrely, despite it being an 'Agriculture' module, it could only count as a credit towards a degree in Horticulture. I attended some of the lectures anyway.

I kept my head down to meet the excessive demands of the infamous Soil Science 1 and worked hard prior to the final year exams. My strategy was to read an extra source of information for each module in the hope of giving the examiners something different to what they'd receive from everybody else. In one exam I wrote about controlling soil erosion in Ethiopia's Wollo Highlands. After all, didn't agriculture take place all over the world?

Returning from the Wind Tunnel where the degree results had been pinned to finish a game of croquet on the Vicarage Lawn (now where else could that happen?) a friend commented 'No real surprises there, apart from you Andrew!' My degree was good enough to be awarded the '1988 National Association of British and Irish Millers Prize'. I chose *The Times Atlas of the World* – the

biggest and most expensive book I'd ever seen. It cost £60 even back then!

Ashburnham Place (1988-1991)

My Agric peers found jobs in the industry or returned to their family farms. And so, unexpectedly, in a rather strange way, did I. My parents had been appointed as Managers of a Charitable Trust that ran Ashburnham Place, a Christian Conference Centre in East Sussex set in 220 acres of woodland, grounds and lakes landscaped by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown in the late eighteenth Century. The woodland had been devastated by the 1987 hurricane, the lakes declared unsafe and a legal demand placed upon the Trust to build new spillways. When my parents went for their job interview, the Fire Brigade were on site pumping water from one lake to another to avoid a catastrophic dam collapse.



In the grounds of Ashburnham Place with 'Emma' and the crane!

For three years I worked with a Brunelian character called Gordon Labbett who was charged to create order from the chaos armed only with a small team of international volunteers, some chain saws, an old Fordson Major called 'Emma', a Ford 3000 and a Thwaites Dumper that had no brakes and was an absolute pig to crank start on a cold morning. Oh, and almost no budget. We hauled fallen trees out of the woodland and cut them down for timber using a homemade saw bench driven from the Ford's power take-off through a salvaged truck gearbox in reverse to make the blade spin faster. As I slowly hand cranked the trunk along the bench and the tractor rocked and threatened to overturn, I'd never been more terrified in my life.

The Inspecting Engineer visited and took photographs to show his students how things were done in the then so-called 'third world'.

Without funds to employ a contractor or hire the plant required, we did everything on a shoestring. Gordon tasked me with building the steel reinforcing and shuttering for the three massive intakes and stilling basins to link Capability Brown's chain of lakes. We made concrete using an old mixer fed by ballast and cement from a plywood chute and water delivered from a toilet cistern (one flush per batch). We built a crane using steel box section and parts from a Caterpillar D8 dug up from Gordon's garden; he'd buried it there after retiring from his earth-moving

business. The Inspecting Engineer visited and took photographs to show his students how things were done in the then so-called 'third world'.

It was wonderful preparation for my next step; with the principles of agriculture learned from Wye and the way to get things done with limited resources from Gordon, my education was complete. I headed to Africa.

In Kenya with VSO (1991–95)

I applied for Voluntary Service Overseas and was accepted on my second attempt. After short training courses in cross-cultural working and tropical agriculture at Bishop Burton College, I departed for Kenya in May 1991. I was posted as an Agriculture Instructor in a Youth Polytechnic in the small rural village of Ngelani, just north of Machakos. Surrounded by hills terraced to grow subsistence crops and coffee, it was an incredible place to live and work; on a clear day I could see the snow-capped peaks of mount Kilimanjaro to the South and Mount Kenya to the north. The lack of electricity and running water were simply not an issue when nobody else had them, and I quickly learned how to collect my water from the local spring and cook on charcoal and paraffin like everybody else around me.

At the Poly, primary school leavers unable to afford the secondary school fees took a two-year course in carpentry, metalwork, masonry or tailoring/dressmaking. Since they all came from local families reliant on subsistence farming, they all had a couple of agriculture lessons per week. My local counterpart Josiah Makau was a joy to work with and quickly became a close friend. We learnt from each other constantly for the nearly five years that followed, as was supposed to happen with VSO.

Andrew in Africa

In the classroom and on the demonstration farm that we established, we taught and practised Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture (LEISA). We grew maize, beans and vegetables, made tonnes of compost and kept chickens, goats, rabbits, bees and a Friesian/ Zebu cross dairy cow called 'Mwende' (which means 'loved' in the local language Kikamba). Income from the milk funded most of what we did, including a successful nursery that supplied agroforestry and fruit tree seedlings to the local community. Along the edges of the farm terraces we planted *Grevillea* trees and Napier Grass for animal fodder. Our outreach included the construction of 'zero grazing' units and the establishment of a farm supplies and hardware shop in the village. Students had their own individual plot on the farm and took home the skills they had learned to their families to apply in the daily fight against poverty.

A few years into my placement, my focus turned towards water, and specifically to rehabilitating an old project in the hillside village of Kisekini. Mobilising the community, addressing the political and social issues around water ownership and distribution as well as the cultural ones arising from a source located near to a local religious shrine were all challenging. We formed a small committee and team to make it happen and employed 20 men for a month to dig out a silted dam using shovels and wheelbarrows. We raised money for machinery and installed it at the dam to pump water to a header tank on the highest point in the area. From the tank it flowed by gravity to the homes in four surrounding villages and a dozen public places such as churches and schools (including the Ngelani YP) as well as public water kiosks. Water was sold from the kiosks by the jerrycan for a nominal fee to



Students learn practical agriculture

cover our running costs. On a good day, up to 5,000 people were using the water, which was chlorinated using a home-made dosing device. We worked day and night laying pipes, repairing leaks, locating blockages, installing water meters. Blood, sweat and tears flowed with the water – which brought joy as it emerged from every tap.

Helping people to secure the basics of survival, being absorbed into a local community struggling to overcome poverty and making so many good friends was a life-changing experience that I still draw on today. It set me up for a continued career in community development in Africa.



Joy as piped water reaches Ngelani primary school

In transition (1995-2001)

I could have stayed until VSO eventually drew time on my volunteer placement but after nearly five years my beard was long and my motorbike broken from carrying too many bags of cement, and it was time to move on. The community held a leaving party for me at the pump house with goat stew and chapattis and a busload of them travelled to the airport to see me off; it was all very emotional and there was a lot of love around.

Back in the UK, people simply didn't understand how most of the world's population survive on a dollar a day (how could they?) and seemed more interested in the football results. I freaked out in the supermarket, got depressed and didn't really know what to do with the rest of my life. But I got through it eventually.

VSO recognised that my volunteer experience had cemented my belief in the power of their skill-sharing model and the humanity we all share. They thought that I might be a good advocate for their cause and offered me a job as a fundraiser even though I'd barely seen, never mind operated, a computer before. I think they must have been invented while I'd been away.

It was in the VSO office that I met my beloved wife Jane, also a 'returned volunteer' and development worker who shared the desire to make a difference among the world's poorest. We got married, did a secondment in Cameroon together and moved to Milton Keynes, where she took a job as a Programme Manager for the development agency World Vision. I moved on from VSO to the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG, now Practical Action). The charity was founded by E F Schumacher, author of *Small is Beautiful A Study of Economics as if People Mattered*. Schumacher's principles

of production from local resources for local needs to build self-reliance were in line with my thinking, but I was uncomfortable with some of the trappings of the aid industry and the value for money I observed; it was a long way from VSO.

ITDG sent me to Kenya to train some of their local fundraising staff and after seeing me engage with local people during a project visit, a colleague told me that I was 'totally in the wrong job' working to secure funds for big programmes from DFID and the EU.

I took the opportunity to return to Ngelani to visit old friends, one of whom, Lesah Musyoki showed me a small unit she had started for children with intellectual disabilities in a primary school. Mrs Musyoki was an inspirational community leader responding to an unmet need with limited resources, among a neglected and stigmatised group of people. It struck me that her story was similar to many I'd seen in my time as a VSO volunteer, but one that was largely untold in the UK, where the media shaped a public perception of Africa as a continent beset by disaster and overflowing with victims. It struck me that a key ingredient of a successful development project was a person like her, and that her story of locally led development needed to be told.

Advantage Africa (2001 to date)

Mrs Musyoki approached Jane and I for support to expand her fledgling project. We wanted to respond positively, and cautiously began planning to establish our own charity 'Advantage Africa' to enable us to support her initiative, and perhaps others.

While our ambitions grew, it became clear that they would not be fulfilled while we are both working in demanding full-time jobs. We sought God's guidance and were inspired by Bible verses such as Proverbs 31 v 8-9:

'Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.'

Around this time, Jane was reading the biography of Leonard Cheshire (the wartime Lancaster pilot and founder of the disability charity of the same name) and his words encouraged us further. He wrote:

'Ever since the beginning I have maintained that my only chance of succeeding [to start the charity] was to be perpetually short of money. If I had my own choice I would like to end each day not knowing how to manage for the next. Then I would be thrown entirely into the arms of Providence and would ultimately learn to refer everything to God.'

The encouragements to take a leap of faith eventually overcame our concerns about how we'd pay the mortgage, and I gave up

my job at ITDG to devote myself fully to establishing and running Advantage Africa. We sold an old radio for £10 and used it to start the organisation. Our first purchase – a fundraising guide!

Advantage Africa was founded as a registered charity in 2002 on the values of justice, equality, and opportunity for Africa's poorest and most excluded people. Motivated by our Christian faith, we were keen to build on the determination and resilience of inspirational community leaders like Mrs Musyoki to overcome poverty and the stigma surrounding disability and HIV. Our first project helped her establish the unit at Mitaboni primary school for 40 disabled children so they could gain an education and learn basic life skills; it later led us to support communities in Kisayani and Thinu to establish similar units. In these schools, Advantage Africa incubated



Mitaboni Special Unit under construction

a ground-breaking model of transition from school to community for young people with intellectual disabilities that is now being adopted, in partnership with the Kenya Institute of Special Education, across the whole country.

In 2004 the Jerusalem Trust provided a grant towards the charity's growth and, a year later, Andrews Charitable Trust invested further in our work and provided two Trustees to join the board of men and women with a wide-ranging experience of international development that we'd brought together to govern the charity.

The charity has steadily grown from those small beginnings; it now has four UK staff and supports more than 30 development workers in nine partner organisations in Kenya and Uganda, all working to help vulnerable people to improve their education, health and incomes. This year we will celebrate 20 years of supporting some of East Africa's most vulnerable people to build a better future for their families and communities.

Advantage Africa's distinctive approach to development comes from our focus on reaching the most vulnerable, practical action not rhetoric, genuine partnerships with local people and their community groups, and our relentless pursuit of sustainability. Handouts from the outside don't usually bring about long-term change, and that's why Advantage Africa works directly, as Jane and I did as VSO volunteers, with local people and their communities to find local solutions to local problems.

We're still enabling disabled children to attend school for the first time, people living with HIV to access life-saving medicines and single-parent families to earn an income and meet their basic needs. These practical projects provide life-changing opportunities



Poultry provide eggs and income

and real hope for the future. Household reliance on farming for livelihoods means that I'm still involved in agriculture; for example, we've now run over 20 community projects promoting poultry, goats and pigs for thousands of people. A degree in Agriculture from Wye College proved a wonderful foundation for a career in international development!

Albinism Project (2013 to date)

One of Advantage Africa's most innovative initiatives has been our growing work with people with albinism in Uganda, who face multiple challenges which restrict their daily lives. These include visual impairments and extreme vulnerability to skin cancer because they lack the protective pigment melanin in their skin. Without support to prevent skin cancer, their life expectancy is just 30 years.

People with albinism also face negative attitudes and misunderstanding from their communities and persecution by unscrupulous individuals who believe the body parts of people with albinism will make them rich and powerful. Limbs, hair and nails are in high demand by witch doctors, and because of this many people with albinism live in fear of their lives.

When Annette met our team and experienced their love and care she described them as 'my new family'

Such challenges mean that people with albinism are often excluded from education and have limited opportunities to earn a sustainable income. They lack access to basic medical care, and most don't have the knowledge or money needed to adequately protect themselves from the sun.

Advantage Africa's project now supports more than 1,000 people with albinism in Uganda to improve all aspects of their lives starting with protection against skin cancer. Working in partnership with Peter Ogik and his organisation – the Source of the Nile Union of Persons with Albinism (SNUPA) – we run over 40 skin clinics a year. These provide education about the condition, wide-brimmed hats, high SPF sunscreen and early intervention cryotherapy to remove pre-cancerous lesions.

The project also aims to debunk myths and raise awareness of the needs and potential of people with albinism so that they can avoid abuse, access school and employment,

help themselves and overcome the misunderstanding and prejudice that causes them to be so disadvantaged.

In more than 30 years of working in development in Africa, I have never come across a group of people more misunderstood and marginalised than people with albinism. Our work to prevent needless early deaths and help children and adults with albinism to feel safe, accepted and included within their communities is perhaps the project of which we are most proud.

To put this in context, earlier this week, we funded surgery for a woman called Annette who had skin cancer which had eaten away part of her ear (no NHS or free health care in Uganda!). Until she contacted our team, Annette had never seen another person with albinism before or a bottle of sunscreen – in her entire life. As is often the case among children born with albinism, she was abandoned at birth and has lived an isolated and stigmatised life ever since. Our project manager Peter told us how she was entirely ignorant of the genetic basis of her condition or the need to protect herself from the sun, 'had no idea why she was white' and was routinely charged more than others to travel in public vehicles. Her only real friend was her loving husband, who supported her and resisted the discrimination she constantly faced, until he died last year. When she met our team and experienced their love and care she described them as 'my new family'.

To find out more about the work of **Advantage Africa: Pathways out of Poverty** or to donate, visit the charity's website at www.advantageafrica.org.

Recollections

Geoff Goodson (1961–64) on why his inability to speak French turned out to be the key to his future happiness.

Parly Vous Francais?

I have much to be thankful for about my lack of linguistic skill.

I grew up on a small farm in rural Leicestershire, attended the local village school in the late 1940s and somehow passed the 11-plus to the local Grammar School in Melton Mowbray. This was considered somewhat of an unexpected achievement, as only three from our class of 25 made the cut. I was not the most attentive of pupils, and my granddaughter, 50 years later, found my name frequently in the school punishment book!

In 1953 I started at the 'Grammar', and must have improved my attention span, as I successfully negotiated O levels, with the exception of French! Into the Sixth form I went, playing cricket for the school and the local club as much as three days a week. By now I was concentrating on Physics, Chemistry and Biology and was really enjoying myself. All through my school days I was a member of the local Young Farmers Club, competing at the County Rally in strange events such as wrapping up a stack sheet and some stock judging. Naturally, growing up on a mixed farm you learnt at your father's knee, so to speak and it was assumed in the family that I would be involved in a farming future.

At the start of my second-year sixth, the teachers thought I might get through my three A levels, and I should think about further education. We did not have a Careers Advisor but an appointment was made for me to visit the Headmaster's office. I had

been called in there before but for issues with pranks and visits to the cattle market during school hours! On this occasion the 'Head', Mr Brewster, wanted to discuss my future, and said that I should set my sights as high as possible, even go to university. My aspirations had been, at most, the local Farm College, but he got a directory off his shelf and thumbed through to Agricultural Degree courses. After such as Reading, Newcastle and Cambridge were considered, he asked me about my O levels, as those all required a pass in French which I did not have. He continued through the directory



Robin Reeks, John Roberts and Geoff Goodson ready to go into Sunday Lunch



Geoff and Judy at the Comem Ball 1964

and gave a smile of success when near the end of his search he remarked, 'there is this place in Kent called Wye College who offer a London degree and do not ask for French'.

So the application was sent off, and an interview arranged. A great adventure took place in 1960, travel by train from Melton Mowbray via London to Wye Station. The walk up to college with at least two others, **John Roberts** and **Charles Dickens** who would eventually become fellow students. As many readers will recall, the interviews took place in the Latin School, with Dunstan Skillbeck, Sita Smyth

and Charlie Garland on the panel. I can't remember the detail but I must have said some of the right things, as my application was accepted!

So, after my practical year, I came to Wye in September 1961 and, in my three-year stay, made many lifelong friends which I have valued as much as the degree I somehow obtained. As with many of my contemporaries I met the love of my life and future wife at a college dance when girls were invited to Wye from nearby colleges, Nonnington, Eastbourne and others. Judy was at Nonnington, as were the future wives of a number of my friends at Wye.

After 58 years together, Judy and I have three children and four grandchildren, and we are still in touch with so many of the friends we made at Wye. We have attended many reunions over those years both at College and elsewhere, including October 2021, 60 years on from entering college.

In the lottery of life I got a winning ticket when I failed my French O level!

Parly vous Francais?



58 years on, Cheers !!



The End of an Era Ball – Wye Playing fields 2009: Judy Goodson, Geoff Goodson, Beryl Charlton, Philip Charlton, Enid Roberts, John Roberts



End of an Era Ball: Ann & Richard Batho, Barbara & John Means, Enid Roberts, Richard & Adrianne Thorogood, Geoff & Judy Goodson

So, you've got a degree, what are you going to do next?

Geoff Goodson (1961–64) explains how it didn't start too well when he messed up his MAFF interview at the age of 22.

After three fantastic years at Wye, playing Cricket at every opportunity, meeting the girl of my dreams, and making lifelong friends, it is decision time.

In the last few weeks at Wye, there were opportunities to arrange interviews with various organisations such as ICI, Fisons and MAFF. Not sure how I managed it, but I applied for a job with MAFF and went for an interview at Agriculture House in Whitehall. I entered the room to be confronted by a panel populated by what seemed, to my 22-year-old self, 'very old people'. I don't remember much of the questioning, but towards the end I was asked, 'Mr Goodson, what do you consider to be the greatest achievement of your career to date?' This floored me for a moment, 'What career?' I thought, 'I'm 22'. My reply was that, 'I played cricket three days a week and obtained a second-class degree!'

They may not have been impressed as I did not get a job offer, but then I would not have made a good civil servant. I felt that I needed to extend my experience so successfully applied to Leeds University for a place on their postgrad Diploma course in Farm Management.

Judy and I married and off we went to Leeds, renting a rundown semi in Harehills – not the poshest part of the city. Judy took a teaching job, having also finished her training at Nonington. We had our A35 Austin Van which Judy used, and a bike on which I went to the lectures in central Leeds. Farms I visited

were different to any I had experienced in Kent. We went to the Dales and North York Moors as well as large arable units on the Wolds and Vale of York. We made some good friends and whilst there our daughter Tricia was born.

I played cricket three days a week and obtained a second-class degree!

As much as we enjoyed Leeds, the time had come to look for a job as I had a wife and child to think of too. One advert in Farmers Weekly caught my interest, Calor Gas were starting an Agricultural Division moving into liquid fertilisers. The interview went well, and I started in September 1965 based at Rushden in Northamptonshire. We put a small deposit on a half-completed semi in Raunds and, while it was being finished, we rented a tiny cottage with no furniture. We moved in without a bed, sleeping on the floor with blankets and little else. The job went well. The main driving force from Calor was to make use of their fleet of tankers and expertise with LPG and diversify into anhydrous ammonia. My immediate boss, the Director responsible for getting the venture up and running, wanted someone to go with him to a conference on the subject in Madison Wisconsin, USA, and I was selected.



*On the
Calor Gas
stand at the
Royal Show
Stoneleigh
1968*

I was picked up in the early hours by my boss and the company Rolls Royce and his chauffeur Ted. The flight to New York was first class by VC10, then internal flights onward to the conference. This was all so unexpected after being a student for four years, but set me up as an 'expert' in the use of NH_3 as a fertiliser. There was much to do, machinery to develop for transport, storage and injection of a pressurised liquid gas containing 82% nitrogen.

I was involved in instigating trials to establish the efficacy of the product as a fertiliser at a time when the main competition was Nitro Chalk which was granular and 21%N. About this time a new product became available for farm use, Nitram from ICI, 34.5%N. It seems remarkable now looking back that there was government subsidy on nitrogen fertilisers as it was a priority to increase yields of arable crops and intensify grassland production. Under the name of Calor Farm services the

operation grew to have depots in most of the arable areas. I was involved in trials and technical presentations throughout the UK and Republic of Ireland. In 1968 we moved the family to a bungalow I built on part of the family farm, near Melton Mowbray, and as I travelled around it was a good base to operate from. In 1972 I became regional manager based in Nottingham, organising a sales force of five, delivery drivers and maintenance of contracting equipment. By 1975 the market was changing and the application of ammonia became less viable. Calor had diversified into liquid fertilisers and pioneered the use of suspensions. When an offer was received from Omex they sold off the liquid fertiliser operation and closed down the liquid ammonia side. I accepted voluntary redundancy and started looking for another job.

In the spring of 1976, I took on a short-term job lecturing at the local farm college,

Brooksby, in the extramural department. It was a very hot summer and involved travelling to local venues, delivering to students 16 years old. My old Wye notes proved invaluable as did my experience of running training and sales support meetings. The term ended with assisting in practical assessments on the college farm, which in those days had a dairy unit, pig department and arable unit, none of which exist today. In June I was job hunting again and after considering my options decided that I preferred being involved in helping to develop new business, and I was attracted to an American Agrochemical company, Union Carbide. They had been marketing their products in the UK through third-party companies Murphy and Duphor-Midox and were setting up their own UK division.

After a successful interview I was appointed as Sales Development Agronomist for the East Midland region. We started with the product Temik, a granular insecticide and nematicide which was getting a footing in the specialist market for aphid and potato eelworm control. I was again involved in organising trials and sales presentations to newly appointed distributors and development departments

in British sugar and potato research. The very hot dry summer of 1976 had created ideal conditions for Virus Yellows in sugar beet, and potato yields were reduced by Cyst Nematodes. The next five years saw a dramatic increase in sales, and, with the addition of more products in the portfolio, the future of the division seemed secure – corporate visitors from USA and Europe came to see how we had developed the market.

UC had manufacturing operations in many countries. In 1984 a gas leak at their factory in the city of Bophal India killed at least 3000 people and up to half a million were badly affected. Although the cause of the leak was disputed, UC paid \$500 million in compensation and the share price was depressed. As a result, UC sold off parts of the business and our UK operation was one casualty, being purchased by French company Rhone-Poulenc. They had been operating in UK for many years as May & Baker but considered it time to market under their own banner. The UC products were taken on board as were the personnel. It operated initially as a separate entity but by the



1961–64 Cohort at the Agricola Club dinner in the College Dining Hall 2004

early 1990s another takeover was in the air. The agrochemical division was merged with Hoechst to form Aventis. So after 21 years in the agrochemical industry 'downsizing' was in progress, and I accepted a generous offer of early retirement in September 1997. I had made more lifelong friends in those years. Two years after I retired Aventis was acquired by Bayer.

I was only 55 and, although I had the buffer of the small farm, I was looking for something in addition. In 1998 Farm Assurance was just beginning with beef & lamb and arable crops. I became a self-employed auditor for the Red Tractor Scheme, visiting farms mainly in Leicestershire and Notts. I was able to make all my own appointments with the farms allocated to me, building up to over 250 visits

a year by 2002. I really enjoyed seeing the progress that farmers made, sometimes a little reluctantly, to improve grain storage and record keeping, in particular. I made many friends and have lots of memories and experienced the isolation that lots of one-man farmers feel. After 20 years and 4000 farm visits I reduced the number of visits and then 'retired' again in 2018.

Through all the 60 years since I came to Wye, we have kept in touch with so many of the friends we made in the 1961–64 years. In the early years, with growing families we organised our own reunions with tents and caravans, throughout the country. We have rarely missed the Agricola Club events including in 2009, the marquee on the sports field. We hope to make it to a few more yet!



Two more budding actors – but when did these amateur dramatics take place and who are the performers? If you know, get in touch with our new editor Martin Rickatson Email: jmr.agriculture@gmail.com

Picture sent in by
Dave Scarisbrick

An alternative career

Three overdue apologies, from Ben Woods (1968–71) who took a different path from most of his colleagues.

Every year, I enjoy reading the journal from cover to cover. But I'm afraid some of the stories in 'Life after Wye' leave me feeling a bit uncomfortable. There are so many Wye graduates who have gone on to do great things, making significant and important contributions to feeding the world.

In contrast, my contribution to agriculture has been – well, zero. Instead, I ended up flying jets for nearly 40 years, and some will now say that this will have caused *damage* to farming.

To the teaching staff at Wye

But my **first apology** must go to the teaching staff at Wye from 1968 to 1971, who might be justified in thinking I wasted their time.

So how did my career choice come about? I was born and raised in a farmhouse on the

boundary fence of Denham airfield, just west of London. In the 1950s, Tiger Moths and other war-surplus aircraft were continually flying low over our garden, as they took off and landed. My parents were not the farmers – they just rented half the rambling farmhouse – but, from a very early age, my two elder brothers and I were allowed to roam freely over the 200-acre mixed farm, completely unsupervised.

We were always welcomed when we came across agricultural activity. We joined in and were allowed to ride on anything that moved. The most exciting time, of course, was harvest. Nobody stopped us from skipping through the stubble beside the combine, just inches from the fascination of whirring knives, belts, chains and pulleys, most of which were completely unguarded.



*Landing at
Seattle*

1950s
combine



Nobody stopped us skipping through the stubble just inches from the fascination of whirring knives, belts, chains and pulleys

We were allowed to lend a hand up on the bagging platform, helping the man to steer the flow of grain into hundredweight sacks. These days, I'm sure the grown-ups could all be charged with multiple health and safety crimes, but none of us got hurt. Every year, I still get a strange thrill when I first see a combine at work.

So it's no surprise that I grew into a teenager mad about farming and aeroplanes, but I dismissed flying as a career because I assumed that it was the exclusive preserve

of WW2 'superhero' types. I wanted to get into practical farming, but with reality approaching rapidly in my final year at Wye, I could see that having little experience and no capital could make this a very challenging path to follow.

At the same time, the RAF, Navy and even BOAC were advertising for pilots in many newspapers and magazines. They offered graduates in any subject some very attractive starting salaries and, eventually, I plucked up the courage to apply. What had I got to lose? I'd probably just confirm that I hadn't got the 'right stuff'.

What actually happened was that, three years after leaving Wye, I was married to **Jean Stuart** (also 1968–71) and flying the famous Harrier jump-jet for the RAF. We were about to go on a first posting to Cold-War Germany, where we were to spend a total of eight enjoyable and eventful years.

But Wye wasn't a waste of time for me. It provided its own unique form of character

development, and an understanding of basic business economics that was very useful later on. On top of that, labouring alongside farm workers in the practical year and most vacations gave me respect for people from all backgrounds. This is something I often find missing in people who are steered straight from education into management roles.

For the low-level training flights

My **second apology** must go to those of you who lived and farmed in the areas where the RAF practised low flying. If you found yourself regularly shaking your fist and shouting at aircraft shattering your peace, I'm afraid it may have been me. You might even have had



Harriers taking off from a German field site

to claim compensation from the MoD for livestock losses. We had no clever navigation aids that we could rely on back then and still followed a route using paper maps, compass and a stopwatch. At 480mph, you can stray off course very quickly, sometimes into places you aren't supposed to go, especially in bad weather. At low level, anything like a silo or a grain tower that sticks up vertically is a great help, especially in flat lands like East Anglia. So yes, we may have kept using your farm buildings as a landmark.

It took the first Gulf War to show the RAF (after I'd left) that flying low was no longer a defence against the latest air defence systems, and the amount of low-flying training began to decline.

However, the aerial view from low-level enabled me to maintain a strong interest in farming practices and landscapes all over the UK, Western Europe and even Belize in the Caribbean.

In Germany, there were two-week flying exercises in which we took over some quite agricultural locations. These made use of the Harrier's unique ability to operate from small fields, away from the large airfields



Over Germany's Mohne Dam

that would be vulnerable in any conflict. There were plenty of protests but few from the farmers themselves, so I guess NATO's compensation scheme must have been generous.

But my chosen occupation was even more dangerous than farming, and very tough on wives and families. Jean and I attended far too many funerals of young men. The last squadron on which I served lost three of its 24 pilots in a single year, killed while trying to maintain the skills that had brought success in the recent Falklands War.

This and the fact that we'd moved house 13 times in 14 years, (and lived in England, Wales and Scotland as well as Germany) led to a decision in 1988 to leave the RAF and settle down. I switched to the airlines, and Jean could finally embark on a career of her own – but that's a story for her to tell.

In an airliner, my observation of agriculture was now confined to viewing and thinking about the big picture from 35,000ft, but some interesting things still stood out. For instance, the circular patterns made by centre-pivot irrigation systems are very obvious from altitude. Heading for Cairo one day, we had a visitor on the flight deck over Northern Egypt – visits were encouraged in those carefree days before 9/11. I pointed out these circles. 'Ah yes', he said, 'they're new potatoes down there, and they're probably all mine!' Our visitor turned out to be a buyer for Tesco.

The route back from the Eastern Med to the UK involved flying close to the old 'Iron Curtain' between East and West Germany. On a clear spring day, I realised I could make out the precise line of the old border, zig-zagging away to the Northern horizon – a distance of about 230 miles at altitude. To the West, the landscape was bright yellow in the sunshine,



Cruising 747

but it changed abruptly to a uniform green to the East of this crooked line. I realised that Eastern Germany was yet to be influenced by the EU's CAP, so nobody grew oilseed rape.

Landing back at Heathrow on my first trip to Nairobi, I was puzzled when one of the crew presented me with a package and said, 'Here's your pineapple'. The explanation was this: for decades, the airline had a contract with a local grower to carry a fixed quantity of pineapples on every flight to London. But apparently there had always been an understanding that if there was spare capacity in the hold before take-off, he could load extra pineapples, as long as the Captain agreed. The grower had done very, very nicely out of this arrangement, and to thank us (or was it a bribe?), he gave a free, fresh pineapple to each crew member on every flight — 18 of us in a 747.

One of the reasons for the commercial success of the 747 was that, even with a full load of passengers, there was still room to carry quite a lot of lucrative freight. On a flight to Boston, I was interested to see we had 16 tonnes of fresh British seafood in the hold. Then, on the return flight, we carried 16 tonnes of US seafood back to the UK! *Go figure ... as they say over there.*



Airbus A380

On a clear night over Europe, the complex network of motorways stood out clearly and brightly, snaking away to the horizon in all directions. The moving rivers of light were formed by the headlights of thousands and thousands of cars and trucks on the move. But it wasn't until I switched to long-haul flying that I realised that, now we're in the 21st century, this same scene is replicated right across the world, from Vietnam to Vancouver, as the developing world has been catching up with the West. It seemed to me that, globally, there must be countless millions of vehicles on the move at any one time. (Google says there are 1.6 billion cars in the world). In those never-ending streams, each and every one would be producing heat from the radiator and CO₂ from the exhaust. How could anyone still think that was that NOT going to affect our atmosphere?

Many trans-Atlantic routes fly over Greenland, where pilots have to be aware that the mountains beneath are pretty high. Extra care was needed if a pressurisation failure called for an emergency descent.

So, it was a surprise when a regular update of our charts showed that, strangely, the mountains had shrunk by a small but significant amount! We were told it was because satellite mapping

had been used for the first time, making the measurements much more accurate than those made from the ground by some very cold humans many years ago: 25 years on, I wonder if that was the full story. Could the height reduction have been caused by global warming, already reducing the depth of snow on mountain peaks?

To all our grandchildren

So my **final apology** has to go to all our grandchildren, for choosing a career that contributed to global warming. I will have pumped tonnes and tonnes of CO₂ into the atmosphere over four decades. In my defence, I suppose I could try to shift the blame onto the world's insatiable desire for more and more travel, which pushed the number of daily airline flights towards 120,000, globally, by 2019.

Most of *my* CO₂ will have come from the five years I spent flying the mighty 747. You might be interested in the results of two simple maths questions. On their own, the figures you get make up a microscopic percentage of the emissions for which humans have been responsible in the last 50 years. But future generations could use them as an example as to why they are angry with us.

In flight, a Boeing 747 burns 10 tonnes of fuel per hour. The aircraft has a life of about 100,000 flying hours. Over 50 years, Boeing built about 1500 747s, which made up just a small proportion of the world's jet airliner fleet. The freighter version will be flying for quite a while yet.

1. How much fuel does each 747 burn in its life?
2. And what will be the total amount of fuel burnt by all the 747s ever built?

Finally – won't that have left a dangerously large hole somewhere under Saudi Arabia?

You really couldn't make it up ...

Flight Lieutenant Charlie Brown BSc (only just!) RAF (retd) (1978–81) is probably the most experienced Spitfire pilot in the world – so how did that happen?

It has been a year or three since Jane Reynolds asked me to write an article about my rather unusual career since graduating from Wye with a third-class degree (with honours) in Agricultural Economics (narrowly missed a Pass in spite of expectations). Throughout my time at Wye and throughout my career and life thereafter, my wife Kay (*née Towsey*) (1978–81) has supported me at home and abroad and has done a wonderful job of Commander in Chief Home Front. Without her what follows would not have been possible. Kay graduated with a very well earned 2:1 probably narrowly missing a first, which, when you compare it to my third, probably sums up my parlous attitude to academia. In fact, I do remember that it did not go down particularly well that when she was revising for her finals at Withersdane that she could hear me playing tennis. Oops!

These days I often fly over Withersdane, around the College and the surrounding area in Spitfires, on my way to and from the coast, often sharing the experience with a guest of Aero Legends in a two seater – to date I believe that I am the most experienced Spitfire pilot in the world. Who would have thought that possible when I graduated from Wye 40 years ago? Certainly not myself, although I had already been accepted for training by the RAF as a pilot a few weeks earlier.

Life so often hinges on a few seconds of chance conversation, or perhaps a telephone number on a piece of paper, from someone whose name you can't even remember. With hindsight that is how my career and indeed my entire life has unfolded: I met Kay within a few days of arriving at Wye, and we met



*A London
UAS
Bulldog*



*My 1937 Riley
Kestrel Sprite
outside the gates
of RAF College
Cranwell*

because I was standing behind her in the queue to buy a gown at the Students Union. I joined the London University Air Squadron (UAS) because my nextdoor neighbour – Guy Watt – was already a member. I suspect that having met a retired wartime Wing Commander through a mutual friend at Wye, who happened to be an honorary member of the Officers Mess at Biggin Hill (the RAF Officer and Aircrew Selection Centre), did me no harm when it came to selection. Although the aptitude tests were rather more rigorous than giving the right answer to the question:

**I stepped straight
out of the England's
most prestigious
agricultural college
and into the RAF
College at Cranwell**



*My navigator and I,
Tornado GR1 (1985)*

*The first Spitfire I
flew (1991), a Mk
XVIe*



*Hawker Fury
(flight-tested from
Pent Farm)*



*Flight testing
a Bf109 G4 at
Bremgarten*



'Do you like brown beer and totty?' Also, the medical standards, which were then and are now, extremely demanding. Probably why my BMI and also Kay's remain the same as they were when we were at Wye.

Early days in the RAF

So, without getting my feet wet, I stepped straight out of the England's most prestigious agricultural college and into the RAF College at Cranwell, for Initial Officer Training and subsequent training as a pilot. Back in 1981 the RAF made it clear that we were aspiring to join its elite corps of Officers. Upon graduation we were accepted into that elite and had to abide by their rules and codes of conduct. We still had batting staff and life was very comfortable and great fun, but flying training was a hard school. It had to be. The Cold War was very much still on and the Falklands Conflict was being played out on the radio and television. It was all about aspiration and meeting the standards expected. Out of a course of 13 young hopefuls who started flying training on the Jet Provost at RAF Linton-on-Ouse, only five were left at the end of the course, only four of us, myself included, completed training and went on to eventually fly fast jets. Meanwhile

Kay, my fiancée was working in Bedford for Unilever, micro-propagating oil palms and making good use of her Horticulture degree.

Kay and I were married in 1985 and we were posted to RAF Bruggen in Germany where I was a Tornado GR1 pilot. At 24 years old I was entrusted with a £20-million pound aircraft, the life of my navigator and a nuclear weapon. Kay left Unilever to be with me in Germany. Within the space of our three-year tour, her career changed course and she found herself playing and teaching piano in the schools on base and returned to the UK with me to RAF Scampton, where I was to train as a flying instructor. Kay was also six months pregnant with our first child. Before I went to Germany, I was already actively flying vintage light aircraft in the civil world, at Goodwood and then at Cambridge. It was at Cambridge Flying Group that I met Tim Routsis, who went on to obtain several Spitfires from the RAF and formed his own company, Historic Flying, to restore them. It was through my association with Tim Routsis and Historic Flying that I was given the chance to fly a Spitfire for the first time in 1991, by the then chief pilot and very senior RAF officer, John Allison.



*Left and opposite:
Aero Legends
Spitfire T9, NH341*

*Charlie Brown in
2021 in a beloved
Spitfire*



*A pair of
Spitfires over
Kent*



On to flying historic aircraft

My progression in the civilian flying world through Historic Flying was very rapid: display pilot, quickly followed by test pilot, followed by offers to fly and test other WW2-era aircraft by other organisations in the UK and abroad, in Europe, USA and South Africa. Difficult to believe that it all started 30 years ago. Back in the RAF, more by luck than judgement, I quickly rose up to the top of the instructional world via my first instructional tour at RAF Cranwell, flying Jet Provosts, Chipmunks and as part of the team that introduced the Shorts Tucano into service. At 30 years old I was examining with the Central Flying School Examining Wing. Kay was by now pregnant with our third daughter, and we had settled in Leasingham, Lincolnshire, two miles as the crow flies from RAF Cranwell. Thereafter many more RAF flying instructor tours on various aircraft followed, always maintaining my position on the thin branches at the top of the instructional tree as an A1 flying instructor, whilst simultaneously devoting myself to displaying and flight-testing historic aircraft.



My Ford GT40 and penny farthing (that Kay has banned me from ever riding... well, for the moment anyway)

Fast forward to 2010. Kay was well established as a freelance music teacher in the local primary schools and playing the organ in church for three parishes including our own. Then, I first arrived in a Spitfire on the airstrip at Pent Farm run by **Chris** (1968–69) and **Jane Reynolds** (1973–76) After a few seconds of conversation, the circle was complete, as we established that we all had a Wye College background and that Chris had been a member of London University Air Squadron in his time at Wye. Ever since then I have been an irregular visitor at Pent Farm in various aircraft, but most notably of course, the Spitfire.

And still flying Spitfires to this day

In the past few years I have become a regular Spitfire pilot and flying instructor for Aero Legends, who are based at Lashenden, Headcorn. I have recently retired from the RAF at RAF Cranwell, having been part of the team that introduced the Grob 120TP Prefect into service (history repeating itself), to spend more time flying old aeroplanes and catch up on the deficit of 25 years of decorating ... There is also my wife, our children, our grandchildren, the cat, the garden, the old cars, the old bicycles and angling.

So, if you do see a Spitfire in the sky, dancing amongst the clouds near Wye, it could well be me, with my fond memories of Wye, give me a wave, and I may see you, after all you just couldn't make it up.

Wool work from the Outer Hebrides

Folk traditions and local materials inspired Tom Hickman (1972–75) to produce artworks rooted in the landscape of the Isle of Lewis.

Naïve, primitive, amateur, provincial, self-taught, non-academic; stylistically there is no one term that satisfactorily describes my stitching of sheep on tweed remnants. Some would say they are not even art, being well outside the realms of taste established by the elite culture. However, I prefer to regard them as a truly vernacular response to my Hebridean island surroundings. While the term 'vernacular' has been more often applied to architecture, the idea of making use of whatever comes to hand in order to

create something falls very much into the island tradition.

When I first bought my croft house, my then 85-year-old mother was very concerned with how I would get any building materials over for the renovation work. I think she imagined me rowing bags of cement across the Minch in a boat not so very different to the one Flora MacDonald took bonny Prince Charley over the seas to Skye. Today, with everything available online (free delivery to mainland only), the idea of making good or reusing seems to be very much a thing of the past, but then those who know me understand that I have never been one who went searching for the latest electric gadget when the old hand-whisk still works fine. So, the idea of sheep on tweed came as a quite natural artistic response to my immediate surroundings; sheep are a constant presence in and around the community of Tolsta, and at the end of the road beyond my crofter's cottage lies the open moor where, between heather and bracken ridges, peat bogs soft underfoot and chattering tea-stained burns, the black-faced sheep seek out the sweetest of grazing. On the machair above the beach the villagers' flocks graze, but come lambing time the fenced-in croft strips are full with the sound of bleating of ewes and lambs, and my subject matter is close at hand.

The idea is craft based rather than from any fine art tradition, and the approach without pretension falls comfortably within the bounds of folk art. Hebridean folk art for the most part has gone unrecognised, and yet it remains linked as a central contributor to



Tom's approach is closely linked to the island's culture of conserving resources and reusing materials wherever possible.



The idea of 'sheep on tweed' was a natural response to Tim's surroundings.



island culture, in pottery, carving, stitching and above all weaving, adding depth to our knowledge of island life. Raw materials such as wood have in the past been hard to come by, and often involved reuse of driftwood in the construction of shelter and furnishings. Having so little meant nothing was wasted: a drawer could double as a potato chitting tray, an old window shutter could be repurposed for the back of a chair. I've seen a butler's tray used as a fish box, the post from a four-poster bed used for fencing while today most of the Tolsta crofts sport at least one Belfast sink and a bath as drinking troughs. The remainder wool left over from tweed weaving was turned into the most wonderful blankets, and while many older folks remember the weight and scratchy feel which caused them to throw them out, today many regret their action as those same blankets have become prized by collectors.

It is said that artist must if nothing else attempt to depict and relate to the present day, and, while some are drawn to comment on or be influenced by the terrible things that come to pass in our connected world, I

in my insular ignorance stitch images of the neighbour's sheep, spinning and felting wool found on the crofts, then embroidered on to Harris Tweed remnants. The approach is very different from that used in my stump work tapestries; the simplicity is derived from my love of folk art, while the warmth and honesty come from my early years spent with the shepherd Neil Tyson on the hills above the leer-side road leading to the Mull of Kintyre. These qualities along with childlike surprise and humour are so rarely seen in academic art, and I love the reaction of those who are literally brought to laughter.

Last year was a busy one all things considered. During the Easter week my home was taken over by Mac TV for a children's fantasy film. Then I was approached by BBC Scotland to take part in their home of the year programme. I had serious doubts as to how my little two-up-two-down crofter's cottage could figure on such a show, but was pleasantly surprised to be amongst the finalists. Having never owned a TV, and living without internet connection or phone of any sort, I am regarded as a bit of an oddity.

Now aged 68, I'm still cutting peat, my only source of energy for cooking and heating. To see how I fared, and who finally won the accolade of home of the year 2022, you'll have to tune in this spring. Finally, down south in London I had a very successful pre-Christmas show of my work at the Robert Young Gallery in Battersea. So much for retirement.

Tom cutting peat



Moving sideways, and back to the beginning!

On leaving Wye, Ed Macalister-Smith (1973–76) didn't have a career path in mind, but Prof Wibberley's advice has stood him in good stead in the decades since.

When I arrived at Wye, I had a love of the outdoors and a background in sciences at A level, but didn't really know what I wanted to do. Doing Rural Environment Studies seemed as if it might be interesting, and it was! Great studying, great people in the College, lovely environment ... what's not to like?

The highlights included (in random order): the detailed botanical study of my designated kilometre square; camping out overnight above the quarry to guard the Bonfire Night fire so that no one 'accidentally' set it off early; the extraordinary College room I had at the top of the Jacobean staircase in the main building where I brewed my yoghurt every few days; a stint as External VP of the Students Union; badminton games in the new sports hall; the huge old mulberry tree at Withersdane and the magnolia on the side of the Library; the Long Mynd field trip ...

It was a shock to realise as I left Wye that the world of work beckoned, and I still didn't know what to do. Linking to the article in the last edition about RES graduates, I did apply for a post as chief officer at a Midlands Rural Community Council (the job absolutely designed for us!), but didn't get it. Then I remembered something that Prof Wibberley had said when talking about careers, about life being a process of moving sideways while also moving forwards.

So I carried on doing things that looked interesting – two long freelance summer

stints with the Forestry Commission, doing tree surveys in East Anglia and soil surveys in south-west Scotland, and winters pruning blackcurrants in Gwent, followed by a self-funded MSc at the Commonwealth Forestry Institute at Oxford University. By this time, **Chris Underhill** (RES 1973–76) had established the new charity which still runs strongly as Thrive, working with people with disabilities, so I joined him and travelled around UK, supporting care staff who were using gardening, horticulture and agriculture for therapy and rehabilitation.

Great studying, great people in the College, lovely environment ... what's not to like?

I saw some worryingly isolated corners of the NHS, social services and national charities looking after patients at the end of the long-stay mental illness and learning disability hospital era (the 'asylums' and the 'colonies'), but also came across so many passionate and motivated people who were working to invent better ways to care while using the land.

While working as a Regional Organiser and Education Officer for ActionAid in south-west England, I followed my exposure to the NHS by becoming a Member of the District



Ed in the foreground with some footpath wardens at work

Health Authority for Bath. Thus, began my next 25 years in the NHS in Oxford, Isle of Wight and Buckinghamshire, finishing as CEO of the NHS across Wiltshire and Bath with responsibility for the health and care of 750,000 people and a budget to match. (See what I mean about moving sideways?) Also family life with two children and now five grandchildren between Cardiff and New York along the way ...

Soil science and soil management skills seem to have been thrown out the window.

So, I retired, lived in the Cotswolds and kept a hand in the NHS as a non-executive director for University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire. But I also wanted something different so became a voluntary Cotswolds Footpath Warden for the Parish of Long Compton, and then was appointed

by the DEFRA Secretary of State to be a Member of the Cotswolds AONB Board. I've been doing that for the past eight+ years, and am currently the Chair of the Finance and Governance Committee, and also the Chair of the Cotswolds Way National Trail Partnership, probably the most heavily used of England's national long-distance footpaths.

AONBs and National Parks (originally conceived of in the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act) were recently the subject of a major national review by Julian Glover. The outcome of that review is now being tied into the development of post-CAP funding arrangements for farming. Our AONB has been doing some pilot work with our farming community (90% of the Cotswolds is farmed, so our special landscape is created mostly by farmers). And we now have a substantially expanded programme to accelerate these new arrangements called FiPL – Farming in Protected Landscapes – with a significant number of land managers' schemes approved

already. The Government's response to Glover, published in mid-January as I write this, sees a strengthening of the role of AONBs, a collective designation as 'National Landscape', and an increased focus on our landscapes for all the people of England and Wales. In anticipation, we started using the term Cotswolds National Landscape last year and have significantly widened our engagement with surrounding urban communities.

My own interest, linking to my NHS background, is to try to build partnerships which support the enjoyment and experience of our landscape with healthy activity for both physical and mental health gains. Also, to draw in more visitors and participants from our surrounding urban areas – Gloucester, Birmingham, Coventry, Oxford, Swindon, Bristol. Some locals don't want this to happen, thinking we already have too many visitors, some of whom can be disrespectful of the countryside.

But we are established as a protected landscape area by Parliament for the benefit of the whole country, and we need to learn new ways of accommodating visitors, which will also benefit our local economy at the same time. Whatever the image that people hold of the 'chocolate-box' Cotswolds, we're also a living and working community. And we have a responsibility to draw in those parts of the wider community who are normally invisible in the English countryside.

One rather sad reflection for me, having learned what I did at Wye but then having been away from the rural community for most of my working life, is how much of what we learned then has been forgotten and is now having to be re-invented. Soil science and soil management skills seem to have been thrown out the window, to await

government financial incentives to do the right thing again. Similarly, it seems to be for the management, conservation and protection of precious water resources. And, similarly again, the ways of working with landscape so as to 'conserve and enhance', which is the statutory duty placed upon us as an AONB.

**Whatever the image
that people hold of
the 'chocolate-box'
Cotswolds, we're
also a living and
working community.**

My *alma maters* at Wye College and at the Commonwealth Forestry Institute in Oxford are both no longer with us. But, in the Cotswolds, our old Wye competitor at the Royal Agricultural College is now a university in its own right, and we work closely with them to build and to drive forwards our vision for our precious bit of countryside. Tree work will be particularly important in the coming decade as we deal with the fallout of ash die-back – elm scrub is still very evident in our hedge lines around here 50 years after Dutch Elm, but there doesn't seem to be any real hope that ash will survive, and ash is the iconic tree species across much of the Midlands landscape. So, more to do!

Finally it's great for me at a personal level to have been able to return to my roots and to my original motivation to come to Wye at this stage in my career and to be able to contribute to our local and special piece of 'Rural Environment'! So, maybe life does circle round to the beginning again ...

Meanwhile, in Australia ...

David Bennett (1953–56) and his family have been celebrating his 85th birthday with a spot of the tree-planting.

My wife, Sally and I thought, with the rest of Australia, that the dramatic change of closed borders in 2020 would be short, but now we no longer think about international travel anymore. We and the UK relatives have got used to Skype and Zoom, and we have even used Microsoft Teams. We've even kept in touch with interstate and Perth family and friends in the same way. How convenient these pieces of software have been in this Covid-induced isolation. Our strong-minded State Premier, Mark McGowan, has done an excellent job keeping Covid at bay and, helped by Chinese iron ore demand, has left the State with surpluses that are the envy of all the other state governments, plus the Federal, and possibly many others.

David's 86th birthday was celebrated in style at 'Salt and Pepper' restaurant in Denmark. David's son Adam and partner Tineke van der Eecken had offered to plant 85 trees to celebrate David's last (85th) birthday, but the planning stalled. New plans led to selecting a site at Nowanup, a Greening Australia property towards Bremer Bay, managed by an Aboriginal community. As a consequence, the seeds had to be of local provenance. So, off they went to the Greening Australia seed bank, and set up seed germination and growing facilities in Fremantle. However, they struck problems. Luckily we found a separate source of seedlings when it came to planting time in late May. So the planting went extremely well,



David and Sally postprandial

The planting team





*The Lamb-
Shank
Guzzlers*

with both seedlings and lots of help from Rod Safstrom and his team. On a later visit, Sally and David were delighted to see that all the seedlings had started to grow. We have plans to do some more for Nowanup in 2022.

Sally flew to Darwin on 3 June to meet a couple of her old union mates, Sue and Vicki.

They had a really interesting time, visiting the Tiwi Islands and learning how to do block printing. At the same time David flew to Perth for reunions with family and old work colleagues. The family was accommodated locally and lamb shanks were chomped by the mob.

Come to the Agricola Hog Roast!

Sunday 3 July 2022

**at Roves Farm,
Swindon, Wiltshire.**

**See Green Form at
back of Journal.**

Wye and beyond

Fergus Flynn (1972–75) after a short spell working in the UK and a road trip across North and South American, a chance letter from a Wye contemporary took him Zambia.

Having been born in Uganda but educated in England from the age of seven, it was almost inevitable in those days not to return to Africa every holiday. It meant some holidays being spent in the UK. My mother was the daughter of a Hereford beef farmer in the county of Herefordshire and within a year of starting school I spent my first holidays on my uncle's farm in Monmouthshire. Despite the extraordinarily exciting and stimulating environment in Africa, I did love hearing stories of early twentieth-century livestock farming

from my mother. My uncle was a beef and sheep farmer and also traded in livestock, so market visits were frequent. Whether it was on the farm or in the marketplace, I loved being surrounded by animals.

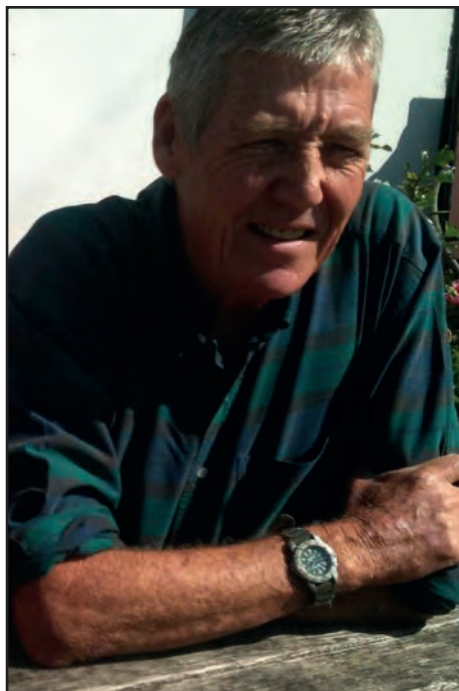
The Wye factor

I was ultimately able to translate that love of animals into a professional career thanks to the excellent Hons BSc course in Animal Production available at Wye when I was there in the early 1970s. The facilities, the setting, the staff, fellow students and all that Wye stood for was a great privilege. I won't begin to express my full opinion on the eventual closure of the College – suffice to say it was and continues to be, in my humble opinion, a loss not only to the British agricultural sector but to rural affairs and tertiary education generally. I would suggest Wye graduates of today could play a more important role than ever with the dramatic changes that are currently occurring within rural society.

So, at the end of the three-year course it was time to join the big wide world.

Early days beyond Wye

At that time, the EU and CAP were the dominant forces, which in truth did not seem to provide a very appealing route to take. I could not get my head around bureaucrats sitting in Brussels determining the whole agricultural production cycle. A turning point occurred in my first job after university, accompanying my boss to collect



a cow who had calved in the lairage of the abattoir. At the time, the same farmer had a dairy which revolved around bought-in cows which were pregnant (PD testing was done by 'punching' from the outside to feel the developing embryo) but destined for immediate slaughter. I understood, of course, that unsavoury decisions have to be made when one is involved in livestock production, but in my mind the line was crossed when those decisions were made by people who were in the main totally detached from real-life farming.

I understood from early childhood that farming is a vocation, a way of life. If one is a livestock producer whose units of economics are animals, then the decision of whether they should live or die should be made in the main by the farmer and not some bureaucrat. So, after an extended period of travel on the North and South American continents (see pages 149–155), I returned to the continent of my birth.

And then to Africa

Starting with beef

As is so often the case, life can be mapped out by chance meetings, letters, or a phone call. In my case it was a letter received from **Mike Cherry** (1972–75) who was at that time a lecturer at the main Agricultural College in Zambia. He informed me that the country's beef baron was looking to find a manager for his recently imported Hereford stud. The gentleman in question, Abie Galaun, was a Lithuanian Jew who had escaped the horrors of persecution and ended up in Zambia. Initially, he was a trader but slowly consolidated his empire over the years to include a vibrant, hugely successful vertically integrated agricultural business. On the cattle side the complex included breeding operations,

holding farms for young stock, a 2000 to 2500-head beef feedlot and a big butchery network. He dominated the industry. Pride of place was his pedigree stud which was mainly Herefords but also included a small Sussex herd and a Boran stud.

I understood from early childhood that farming is a vocation, a way of life.

As an individual he was an extremely shrewd businessman, but his talents did not extend to his knowledge of pedigree cattle. He purchased from top Hereford breeders around England, but, of course, wonderful cattle in Warwickshire or Devon did not necessarily make them winners in a hot African context. Cancer of the eye was a major problem, as was their generally poor adaption to high ambient temperatures. The problem for the manager was that he insisted on the stud cattle looking their best all the time (he would conduct weekly inspections of all his farms which everyone dreaded!). It meant that the female stock was overweight, difficult to get in calf, and even more difficult to calve. The net result for me was that, if a prize cow was due to calve over a weekend, any hope of a quick wildlife trip or fishing excursion was immediately cancelled! It was tough but also a fantastic learning curve where failure at any level was not an option.

The ultimate challenge came in the form of the 1980 Annual National Agricultural Show, and this was accentuated by the fact that Queen Elizabeth was the guest of Honour. In those days the cattle section of the show was extremely well represented by many breeds and age classes from producers all over the

country. The ultimate prizes were Champion Animal on Show and Best of British breeds.

My employer saw this as a spectacular opportunity to meet the Queen and to be surrounded by silverware. The preparation for the Show started months beforehand, involving halter training, controlled exercise, precise rations, covered overnight pens etc. Of course, every week without fail the inspection took place with ever more criticism and emotion.

We did win all the prizes including best slaughter animal with the infamous steer, so the boss did get to shake hands with the Queen.

There was one particularly difficult incident where a young animal of mixed descent was spotted amongst the pedigrees; a Boran bull had covered one of the precious pedigrees! During inspection on bad days, I was accused of destroying his entire 'empire', and on a good day there were some grunts of approval. I was determined to turn defeat into victory with regard to the now famous 'crossbred' by halter training the young steer and putting him on a diet which allowed good growth and flattering conformation and, as luck would have it, he was only 16 months old at the time of the Show. There was at that time a strong slaughter stock section in addition to the pedigrees.

Our farming enterprise from the feedlot section put in lots of entries with both groups of three and individuals for the competition.

I put in my milk tooth steer. Fortunately, he had the classic white face of the Hereford so this, over the months, became glistening, thanks to Fairy Liquid, he not only stood out as a fine animal but he also stood out visually! None of the other slaughter stock had been washed, which probably was the deciding factor in the end when the day of judgement came.

It was a very vibrant show with the climax being the grand parade displaying all the prize winners and a full crowd in the stands. Fortunately, that year we did win all the prizes including best slaughter animal with the infamous steer, so the boss did get to shake hands with the Queen, several times. My job was secure for that week at least.

I have dwelled on this two-year stint in my career because it was a pivotal time for me. I was very fortunate to work under a young general manager who was exceptionally talented in terms of managerial skills. He had a remarkable ability, regardless of how complex the challenge, to distill the problem down to a few fundamental components. On the strength of identifying those 'pillars' he built up the picture and solved the tasks at hand. I never forgot those lessons and that led to the managerial approach I have adopted throughout my working life.

Moving on to a fish farm and piggyry

Out of the blue the following year, I was approached by an English fisheries consultant who was given the task of preparing a feasibility study for a startup fish farm on behalf of a British industrial company who had interests all over the world, including Southern Africa. Part of that task involved finding a manager. Given that fish farming was a completely alien concept on the African continent, they really were looking to find someone who could think, 'outside



The first 'informal' board meeting for Kafue Fisheries Ltd. Our Manchester-based Chairman recording the first meeting in October 1981 with the Kafue River in the background.

the box'. It provided a unique opportunity. With my two-year contract on the stud ranch coming to an end, I was seeking a change. I also had found my wife to be, fallen in love and really wanted to find a project which had some longevity and stability, posed a real challenge and where we both could participate in the development of the project. Kafue Fisheries Ltd was started on 1 October 1981 – for us it was to be a 31-year stay, a fabulous journey where we raised our two children on the farm until the ages of 11 and 12 before continuing their schooling and university in the UK. It also proved over the three decades to provide all the challenges one would want in life – emotionally, intellectually, professionally and culturally. It was quite simply extraordinary, and when we did finally leave, we drove out of the gates feeling utterly fulfilled and have never returned.

At the start of that journey, Di and I walked in front of a D8 to find the initial 100 hectares to which we held title and to make a route into the site. There literally was nothing – no road, no buildings, no structures at all. We started from scratch, which when one is 28 is in my opinion the perfect age to start such a road – full of enthusiasm, throwing caution to the wind and, most importantly, believing that one really can do something meaningful. Hence my reference in the introduction to bureaucrats in Brussels. Here in Zambia, farmers were respected, there were infinite possibilities and there was not the suffocating paperwork to be overcome before starting something new. On looking back, we achieved many things, but most importantly we wanted to leave the property in better shape than that which we took over, both commercially and environmentally. Over the years the property grew to over

4000 acres. When we arrived, we had one of the top ornithologists in the country do a bird count, and it stood in the early 1980s at 120 species. By 2012 when we left, the last new species was number 444, testament to protection and development of habitat and security for our feathered friends.

It was quite simply extraordinary, and when we did finally leave, we drove out of the gates feeling utterly fulfilled.

On the farming side, it was a journey of many trials and much testing, but most exciting was commercialising the concept of 'integration'. In this case it involved tying in the piggery operation and the waste generated there to fertilise the pond water to provide a rich environment in which microorganisms thrived and, in turn, provided feed for the fish.

The pig operation grew over the years and was based on imported semen from top Large White and Landrace in the UK, as well as developing a small pedigree Berkshire herd specifically aimed at the small-scale farmer market and providing the best pork to select butcheries.

Beyond the integrated pig/fish farm, we experimented with other livestock species (chickens, ducks) as well as different feeding regimes. We started a commercial rice farm, the first of its kind in Zambia, but finally in 1988 we had reached a crossroads – we had two very small children (a one-month-old and a two-year-old) and a project which was doing very well but there was one component missing for us – that of wildlife.

Adding game farming

In 1988 Di embarked on what seemed like an impossible mission – to try and catalyse the beginnings of a game-farming industry in Zambia. In large part through her extraordinary determination and stubbornness and approximately 14 months after the start, the first animals were captured from the wild in October 1981. It was a fascinating and nerve-racking time and so began the journey as regards the final part of the puzzle. Like the fish project and the rice, there was little immediate help if one ran into problems. It was fascinating and, of course, like all the operations which were started it had to be commercially successful to survive.

The final African projects

My next employment in 2012 also provided an exceptional opportunity to test one's managerial skills and broaden one's horizons. It involved setting up from scratch a modern 500-sow unit with a very good supporting team. In addition, the manure provided the fertiliser for a fish project as well as 'green' nutrient-rich water which went through the irrigation system to the arable crops (a soya/wheat rotation) and assisted in reducing the inorganic fertiliser bill. In addition to the pig/fish complex, there were already the foundations of a good beef operation on the farm. In the three years we were there, the herd doubled from 1500 head to 3000 largely based on the Bonsmara and Boran breeds. Finally, there was a small game farm where the introduction of supplementary feed, the controlled harvesting of selected groups of animals and limited trophy hunting brought the operation more into line as a commercial-minded operation. It was a family run operation, so I always understood that my stay would be finite.

The next job was also exciting. It consisted of 50,000 acres of good 'sweet veld' grassland in the far south of Zambia, a ranch which had been run along traditional lines for many decades. The new owners wanted to take it to another level, not only by building up a top Bonsmara stud to supply into the commercial cow herd but also to develop a commercial feedlot and construct a modern abattoir. A huge 20 million cubic metre dam had been built for growing crops, and most importantly the master plan also involved buying cattle from the traditional local farmers, as well as to help them improve productivity. In rapid time, 22 dip stations were constructed and commissioned in outlying areas and 23,000 head of cattle were visiting these stations for dipping on a weekly basis. The dipping alone reduced cattle mortality dramatically, and with a secure market for their cattle it was growing into a very exciting project. The long-term plan was not only to supply adapted and improved cattle to the local farmers but also to expand the range of services to them (e.g. basic husbandry and vet support). When we left there were 7000 head on the project (breeding and fattening stock), but the grand plan was to have a feedlot of 5000 standing stock and three cycles a year: the balance of 9000 head would be purchased for direct slaughter giving the abattoir a 2000/head/month throughput.

The investment company who owned the operation was based in London. They regrettably did not see adequate short-term returns, plus the fact that they did not have confidence in the long-term future of investing in Zambia. It was a tragedy in my view. Africa does not provide many winners, but here was one in the making. It is always disappointing when those investing in agricultural projects do not think long-term in terms of the investment. Secondly, Africa

more so than many other parts of the world requires courage and patience. And so it was with a heavy heart that we left at the end of four years. A non-cattleman took over the helm and nut trees started to be planted on a commercial scale. The abattoir remains in moth balls to this day, and the traditional cattle farmers are no more secure than when the project started.

Finally, in 2019, I was given the opportunity to help develop a modern 400-sow piggery on the outskirts of Lusaka. It had once been a piggery with a mixture of modern and old buildings that had been swallowed up by bad management and disease. The task was to redesign, rebuild and train a new team of stockmen and commission a viable commercial unit. This was achieved through purchases in gilts sourced from a top genetic company, formulating top feed rations to maximise performance and training up a small group of dedicated staff to get the results. It was a very satisfying and rewarding way to end one's full-time African commercial farming career, and at the time of my departure the results were matching those of top herds anywhere in South Africa.

Back to Africa?

It is my wish that some opportunities will present themselves to get back to Africa either in a formal or informal context in the coming years. It is said that it is impossible to leave Africa completely.

The fish site link below describes in some detail the aquacultural journey that Fergus travelled.

<https://thefishsite.com/articles/pioneers-of-african-aquaculture-fergus-flynn>

A life in fruit growing (with considerable help from Wye College)

Robert Mitchell recalls his days at Wye from 1977 to 1980 and how the experience shaped his later life.

The Wye years

Coming from a family of fruit growers, it was always my wish to continue the farming tradition and a quick tour of other universities offering Agriculture confirmed my first choice, Wye College. With a small campus, their own farms in a lovely rural setting, and London-weighted student grants, the choice was clear.

However, I first had to complete a year of practical experience, which brought me to the dairy enterprise of Richard Wooldridge at Yotes Court Farm near Maidstone. I was required to keep a daily diary, a habit I have kept up for most of my adult life. It was a far cry from the fruit trees of home, and I quickly learned calf rearing, milking, silageing, muck spreading and the dark art of treading brewer's grains. It was hugely enjoyable but full-on seven days per week. Maybe this was not what I wanted for the rest of my life.

In October 1977, I turned up at Wye and settled into A Block. How different this was from my days at school. There were girls, parties, lectures, clubs, and I dealt with them all strictly in that order. To be addressed as 'Mr Mitchell' was very strange and there was clearly a level of personal choice and freedom that my schooldays had not offered.

However, my first couple of days brought a crushing blow – there was a module available for students that did not take A level chemistry. I had been advised that A level chemistry was a requirement, so had battled

for two years with this baffling subject, only to discover that I could have done something interesting like geography instead.

Not easily put off, I launched into life at Wye with gusto and made many firm friends. When it came to accommodation choices, many of us in A block stayed put for our second year. It was very comfortable and convenient although the church bells immediately outside encouraged early starts at weekends. The girls in nearby K block were very sociable, the A block parties were legendary, and we found student-friendly pubs nearby, including the Compasses where we met up with students from the University of Kent at Canterbury and went along to some of their events.



Robert in his third year at Wye

The building of the bonfire on the Crown was a good team effort. I arranged to borrow a tractor and trailer from the farm and many loads of wood were gathered up and carted to the top of the Downs. The Motor Club was a very sociable affair, organising midnight rallies, treasure hunts and days out. I loved the formal dining and the many receptions and balls that made up the student calendar. The main thing was that for the first time in my life I was studying all subjects that I wanted to learn about. For me this made lectures and practicals interesting and worthwhile, so the first two years of study quickly passed.

I quickly learned calf rearing, milking, silageing, muck spreading and the dark art of treading brewer's grains.

Part of the Wye experience was finding a job in the summer holidays, and I learned a lot about cauliflowers during my first summer at John Saul near Boston in Lincolnshire. However, it became clear that as soon as a job was posted on the Union noticeboard, it was filled in hours. My second summer job needed a novel approach, so it was off to the library. A careful study of back issues of Farmers Weekly revealed a shortlist of previous jobs, so three of us wrote off hopefully in February 1979 and were rewarded with a superb experience working for Peter Headley at Hersden, near Canterbury. Those lectures about rotations, cereal varieties, pests and disease, and cultivations suddenly meant more, and we soaked up all the knowledge ready for our third year.



Meeting the Queen Mother at Graduation – June 1980

October 1979 saw a change in lifestyle for me. I rented a house in Scotton Street with four other third-year students. Suddenly we had to cook and clean for ourselves! Studying took on a new seriousness as final exams loomed. I became an expert on field beans, dairy cows and pigs, marketing and economics and enjoyed my introduction to computers, statistics and replicated field trials. I realised what a good choice the Agriculture course was for a young man who had been brought up in the specialist world of fruit growing. The newly introduced Rural Environment Studies course was frowned upon by us Agrics, but time has proved how Wye was ahead of the curve, as we now embrace all that content in our daily farming lives.

Seeing the world

After gaining my upper second-class honours degree, I embarked on a 5,000 mile driving and camping tour of Europe and Scandinavia with Animal Sciences student **Bill Mellor**. This was just an introduction to my travels, as in November 1980 I bought my standby ticket on Freddie Laker's Skytrain to Los



*Working
at Johnny
Appleseed
Fruit Packers,
New Zealand*

Angeles, and then onwards to New Zealand with fellow Agric student **Bob Hussey**. He had family on the North Island, and we quickly got involved in relief milking, hay making, putting up deer fencing and general farm work. After a couple of months, we moved on, looking for work on fruit farms near Hastings.

I had endured nine months living out of a suitcase, so I headed for home.

Our searches took us to Johnny Appleseed Fruit Packers, where we were offered jobs but no accommodation. Never deterred, we headed down the road knocking on doors and asking around. A lovely lady called Lyall Taylor invited us in for tea, and we made her spare rooms our home for the next three months. We started at Johnny Appleseed the next day.

Our supervisor there was Alan Hellyer, and his approach to two young men from the other side of the world was to shape my life for years to come. He was welcoming, tolerant, calm and generous with his time. He was also generous with his truck, which he lent us at weekends to get around in.

Our days were filled with picking Williams pears, Gala apples and 'Yummy Nectarines'. We were shown round the packhouse and travelled to the port with the lorries. My experience on a forklift quickly got me in the team both at the packhouse and loading in the orchards.

While living in Havelock North we experienced several minor earthquakes and visited nearby Napier which was almost destroyed by an earthquake in 1931. Having earned our money, we then travelled the length and breadth of New Zealand, and later flew to Australia where we spent three months travelling and exploring. Eventually, the money ran out, and I had endured nine

*Back on the family
farm – 1982*



months living out of a suitcase, so I headed for home. One of my few regrets in life is that I did not move to another country to continue my studies and gain a master's degree.

I travelled to Ukraine, Moldova, Poland, Bulgaria and Romania visiting universities and recruiting students to work in the UK.

The family farm beckoned, a spray rig awaited me, and I settled into work with enthusiasm and a determination to disprove the old adage 'Clogs to clogs in three generations' – no pressure then! Life was good as I married and had two sons and gradually became involved in many industry organisations.

The decline in local labour saw the first

Eastern Europeans arrive on our farm, initially in tents on the grass but quickly adopting a large, converted building as their summer home. I tried to apply what Alan Hellyer had taught me, and we developed some great friendships lasting many years.

Having used Concordia to source our harvest labour, I was invited to join the Board of Directors, which I enjoyed very much. I stayed on the Board for 18 years, 14 of them as Chairman. We developed a bursary scheme to train the most promising candidates in farm management roles, we ran volunteering projects with partners worldwide and we placed students from Eastern Europe on over 300 farms throughout the UK. We made a difference. On my departure in 2011 Her Majesty the Queen honoured me with an MBE for services to young people.

With Concordia I travelled to places like Ukraine, Moldova, Poland, Bulgaria and Romania visiting universities and recruiting students to work in the UK. I also travelled to Russia to advise on modernising the



Robert at Buckingham Palace with wife Helen – 2011

orchards and storage on a large farm which was transitioning from state control to private ownership. Those lectures from Peter Newbound and Alan Hunt came in very useful in ways I could never have predicted.

In 2000 Bayer Chemicals invited me to join a small group of researchers, advisors and growers on a two-week trip to New Zealand, which had changed dramatically in 20 years. I was also invited by Agrovista to visit Washington State to look at fruit production and crop protection in a very different climate from our own. How I ever found time for any work, I don't know.

Those early days at Wye sparked a keen interest in research, and in particular applying a scientific approach to any problem. David

Scarlsbrick's lectures on statistics and field trials became very real as I began to collaborate with researchers at nearby East Malling (now NIAB-EMR). I became a trustee at East Malling Trust and enjoyed 21 years of involvement with some of the brightest minds in agriculture. I also served on the Apple and Pear Research Council and developed a keen interest in post-harvest technology.

During my years at Concordia, I became fascinated by the way that charities operate. My day job was purely commercial, with every metric of success expressed in pounds and pence. The operation of charities, with many volunteers simply giving their time, was a refreshing contrast, and I enjoyed



On the farm with the latest delivery of new tractors

forming committees and boards made up of volunteers who needed to get more than money out of their involvement.

I also got involved in the Marden Fruit Show Society, of which I was Chairman for five years. My task was to turn the finances around and present the fruit to a different audience, which we did with willing volunteers at such venues as Kew Gardens, Ampleforth Abbey and Chatsworth House.

The success of the Apple Juice competition inspired me to start producing my own juice from our farm in 2011.

Farming never stands still, and even in my working lifetime I have seen the decline of the wholesale markets; the rise to power of the

supermarkets; various energy crises; joining the EU; Brexit; the growth of veganism and a new thirst for local produce and care of our environment.

It was inevitable that Wye College would change too, but such a shame that it has almost died. Last summer I did the Wye Downs walk with my family and dog, looking forward to showing my family where I had lived and studied. The empty courtyards and boarded-up windows do not inspire enthusiasm, so I am grateful for this opportunity to tell my story of how fantastic Wye College once was.

A forty-year love affair with New Zealand

Kate Hillerton (née Luton) (1978–81) on how a gap year from Wye in 1980 became a defining moment in her life.

The gap year

Between my second and third years at Wye reading Agriculture, I put myself on a plane for the very first time and then proceeded to travel as far as possible from the UK (a good, if extreme, way of getting over any fear of flying!).

I spent the summer (winter over there) on a farm in the North Island, New Zealand which belonged to Massey University, where I was given a motor bike, a first aid kit, a farm map and 1800 hoggets to lamb. It was a marvellous experience and rapidly cemented my love of New Zealand.



One day, on a farm visit in the Wairarapa, I was asked by a MAF consulting officer how much 'Super' we put on our grass in the UK. He meant superphosphate. This was in the days when our go-to reference book was *Fertilising for Maximum Yield* (by G W Cooke), and the recommendations were for 350 kg N/ha. New Zealanders still relied on clover in their leys and used little or no nitrogen. By the time I returned in 2004, the tables were well and truly turned, with the UK having Nitrate Vulnerable Zones, and New Zealanders throwing as much N onto their grass as possible. That has changed significantly in the last 17 years, and there is much more awareness of the issues of nitrate leaching (so blithely written off by G W Cooke in the 1970s, as being a minor problem that scientists would have resolved before it became an issue in the future!).

Another farmer in 1980, who prided himself on his forward-thinking and conservation, proudly took me round his farm and showed me his biggest prize – a couple of Canada geese. He was quite upset when I bluntly told him he would live to regret his decision. and, sure enough, by 2005 there were radio news articles about the terrible problems being caused by naturalised Canada geese in the Wairarapa who were forming flocks of hundreds, eating the sheep out of their pasture and ruining the rest with their droppings!

On the plus side, pasture management in NZ in the 1980s was astonishingly good. Grass

growth is quite different there, with most occurring in the winter/spring and less in the dry summers. They practised high-density grazing, putting sheep into a paddock at 200/ha stocking rate – then removing them 24–28 hours later, leaving apparently bare earth behind, which then completely recovered within a very few days; something completely alien to this innocent Brit.

By 2005 there were radio news articles about the terrible problems being caused by naturalised Canada geese in the Wairarapa.

I investigated the possibility of staying on and becoming an overseas student at Massey; unfortunately, the costs were prohibitive, and job prospects for a Pom who liked looking after sheep were minimal at that time.

I somewhat reluctantly returned for my final year at Wye, but determined to go back to New Zealand and discover more about that wonderful country.

After graduation

Almost immediately upon graduating, I went back for a six-month trip, this time to Ashburton, in the middle of the Canterbury Plains in the South Island – a very different farm with 2000 sheep but also cropping. This time it was over summer, and I discovered how desperately dry Canterbury can be, totally reliant on flood irrigation for any grass growth at all. Once again, long-term visas proved impossible to obtain, so I returned to the UK, got married, bought a house, and

had a succession of jobs, some more related to agriculture than others contract shepherding, grain analyst, Christmas accessories packer – all seasonal.

In desperation, I took six months out of employment to pick up a secretarial qualification in shorthand and typing, with the intention of becoming a peripatetic farm administrator. But before that could eventuate, I found myself working as a Regional Administrator for a large agrochemical company (FBC, which later became Schering Agriculture before being taken over by Bayer). This was challenging and interesting, and I was nearly persuaded to join the ranks of their field consultants, but the arrival of my first daughter put paid to that idea.

There followed a few years of raising my family, but then I found myself working at Sparsholt College in Hampshire, first as a secretary, then later as the Farm Administrator – with a couple of stints of practical agric thrown in during times of emergency, such as the foot-and-mouth outbreak of 2002, when all students were banned from the college and a lambing assistant was urgently required; to a period on a silage wagon when the farm manager went down with viral meningitis the day before the contractors were scheduled to arrive!

The return to NZ

However, during all this time I hankered to return to New Zealand, and suddenly an opportunity arose in 2003 when the immigration system made it very difficult to qualify except under 'specialist shortage categories', and there was a small window of

time before my daughters started in on GCSE syllabuses. As an Agric applying to go to NZ, I was hardly considered essential – but my husband Alan, a skilled qualified mechanic, was in demand, and we jumped through many hoops to meet the eligibility criteria.

Eventually, with the aid of an invaluable immigration consultant, we were accepted, sold our house and moved, on a wing and a prayer, out to New Zealand in September 2004.

It worked well for a small number of farmers who had no attachment to their units of production (cows).

We found ourselves a wonderful house in Cambridge, some 130km south of Auckland – feeling like lottery winners, because in those days the exchange rate was three dollars to the pound! Alan went job hunting and was taken on by the first garage he approached; I, on the other hand, had a six-month hiatus of being over-qualified and under-experienced in most of the jobs I applied for. Kiwis had then – and still do – an implicit belief that somehow things are 'different' in New Zealand, and no matter how qualified you may be in your own country, it can be difficult to break into the labour market as an immigrant.

Finally, I was taken on by Dexcel, a dairying research and extension, industry-good organisation, as Executive Assistant to the Research team. This turned out to be a good challenge, though still not as directly in agriculture as I would have liked. I became frustrated when I spent a lot of my own time

picking up foundation qualifications to form a strong basis for becoming a Consulting Officer – only to be told at the last minute that they had changed their policy and only wanted younger graduates! (That probably wouldn't wash these days, but that was some years ago, when employment policies were still in the Dark Ages by comparison with the UK.)

In desperation I jumped out of the frying pan into the fire, by switching jobs to become a data analyst for a small management company that dealt direct with farmers, using a hideously complex system of interlinked spreadsheets to provide farmers with information on their best strategies for keeping exactly the right number of cows fully-fed on their farm at any one time. It worked well for a small number of farmers who had no attachment to their units of production (cows) and were prepared to alter grazing numbers swiftly and radically throughout the year. I did get to do some travelling around the country, training farmers in the use of this system; however, it was so complex and hugely labour-intensive that, after a year there, I decided it was not for me.

Luckily, I was head-hunted back to Dexcel (now rebranded DairyNZ) as Assistant to the Chief Scientist. There followed a very successful few years where we built a number of quality control systems into the Research Department. I was also on the organisation committees for two international conferences – an IDF Mastitis Symposium in Christchurch (just before the earthquake) in 2010, and the Auckland World Dairy Summit in 2011; both highly successful and very enjoyable events, and probably the highlight of my career! I moved on from that position to become a Business Manager, still in DairyNZ, dealing with the

increasingly legal requirements of funding, subcontracting and monitoring the many projects on the go. After nine years of this, however, I was ready for a change and decided to downsize to a (hopefully) less stressful role. Unfortunately a culture prevailed of inter-staff bullying, which created a toxic and stressful atmosphere.

I love pottering in my acre of garden, growing vegetables and fruit, particularly my own citrus to make organic marmalade

Wanting to still keep some connections to agriculture, I found myself in a completely different position as Admin Team Leader in a private school just outside Cambridge – which had the unusual advantage of its own farm, where they happened to also need a farm administrator. Managing and leading a team was a steep learning curve, but enjoyable; unfortunately a culture prevailed of inter-staff bullying, which created a toxic and stressful atmosphere. When Covid appeared and New Zealand was locked down in March 2020, I was quick to put up my hand for a drop to three days a week, and later took redundancy at the end of the year. Only then did they realise how much work I actually did apart from managing my team – and I was promptly contracted back to continue to administer and support the farm team, and take on discrete projects as they arose.

Looking to the future

I now work mostly from home, and up to 30 hours a month; it keeps my hand in, provides some pocket money until such time as I am entitled to a pension, and gives an excuse to get out of the house occasionally. For the rest, I love pottering in my acre of garden, growing vegetables and fruit, particularly my own citrus to make organic marmalade which is gaining a local reputation!

I have also become the secretary for a community choir in which I sing; and the Ladies' Vice Captain of our local golf club – as busy as ever though, at the time of writing (October 2021), confined pretty much to our property, as New Zealand continues to try to hold back the covid tide from spreading, against all odds.

And the future? We have made a conscious and deliberate decision to put ourselves on the four-year wait list for a villa in a local retirement village, knowing that our immense garden will become too much one day, and having seen many others leave it too long to make such a momentous change in their lives. Hopefully, we will be able to travel again in the future, and look forward to getting back to the Northern Hemisphere to meet family and old friends – maybe even for the 50th Agricola Club reunion in 2031, having missed this year's 40th due to Covid restrictions.

A journey of a lifetime

After graduating from Wye, Fergus Flynn (1972–75), with his friend John Blake (1972–75), bought two motorbikes and shipped them over to Boston where an unforgettable journey began.

Although Wye College gave one a very strong basis on which to form a career, I think it is fair to say that most graduates take time to think about what is the next step – how do I get onto the employment ladder, or is there ever a better time to travel to be free, to explore life itself?

I certainly felt like that. I simply was not ready to settle down to a formal employment structure, a way of life in which the basic obstacles/goals are mapped out and known.

In the three years at the College, I was very lucky to strike up a friendship with someone who was following the same thought process. **John Blake (1972–75)**, the person in question, had already taken an unusual route on leaving school – with the help of family contacts in the Falkland Islands, he had gone out there to work as a shepherd for nearly two years. In those days it was basically a sheep orientated economy and unless one was a manager, one was a shepherd doing all the daily and seasonal chores to survive. It sounded to me to be character-building stuff and with the added benefit of being surrounded by wildlife. When I visited the Islands for the first time in 1977, I could not believe the uniqueness of the place. Visiting a shepherd's house might involve weaving in and out of nesting Black-browed Albatrosses in order

to reach the front door! The sheep cull was primitive – a simple kraal on the edge of a cliff, slaughter, skin and carcasses thrown into the sea for the likes of sea lions. It is only in the very recent past (10 years) that all cull sheep/carcasses go through a formal abattoir in the capital and are shipped back to Europe.

Whilst we were at Wye, John and I spent a lengthy summer holiday travelling through Ethiopia (where my parents lived), Kenya and Tanzania. Our usual mode of travelling was local transport with the exception of one stint using a hired VW Beetle. Given that countries like Ethiopia have quadrupled their populations in the 40 years since then and implemented development programmes beyond recognition, in those days it did at



Fergus (left) and John with their motorbikes – the primary mode of transport

times feel almost medieval. For example, a memorable overnight stay was spent in a tiny hotel where one's water was delivered on the back of donkeys and was stored in goat skins – the scene was almost biblical. Imagine being in a bus, as we once were, with a community of Danakil people armed to the teeth and keeping their bus tickets in the muzzle end of the barrels of their guns! Over all, it was a wonderful experience and set the platform for a more adventurous plan when we graduated.

We had many fabulous fishing experiences which took us to breathtaking locations.

This was simple: stage one was to get some savings under our belts, then start to piece together all the necessary equipment for the journey. The chosen mode of transport was to be motorbikes – why one asks? Neither of us were bike experts (in fact the opposite – neither of us had even ridden a motorbike!), but we did agree that a motor bike allowed one to experience the journey in a much richer way. Our perception, which proved to be right, was that one really would know when it was cold, when it was hot and everything between.

I milked cows and oversaw a medium dairy herd in UK for half a year in order to build up the necessary funds – as for John, well he seemed to find gold coins in the attic so his passage was a little easier.

During those months we met up on a couple of occasions in London and purchased two

bikes, two tents and all the requisites to be self-sufficient. It was a strange and daunting feeling as I collected my 500cc bike on Kensington High Street (at the time the biggest Honda dealership in the area) and headed out on the highway heading for the South West. We rode independently down to Somerset where John's home was and over the next couple of days crated all the bikes and equipment ready for the journey. Once all possessions were in order it was a question of getting the crates and motorbikes into a horse box and heading for London docks! The next time we would see them would be in Boston Massachusetts, USA.

We flew over to Boston, based ourselves with very generous relatives of John's and a week later went to the docks to receive and open our crates, put fuel in the bikes and head out. It all seemed rather surreal and surprising that Phase 1 of the master plan had worked.

Over the previous months we had given a lot of thought to the route, our aims and the time we were going to allocate to travelling. From the outset, we had agreed that there was going to be no fixed time frame within which we had to keep. It was a good decision – to let fate determine when would be the right time to head back home. This adventure was a unique opportunity to have the experience of a lifetime, and, as long as funding allowed and we were enjoying ourselves, there was no structure in terms of reaching the finish line.

With regard to the main aims, there were three: firstly, to enjoy all aspects associated with travel – the people one met, to target places and locations which were of significance and also to visit places of significance in the context of livestock production (in other words not lose sight

of the fact that, ultimately, this was also an educational experience in the context of one's chosen career). The journey would also take us to some great fishing country. Both of us also enjoyed our fishing and it made sense to have fish as our primary protein source when in the backwaters. This was applicable from New Hampshire to Mississippi, from Colorado to the Yukon and from the Alaskan border, all the way down to Southern Argentina. We had many fabulous fishing experiences which took us to breathtaking locations. Motorbikes did allow one to be adventurous in terms of getting to relatively isolated sites. A vehicle would have been very restricting on that score.

The amount of paperwork at border posts was inversely proportional to the state of the economy!

Finally, the route: well, the first stage was to travel extensively through both continents of North America and South America and then see if another spell on the road was required. We had no fixed plan, but the basic principle was to do the length of the East side of the USA from New England down to Louisiana and then up the middle through Texas, Colorado, Montana, Washington up into British Columbia and, finally, the Yukon/Alaska border. The trip down would encompass the Pacific West, through California and onto Baja Mexico before sailing over to the mainland and travelling extensively through the huge country from West to East, North to South. Continuing through Central America, we rode through and around Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica and Panama. The time

spent in each country very much depended on the political climate existing at the time. Most countries were fine, but El Salvador, for example, was not a secure environment, so sadly we did not dwell. The border post and all the bureaucracy/form-filling resulted in almost as much paperwork as the weights of the motorbikes. We concluded that the amount of paperwork at border posts was inversely proportional to the state of the economy! El Salvador won by some margin in this regard.

We were very fortunate throughout the journey including in Panama to have contacts, and so these were always points



Fish was the primary protein source.



*The happy face
of a Guatemalan
lady*

to aim for. Some contacts, of course, we had never met before, but to a man and woman they were all welcoming and generous – it made a huge difference to the trip. It is also worth noting perhaps that we did feel that there is no finer continent to travel in than North America – it is vast, it is varied and explains, to some extent, why to this day some 80% of Americans don't possess passports. It is all there in the home country! Having said that, however, it would not have been a complete experience without having enjoyed the variety and depth of culture which one encounters travelling through Central and South America.

We were very much on our own. That was part of the thrill of travelling.

It is perhaps worth remembering that in the mid/late 1970s communication was not what it is today. For a start, we had to pre-arrange mail collection points – in the case of, say, Panama the next stop was the British Embassy in Lima Peru. In the context of communication between ourselves, it was a case of never unwittingly getting separated – no mobiles and no second plan! In retrospect,

it did reinforce our strategy that this journey was to be taken very seriously, and we had to be ever-focused. That did not in any sense mean that it was not enjoyable, but one had to be aware, and, of course, the situation could change in seconds. A good example was whilst birdwatching in an isolated valley in Chile when we were suddenly surrounded by soldiers and bundled into a military Land Rover. Unbeknown to us we were wandering around a militarised zone. Given that it was General Pinochet in charge at the time, it was an uncomfortable experience. It all ended well, and ironically the ending was an amusing one as we were invited into the home of the Officer in Charge for tea with his wife!

Just a day or two before, we had met a Catholic priest, and he told us of a number of his flock who had simply 'disappeared'. Central and South American countries were in places very volatile. It also at times felt lonely. We were told at one prominent border post that there were only five 'gringos' travelling by motorbike on the South American Continent at this particular time. We were very much on our own. That was part of the thrill of travelling, but we had to be sensible. Remarkably neither of us fell sick throughout the 22 months, which was extremely fortunate – that feeling of loneliness, lying in an unfamiliar bed in an unknown location in an unknown medical facility was to be avoided at all costs.

Continuing on our journey south from Panama, we had no option but to put our motorbikes in the hold of a tired old plane and fly into Columbia crossing the Darien Gap. From the air it really did look like an impenetrable forest. Arriving in South America had a slightly unreal feel about it – Columbia was a dangerous, drug-driven

economy, but, providing one was careful and sensible, it seemed fine. Even wearing a watch was a risk. The streets in the big centres had lots of young and desperate children who were fast and clever. In the countryside it was a much more friendly environment, so apart from visiting key landmarks in the likes of Bogota (the gold museum) or Medellin, it was in rural settings where we spent most of our time.

Whilst birdwatching in an isolated valley in Chile we were suddenly surrounded by soldiers and bundled into a military Land Rover.

From Columbia we travelled through Ecuador, Peru, Chile, across the Andes to Argentina and South to the Falkland Islands. Throughout the journey in South America, we travelled using any manner of transport (relying only on the motorbikes for the main route) and visited many extraordinary places and met extraordinary people.

There was one memorable trip in Guatemala where the further we went from the capital, so the vehicle and roads/tracks became increasingly small. This specific journey ended going down many kilometres of bush track hanging on precariously to the back of an ancient American Jeep complete with an array of poultry. The final destination was a tiny village with no hotel. We did get some food in the only bar/restaurant and, in the flickering candlelight eating our meal, we were surrounded by people who supported exactly the profiles of the ancient Mayans.

The spoken language was certainly not Spanish. We slept under the stars in the central plaza, which was minute.

Whenever we found a place to our liking we stayed as long as we wanted before moving on. This could vary from one day to a few weeks. The most Southerly point on this journey was the Falkland Islands where we spent several weeks exploring, working with sheep, painting sheds, fishing and enjoying the wildlife. We stayed with a cousin of John's and his family – they were gracious hosts. He was the owner and manager of an average-sized sheep operation for the Islands – 137,000 acres, running 35,000 sheep.

John, on his spell working post-school, had visited a cousin who ran a huge sheep station in Patagonia (125,000 sheep) and went on to reach the Southern tip of the continent, the town of Ushuaia in Terra Del Fuego.

Returning to the main land, we headed north through Argentina, Bolivia and back into Peru. We had been on the road for 22 months, travelled 95,000 kilometres and had the experience of a lifetime meeting many extraordinary people and having many extraordinary experiences, and from a personal point of view we had both matured and mellowed.

John from the beginning had an inner calmness – this was reinforced by the fact that, when it was over, his path was already mapped out. He had a wonderful family home which he would take over ultimately, unbeknown to me he had already met the woman who was to be his future wife (far more organised than I), and his chosen profession was to be organic farming so his life's path had been chosen before we had even set off! In my upbringing, I had moved homes and countries several times and hence the urge to travel and explore.



*Fergus
and John
standing
in a plaza
in Central
Lima*

At that stage, I had no idea where the end game would be, but I had made up my mind that it was not to be in the British livestock sector. During our travels in Canada, I had done a very brief spell with a lovely Holstein herd near Vancouver. That was to be my starting point. A year later whilst looking after the dairy herd in British Columbia, a chance letter from a friend in Zambia changed everything. An opportunity presented itself to return to Africa. It was not an easy decision because I was well settled into my work, the family I worked for were generous, and I was happy. However, in the end it was the soul that spoke – that yearning to go back to Africa, to forge a new life. There was of course risk and a good dose of unpredictability. Looking back over the last 42 years that I subsequently spent in Zambia, it was absolutely the right decision.

So, what are my conclusions? First and foremost, the period immediately post-university regardless of degree subject or background does give one a unique opportunity to explore possibilities outside

the formal employment box and to work outside the normal structured time frame. In the context of how long people are living today, a break of one or two or three years is not significant providing that time is used productively and seriously.

**Every day is to be
appreciated, every
event or happening
good or bad is
part of the rich
tapestry of life.**

If travel is the chosen route, I personally would recommend sharing the experience with a trusted friend. But it has to be a real friend who can take the body blows, share the risk and inevitable unpredictability of the journey, as well as savouring every step. In my case I feel unbelievably blessed that I did the trip with John and am proud to say we parted best of friends at the end and remain best of friends to this day, despite the fact that we have seen very little of each other in the last 43 years.

I think the second most important lesson learnt on a lengthy spell of travelling is how big the world is and how small you are in the grand scheme of things – it is a humbling experience, and it also focuses the mind on how serious life is. I remember travelling through a windy mountain pass in Mexico when suddenly I hit a slick of oil and the bike skidded without warning. Luckily, it lasted for no more than a couple of seconds, but the road had no barriers and if I had continued to skid there was a several hundred feet precipice on the side I was heading towards. My blood ran cold ... several thousand miles

from home and no phone. Life could have changed or been terminated in just a few seconds.

A chance letter from a friend in Zambia changed everything.

A lengthy spell of travelling also gives one time to philosophise and get one's emotions and thoughts in order. On a long trip, one meets a huge range of people who directly or subconsciously influence ones thinking for the future. Certainly, when we had decided to head home to the UK to our families, I felt that two continents were enough and we had experienced much of what travelling can offer in terms of reward and challenges. I knew that I wanted to devote my life to livestock production, and I knew that the European environment was not the place to fulfil my dreams and aspirations.

Africa was to prove to be the continent where one could express oneself professionally and enjoy being in an environment where farmers are respected and appreciated. I could not have written a better script to the one I lived

out for the next 42 years. Of course, it has not been all plain sailing. Africa is tough, it is unpredictable but without sounding biased, it is the best!

That journey, that time spent on the road, shaped who I was and what I wanted to get out of life. It showed me that every day is to be appreciated, every event or happening good or bad is part of the rich tapestry of life. It also made me realise that my real dream was to settle down, hopefully find a wonderful woman to share that life with and have a family. Those dreams have been fulfilled; so as one settles down to the home straight, I hope to contribute in some small way in areas and on subjects that I am passionate about. It has been a wonderful life and long may it continue. The three years spent at Wye played a pivotal role for me in not only enriching the travelling experience but also in reinforcing the chosen employment route which proved to be so rewarding over so many years. Wye deserved to continue to flourish. Like me and the hundreds of students before and after, it has left an indelible mark for which I will be grateful for ever. It was quite simply unique.



22 months of journals

A mixed bunch of memories of a fruitful life

Graham Clampin (1974–77) ranges far and wide in these musings on a life importing fruit.

All at Sea

'The *Astoria* has gone aground at the Panama Canal.' This was the news I got on an overnight fax in June 1991 (no emails in those days) when I got into the London office. You may recall that in 2021 the container ship *Evergiven* blocked the Suez Canal, which reminded me of the above.

At the time I was working for the New Zealand Apple and Pear Marketing Board (NZAPMB) – not too dissimilar in structure and remit to the old UK Milk Marketing Board in that it had a monopolistic right of acquisition of apples and pears from NZ growers but also the sole right for export and sale offshore. As such the approx 180,000 cartons of apples on board with a retail value of over £2.5m was our fruit. A few hours later I was on the way to Panama to protect our interests. The NZ-based CEO had faxed the London-based GM asking for a full update and was rather surprised by the five-word reply – 'Indiana Clampin's on his way!' I learnt later that he was apparently satisfied by this.

There were a couple of significant differences between the two groundings. The *Astoria* was not blocking the canal – it had exited the canal, dropped off the pilot but had mysteriously tuned landward towards the town of Cristobal rather than out to open sea and so was not causing delays to other shipping.

Secondly, the vessel was much smaller, only about 150 metres long and it was not a

container ship – the cargo was loose-stowed box by box into the refrigerated cargo holds.

On arrival in Panama, I made my way to the ships' agents' office to liaise with a Mr Ng. I was unsure how to pronounce his name so asked for 'Mr Neg' but was told (in perfect English by the receptionist) there was nobody of that name so I got out the fax and showed the name – 'Ah,' she said 'Mr Ng' pronouncing the two letters individually. It was late in the day and not worth going out to the vessel so he took me to a none too salubrious hotel, but good for Cristobal as it did have air conditioning, he said, as night-time temperatures were similar to the 30°C daytime temperature.

Indiana Clampin's on his way!

As he dropped me at the hotel, he said: 'Don't go out at night – you don't look Panamanian and you don't speak Spanish.' He continued that he would pick me up in the morning at 9am but to wait inside until he arrived, and that it would be ok for me to walk the two metres across the pavement to his car but not to have anything like a wallet in my pockets or have a case – an armful of files would be ok, however.

The AC unit turned out to be an old lorry-body refrigeration unit bolted into the wall. It made such a noise that it was impossible to sleep so I got the room cold, got some sleep

then woke up being very hot and switched on the unit again to make the room cold. This process was repeated four to five times during the night.

Over the next few days, a plethora of naval architects and various insurers arrived. The initial view of the ships operators was that they may have to remove some cargo to lighten the ship so it could refloat, although the tidal gain in that area was only about 12 inches. My concern was for fruit condition when out of refrigeration.

Next a salvage tug arrived and a rather large American salvage captain who had total authority when on the vessel. Divers went down to see how the ship was stuck. The architects calculated that by removal of most of the water ballast and bunker oil and with the tug pulling in a certain direction at high side it should be pulled clear. The main risk was that the ship would be top heavy as all the sea water ballast and bunkers were low down in the ship which already had a lean (see Image 1).



Image 1: the forlorn-looking m/v Astoria aground at Cristobal
Note: m/v stands for motor vessel which replaced SS (as in Titanic) which was for steam ship.

The time for the refloat occurred late one evening with a posse of the people involved with the salvage, including myself, onboard and as the salvage tug pulled the vessel free it started to tilt even more, and the salvage captain showed an amazing turn of speed and at the same time with an urgent tone of voice shouted, 'Quick to the high side'. Obviously, if the vessel was going to capsize you wanted to be on the upper side of the vessel and not the side hitting the water first. The vessel tilted a bit more then slowly righted, and an immediate order was given to refill certain ballast tanks with sea water to make the vessel lower in the water.

A day later there was a dark early morning taxi ride to Panama City airport for the flight home. It was rather alarming that after looking at his watch the taxi driver veered onto the other (wrong) side of the road along with many other cars. It seems that at certain times of the day a normal two-way road becomes one way although there are no signs to indicate this! There is a similar situation on one of the main roads into Santiago Chile

to help traffic into the city in the mornings and out in the evenings, so it's good make sure you know the correct time, but it's also good fun to scare first-time visitors to the city. Auckland harbour bridge does the same process but at least they move a row of concrete barriers several lanes each day to separate the two directions of travel.

The only realistic solution was therefore to have a design that was portable between different vessels.

The grounded vessel was not my first visit to Panama. During 1987 and still working for NZAPMB, I came up with the concept of allowing a conventional refrigerated cargo vessel to carry fruit under controlled atmosphere (CA). CA is standard practice worldwide on land-based static stores for



*Image 2:
the CA
generation
unit snugly
fitting into
the cargo
hold of a
passenger
747*

many fruit including apples and pears, whereby the oxygen levels are lowered and CO₂ levels allowed to rise, often by fruit respiration, and then monitoring the levels and allowing in fresh air to prevent anaerobiosis.

I could never quite fathom, when it's 40°C outside, why spicy hot soup is served at lunchtime!

It is relatively easy to build a static store airtight enough for this purpose, but refrigerated ships are not built with this in mind and are designed to flex, given the pounding they take during their voyages. There was some new membrane technology where compressed air is passed through a semi-permeable membrane that separates the main constituents of air, oxygen and nitrogen into two streams allowing the nitrogen to be tapped off to purge the cargo holds, thus reducing O₂ levels. This process was in widespread use by LNG-carrying (liquified natural gas) ships to prevent explosion by having significantly reduced O₂ levels around the LNG. Routine automatic monitoring of the percentages of O₂ and CO₂ could then start up the machinery to maintain an atmosphere regime. An issue was that the vessels bringing NZ fruit to Europe were not on a liner service (like a bus route) and were classed as tramping reefers that were chartered for one particular voyage and may never be used for that trade again.

Economics dictated that any machine would have to be used multiple times during a season and on different vessels and given the voyage time the only realistic solution was therefore to have a design that was *portable between*

different vessels and that could fly back to NZ after each voyage as part of standard air cargo in the belly of a passenger 747. Given the size of vessel cargo holds and the somewhat non airtightness of ships cargo holds, the machinery nitrogen generation capacity would need to be rather large.

A Swedish shipping operator, a Norwegian manufacturer and membrane user of US membranes, and a UK-based gas analysing company along with an Air NZ representative and myself met to outline the feasibility of this. After a couple of days and many sandwiches, an outline arose, the main limiting factor being the shape and weight that could be used for its return journey on a standard passenger 747. Image 2 shows the tolerances used with the odd shape being necessary to fit into the somewhat circular lower half of the plane. It should be noted that passengers sit on the floor above the ceiling of the cargo hold. The whole unit weighed 4.5 tonnes – the maximum allowed for one cargo piece.

The unit was built and ready for use the following season, and I would travel on its first use with the vessel from NZ to Europe – a one-month journey, certainly my longest period away from dry land. The machine worked well and there was not a huge amount to do, but I learnt a lot about merchant vessels and life at sea but was very fortunate to be allowed the use of the 'owners' cabin which was generally better equipped than the crews cabins.

Both crew and officers were Philippine with good English and quite friendly. I could never quite fathom, when it's 40°C outside, why spicy hot soup is served at lunchtime. But overall, the food was OK. Satellite phones were in their infancy and only used by the vessel in emergency, and so communication



*Image 3: Vessel during heavy seas with the CA unit on the hatch cover under the foreground crane.
(again I can recall the name of this vessel)*

with family was a fax to the office which was then relayed home. A lone seabird rode the bowsprit for three days whilst crossing the Pacific and there was an escort of flying fish for about 20 minutes. There was some rough weather see (Image 3) and the bow of the vessel was plunging into the sea creating a huge spray. The CA unit can also be seen under the crane in the foreground.

**As we went in, he
asked for my passport
and promptly
put \$5 inside.**

Because things were going well, the plan changed for me to get off at the Panama Canal and fly home. However, a day or so beforehand a political situation developed in

Panama and UK Government foreign office advice urged against all travel in Panama. The canal remained open and the vessel, with me still on board, made the transit at night-time with daytime slots reserved for much larger vessels. The captain told me to make sure my cabin was locked and soon a small motor launch came out of the shadows and eight men climbed up the rope ladder (whilst both vessels were moving) to act as linemen during the ascent through several locks. With such slow speed there is little water flowing over the rudder and the vessel has virtual no steerage. The linemen threw ropes fore and aft on each side and these are attached to four trains at the side of the canal (see Image 3) and the pilot orders the trains to winch in or out, forward or back to keep the vessel straight when moving through each lock as there is so little



Image 4: Vessel at the Panama Canal with guiding trains at the side and lock gates in front.

clearance either side with vessels built to a 'Panamax' standard. Protocol demands that ships rudder and propulsion is ordered by the pilot to the ship's captain who then relays this to the helm and engine room. Once through the ascent stage there is open water through some conjoined lakes over the 85-foot-high continental divide before the reverse process in the descent stage although sea level on the Atlantic side is about 20 centimetres lower than the Pacific side.

The bunkering facilities were not operational near the Canal and the vessel could not make Europe without more fuel, and it was arranged to take on fuel at the tiny Caribbean Island of St Eustatius where I left the vessel. The ship's agent met me quayside and took me to the airport. As we went in, he asked for my passport and promptly put \$5 inside! He spoke to the immigration officer who stamped

me into the country and two seconds later out of the country, as in theory I should have been met by immigration and customs at the quay, but all passed off without incident

In the years after I did some contract work with one of the American banana multinationals who were trialling CA with bananas on vessels from Central and South America which has now become standard practice. As these banana vessels operate specifically for the banana trade and often on the same routes in a back-and-forth way, newly built vessels had purpose-designed machinery built in the vessel during construction and so is part of the ships standard equipment, just as the refrigeration equipment is. One of these involved a daytime transit of the Panama Canal where I saw the rather small canal-side memorial to the 10,000-plus who died trying to build the sea level canal which

eventually failed. Whilst completing similar work I met an arriving vessel of Colombian bananas at Antwerp to download some data from one of the CA units. It only took about half an hour and then got a taxi to take me to a hotel. About 100 metres after leaving the port a car turned in aggressively across the taxi and plain clothes police showed a card to the driver and ordered me out, and a search of my bag took place – I suppose looking for drugs – but it was all over in a couple of minutes.

Fruity Ditties

The majority of my career was spent working for UK-based fruit importers, supplying major supermarkets with various fruit from many sources. Often the job involved offshore travel and sometimes with supermarket technologists to ensure the correct fruit quality at point of packing, and the following memories are some of the more unusual and, hopefully, humorous moments of my career in fresh produce retail supply that my horticultural degree led me to.

At the airport

I was to drop off a UK supermarket technologist at Napier (NZ) airport one morning at the end of his visit for a connecting flight to Auckland for the journey home, but his paper itinerary and flight ticket details were different, meaning that we would arrive at Napier about five minutes before the flight was due to depart. Just to be seen to be doing something I called Air NZ at the airport – those were the days when you could do such things and speak to a person, and I was amazed when they said they would hold the flight. He dashed into the airport and was taken with all his baggage to the plane at the end of the runway. As he got on, everyone looked at him, of course, and then

the captain announced that, due to a late-reporting passenger and baggage, they were too heavy and would have to charge up and down the runway on the ground to burn off some fuel, so they were within weight take-off parameters.

I saw the rather small canal-side memorial to the 10,000-plus who died trying to build the sea level canal.

Awaiting take-off on a Ryan Air flight the steward made some variations to the pre-take-off announcement. When it got to the part about if there is a drop in cabin pressure oxygen masks will drop down, he added in 'please stop screaming' before continuing with the routine script, but it certainly got everyone's attention. Again, when it got to the bit about lifejacket under the seat and there is a light and a whistle he added 'in case you end up in a disco'.

At the bath house

Vessels to bring NZ fruit to Europe often came down from Japan where they bought secondhand cars (right-hand drive), and I had a few trips to Japan to make sure vessels were suitable. On my first visit there, which involved flights via Alaska, as Russian airspace was not open to foreign airlines, I was met at Tokyo airport and then driven to the bullet-train station and met at the other end by a shipping representative. In the car on the way to the hotel he said something like, 'You must be very tired – we have Japanese bath.' So, we stopped off for the traditional bath, sitting (starkers) on a six-inch high three-

legged stool to wash thoroughly and involved tipping a potty-shaped bowl of water over your head, all the time being watched over by a female attendant to make sure all was properly washed – and she did indicate I needed to wash my rear-end better than I had – before being allowed into the very hot very large bath.

It was a one-horse town but, then, even the horse left.

An encounter with royalty

During a NZ visit with other supermarket customers, we arrived at the Christchurch hotel only to be stopped going into the underground car park due to a VIP visit to the hotel. My NZ-based colleague who was driving insisted that he had important guests from England, and we were surprisingly let in. The chat going up in the lift to reception was that it was probably a Z-grade celebrity. The lift doors opened and the Queen was walking alone no more than two yards away with no security or anything and no one came to challenge us. Having turned to see the lift opening, she just carried on walking.

Time out

There was time for some occasional R&R. I recall an overly confident UK supermarket technologist in NZ chatting to the guy who was tying the bungee to his legs about to do a bungee jump. No doubt he had heard it all before and thought 'Cocky pom – I'll fix him.' Just as the jumper leapt off the platform and the point of no return, the NZ guy shouted 'Hold on a minute.' There was of, course no, problem at all. Another bungee jump incident occurred when a group of European customers were being teased that the following day's

itinerary included a bungee jump which caused some lively conversations, although one of the German customers said, 'If I am told to jump then I will jump.'

I was being driven to the Washington state town of Wenatchee which is an area of apple growing, and I asked my host what the town was like. He replied that 10 years ago it was a one-horse town but, then, even the horse left.

Some people don't take rejection well

...

One of my first long-distance visits with supermarkets was in the early 1980s to South Africa. We had been importing cantaloupes, but all arrivals had been very mixed in appearance and quality (due to open-pollinated seeds being used, we found out later), and I had sent a message to the grower to say that the fruit had to be rejected as it was not to the customer requirement, but they would be sold at a wholesale market. The visit was to try to understand the issues and what could be done. We met outside this grower's house in the middle of nowhere, and when I introduced myself, he said in a gruff voice, 'Clampin – you reject my melons – where's my gun?' and he stalked off towards his truck before turning round with a big grin on his face.

Just a juvenile

In the early 1980s when checking some field-packed cold-stored late season Californian red grapes in UK. I came across an immobile slightly spotted spider and so boxed it up. When warmed up, it started to move a little. I took it to the natural history museum for identification, and the guy there opened the box and corralled it with both hands and said – it's a black widow.' I took a step back but he said 'Don't worry, it's a juvenile so not

dangerous.' I was not necessarily convinced – to think that I'd had it in a small not very secure box and had taken it on train and tube.

The Man from del Monte

It would not be uncommon for various suppliers to have technologists in the same place at the same time often at the start of a new product season and coinciding with a supermarket visit. We carried some small instruments to help with quality monitoring such as a refractometer to measure sugar levels and a penetrometer to measure fruit firmness. Airport security often asked about these and on explaining they were to measure fruit maturity a nearby colleague said, 'You're the second "man from Del Monte" this morning!' (for those who remember the TV ads).

You must be joking!

During the early noughties and whilst working for a company supplying fruit to a UK supermarket, we had monthly operational management meetings to review the previous month and discuss the future supply so my technical and quality report was largely figures-based. This was also the time when individual targets were all the rage – I got my most bizarre objective: to tell a joke before my monthly report which would be scored out of 10 by other attendees. This, it was hoped, would liven up proceedings. I must admit I thought it rather frivolous, and my first few attempts got low scores, but I gradually told some better jokes and often became the most looked-forward to part of the meeting.

It's a small world

I am sure that many of us have experiences of it being a small world. I have three cases that spring to mind. In the late 1970s I was in a Southampton petrol station before

boarding the ferry to France when I saw two Wye contemporaries who were also on their way to France but on their honeymoon. On another occasion at breakfast in a small hotel in the town of Curico Chile, I walked a guy I used to work with about 10 years previously. The strangest though was in a pub in a small town by the Marlborough Sounds, NZ. A couple of years previous an NZ couple (Tracy and Tony) had house-sat for me whilst I was abroad, and they had worked for a season for the same company before moving to Scotland for the winter to work for the ski season. In the pub, I was with a supermarket guy, and we sat at a table for a few beers.

He said, 'Ah, is raw eel', to which I replied 'Just don't tell me what the others are.'

Later in the evening the pub got fairly crowded and a couple of guys asked if they could sit at the table as there were no others available. We exchanged a couple of pleasantries before returning to our own conversations. One of the guys then asked what we were doing here, so we explained we were with the apple industry bringing NZ apples to UK. He said that his son had worked the previous year in UK with the apple people, and that they had been very lucky in looking after a house for a guy when he was abroad and that he was now working in a sports shop in Scotland. As he raised his glass to take a swig I said, 'You are Tony Smith's father'. There was a slight splutter of beer and a look of disbelief that I knew his son. Anyway, conversation flowed as did the beer



An unusual signpost seen in Suffolk during my long walk.

A matter of taste

I am sure we have all had various food experiences, and I recall that an evening with some shipping guys in Tokyo started off in the equivalent of a Tapas bar with beer and some small dishes of something to eat. I tried one, then one of the guys asked: 'Did you like that?' I replied that it was good. He said, 'Ah, is raw eel', to which I replied 'Just don't tell me what the others are.' But I have no bad memories. They were, however, polite enough to ask if I wanted the poisonous (if not prepared and cooked correctly) blow fish – probably just as well I was not aware that it is more deadly than cyanide, as I agreed to this and no harm done. However, the lung and spleen (no idea from what animal) did get the better of me in Turkey. In the US I tried moose drool – this is, however, the name of a beer!

Concluding thoughts

I was a keen hockey player at Wye and, apart from breaks when working permanently abroad and when children were young, I have continued to play and still do today and still wear the same tracksuit for the pre-match warm up. It is a much better game now on AstroTurf than on the muddy, bumpy grass pitches at Wye, and many of the technicalities have been removed so it's a much faster and fluent game. Fortunately, I have avoided muscular injuries although stopping a fiercely stuck penalty corner shot with my eye socket instead of my stick was a bit painful and needed bone grafting to patch up the fractures – as the surgeon said we chop out pieces of bone from the other side of your face and Polyfilla them into place – all internally though.

In the US I tried moose drool – this is, however, the name of a beer!

In the last decade or so I have done a lot of walking, completing things like the North and South Downs way, the Wealdway, High Weald Landscape Trail, Cotswold's way, London outer orbital path, the coastlines of Sussex, Kent and Norfolk etc, and in 2021, delayed from 2020 lockdowns, I made up my own long-distance path from England's most westerly point at Lands' End to England's most easterly point at Lowestoft, a tad over 500 miles, and hope to do 2000 miles of walking in 2021.

Some downsize and others ... well upsize!

How John Daw's (1985–88) requirement for more space led to a fascinating discovery.

Once the kids have flown the nest, the logical thing to do is, of course, to downsize the family house. Well, as I am sure you already know very well, life doesn't always go according to plan. My wife and I are keen ballroom dancers, and this resulted in a requirement for our own practice ballroom. We then found that, when a house is big enough to house a ballroom, it inevitably means that you end up with a lot of stuff that wasn't on the original shopping list, but at least the silver lining is that you get to play life-sized Cluedo at Christmas!

The upshot of all this is that we ended up purchasing Huntsland House in Sussex, which

is conveniently located about ten minutes' drive from Gatwick: handy both for all-night trains from London (dance events often end late) and flights to Vienna (home to around 400 balls a year in more normal times). It is thought that there may have been a building on the site since the thirteenth century – certainly Huntsland Barn has parts dating back to the fifteenth century – but the current house is a mix of Regency (cantilevered circular staircase and dome) and mid-Victorian.

Somewhat surprisingly, the renovations of house and garden took place without missing



John and his wife Olga at the Hofberg Palace of Vienna in happier, pre-Covid times!

a beat during the various lockdowns (dredging the lake would make a story in itself), until finally we were ready to sell up Grange Farm and slip unnoticed over the border from my native Kent into an unsuspecting West Sussex. The inevitable inertia resulting from Covid

(close contact ballroom events were the first to be cancelled) resulted in idle thumbs, and so the work found for them turned out to be research into the history of our new home.

To my great surprise the digitisation of old newspapers means that it is now possible

*The house
as built by
John Russell
Reeves*



*Same view
today – only
the con-
servatory
and planting
have
changed*





Sacred Lotus from the Reeves collection – was this the reason for the creation of the lake?
 Courtesy: The National History Museum

to search instantly for a name or keyword across multiple publications, something that would have been inconceivable when the process was purely manual. Perusal of the *Mid Sussex Chronicle* and *Eastbourne Gazette*, in particular, produced many gems, as did the ancestry databases designed for would-be genealogists. From all of this digging, it transpired that one of the previous occupants was a John Russell Reeves, who owned the Huntsland estate from the years 1843–1877, and it is now that we finally reach the real reason for this article.

His father, John Reeves, worked as the Chief Inspector of Tea for the East India Company in China. A keen amateur naturalist, Reeves senior commissioned local artists to paint pictures of botanical specimens from all over Asia, with his work in the trading port of Canton giving him access to exotic flora

and fauna from all over the continent. He developed a network of local contacts who supplied him with specimens from within China and other Asian countries, and so he became a correspondent for the Horticultural Society of London, sending specimens and drawings back to England.

The bamboo planting screening the oil tank and swimming pool seem rather too conveniently located.

John Russell Reeves joined his father in Canton as a tea merchant, and eventually succeeded him as the Chief Inspector of Tea. He shared his father's enthusiasm for natural history, and eventually became a well-known Chinese naturalist for scientists in England in his own right. He carried on the illustration work started by his father, his artists relying initially on local materials for their drawings, but later on using higher-quality paper and paints especially imported from England by Reeves. Eventually the collection grew to number more than 2,000 illustrations.

Reeves's purchase of the Huntsland estate would seem to coincide with the timing of the First Opium War, which presumably caused him to return to England. However, on the cessation of hostilities the East India Company appears to have persuaded him to return to China (the 1850 census show the only occupants as being a housekeeper and a gardener), until he finally retired to Sussex and commissioned the alterations to Huntsland House that we see today. On Reeves's death in 1877, his widow presented the entire collection of drawings

to the then British Museum's Natural History Department (now the Natural History Museum), where they are still available for inspection by interested visitors.

And so the question that now naturally arises is can, we still find evidence of John Russell Reeves's enthusiasm for oriental flora and fauna in the Huntsland gardens today? Well, the bamboo planting screening the oil tank and swimming pool seem rather too conveniently located, and the magnolias appear to be rather too young. The dammed clay lake may have been created to home Chinese water lilies (a religious symbol of resurrection in that country because of their flowers closing at night and reopening again

in the morning), but prior to the dredging it was devoid of all life save for a few native yellow Flag Irises.

The shy Reeves Muntjac deer seen through the fence at night are a possibility (the clue is in the name), although anecdotal evidence suggests that they are descendants of a herd originally introduced to Woburn at the turn of the last century. There are sadly no Dove Trees and the Golden Larch is conspicuous by its absence, and so the answer would therefore appear to be a rather disappointing no.

Oh, hold on a moment – does Japanese Knotweed count ...?



*We know this is **Will George** (1976–79) playing Henry VIII, but do you recognise any of the people in the background? And when did this performance take place? Contact our new editor Martin Rickatson Email: jmr.agriculture@gmail.com*

See page 76 for a tribute to Will who died in 2021.

Farming on crutches – with nature and without debt

John Meadley (1965–68) first visited Sierra Leone in 1979, but it much later that he encountered some of the many amputees and became involved in a project to teach farming skills on crutches.

One of the poorest countries in the world, Sierra Leone experienced 11 years of brutal civil war (1991–2002). More than 50,000 people died. Many others lost limbs through amputation. The country's major source of livelihood – agriculture – was devastated whilst education was left in limbo. Following the civil war, the Ebola epidemic killed over 8,000 people.

I first became seriously aware of Sierra Leone in 1979 when I received a call from the World Bank asking if I could help to evaluate a request from the Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board (SLPMB) for funds to establish the commercial production of groundnuts. I was intrigued by this request as, based on my experience of growing them in the Middle Veld of Swaziland (annual rainfall

of 925 mm with 650 mm in the six-month growing season) I had always considered groundnuts to be a crop suited to areas of relatively modest rainfall.¹ In contrast, annual rainfall in Sierra Leone (over the six-month rainy season) varies from around 2,000 mm in the north to 3,500 mm in the south – throwing up thoughts of both Cercospora and Aflatoxin.

Regardless of what I might think, the groundnut (which would appear to have been introduced into the country by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century) is an important subsistence crop in the country with a modest level of exports.

In those days, unaware of issues around climate change, many of us were routinely flying around the world on Boeing 707s or



Schoolchildren learning to make compost

¹ Confirmed by Purselove's Tropical Crops

DC8s, working with rural communities. And so, intrigued by this request, I can remember responding to the telephoned request by blithely saying:

'I expect to be in Ouagadougou within a fortnight and, if you are willing to cover my additional costs of travel and accommodation, I am happy to route round to Freetown and spend a few days – pro bono – to take a look.'

And so it happened that I arrived, my bag temporarily lost somewhere along the West African coast, and entered the office of the besuited management of the SLPMB wearing jeans and a tea shirt. Despite my bedraggled and disrespectful appearance, it was agreed that I should spend a week or so travelling around the country on my own with just a driver. I remember him well – Malekeh Boiroh. I met him some years later when he had become an Imam.

In those days, unaware of issues around climate change, many of us were routinely flying around the world on Boeing 707s

On my return to Freetown I reported to the Board that farmers around the country seemed perfectly capable of growing groundnuts on their own and that what prevented them from doing so was a transparent market.

From that conversation emerged the National Produce Company, which entered into contracts with an increasing number of village communities to produce groundnuts

at a price guaranteed at planting time. It was a simple, low-cost and successful operation that then spread into other products such as rice, ginger and *Pentadesma* (Buttertree) and continued until 1996 when it was overcome by the civil war. No loan from the World Bank was needed, and I had no further involvement once it was up and running. At the time, one could not help but be disturbed by the enormous disparity in wealth within the country and the potential for significant unrest – as sadly proved to be the case.

I returned to Sierra Leone in 2001 to lead a mission for DFID charged with assessing how it could help to address the many issues arising in the rural areas from the continuing civil war – including in particular supporting both the traumatised people who had fled the rural areas and wanted to return and those who had remained on the land.

In addition, there were the tens of thousands of (mainly young) ex-combatants who were increasingly being disarmed and who had no obvious future. That is another story, but during that time I became increasingly aware of the many people who had lost limbs – either a leg or an arm – during the vicious terror campaign of amputation. Some were in camps and some wandered the streets – on crutches or in make-shift wheelchairs – asking for money. In those early days, we could only help to provide the basics, and it was difficult to look beyond that. My involvement in that initiative ceased when I moved on to Liberia to do similar work in another country that was experiencing a traumatic civil war.

In 2012, my son Tom had just completed his GCSEs, and we went together to Sierra Leone so that I could share with him some of what I had experienced and catch up with old friends from those earlier days. Whilst there



Football training on Lumley Beach – Lahai is the second from the right of the picture

I heard about a group of amputees who were playing football on Lumley Beach. We tracked them down and went to watch them play, engaged with them in conversation and later went to their office.

There I met Mambud Samai, who in 2001 had founded what became the Sierra Leone Amputee Sports Association (SLASA) to generate fellowship, self-respect and hope. Its primary aim was and remains to bring together amputees from across the country and – through football – to assist in their

mental and physical rehabilitation and to develop both confidence and hope. Both men and women amputees play football in leagues across the country. They have participated in both the Africa Cup and the World Cup. In 2014 they got through to the finals of the World Cup and asked Tom to write their theme song for them – which he did – but they were denied the opportunity to participate in the games due to the outbreak of Ebola.



Working the farm – Lahai is at the front; Zainab is wearing the green shirt.



The farm-house and training centre

The aim, as is also the case increasingly in India, is to farm with nature and without chemicals and as far as possible without the debt that debilitates so many small farmers. Amongst other techniques this involves the production of Bokashi, a kind of supercharged compost, which is made using natural materials impregnated with fungi harvested from local forest soils. I organised an online session about making Bokashi in 2021 – in which Mambud explained their technique alongside specialists from South Africa and Europe.

Its primary aim was and remains to bring together amputees from across the country and – through football.

The focus of the farm itself is now on extending this practical knowledge to others – starting with the amputees themselves. Fifteen of them from across the country will

spend a week on the farm both learning the farming techniques and working out how to implement them when on crutches. It will be a course designed by the amputees, of which they will have ownership and which they will then share with their peers. This will be followed by a series of training courses for 150 whole-bodied farmers and then for 120 schoolchildren (and their teachers) as well as a small group of community leaders who will provide a continuing link between the SLASA farm and their communities.

At the time of writing this article there are three other developments. The first is a potential link with Physionet,² a disability charity in which **Harry Franks** (1963–66) continues to play a pivotal role.

The second is a recent approach by a charity that supports bee-keeping in Africa that would like to see how their equipment and training might be adapted for people on crutches. It is not likely to be easy, but once

² A UK-based humanitarian organisation dedicated to helping some of the most marginalised people in the world by supplying children and adults with disability equipment considered surplus or redundant in the UK.



Zainab and Lahai are engaged to be married.

achieved it could create benefits not only in terms of income from honey but also from increased pollination and crop yield.

The third is the good news that Lahai and Zainab (seen in this photo and in the one above on 'working the farm') are getting married in May and – both amputees – will continue farming.

In the eyes of Mambud and his team there are compelling benefits arising from training and supporting both the amputees and whole-bodied farmers in agro-ecology and permaculture farming practices. These include:

- 1 enhanced food security and human health whilst reducing financial risks
- 2 eliminating the need for synthetic fertilisers and plant protection chemicals
- 4 protecting the forests from deforestation and reducing erosion
- 5 rebuilding habitats to preserve biodiversity and aiding in sequestering carbon

- 6 providing new economic opportunities for both amputees and whole-bodied people and increasing the attractiveness of the rural areas as places to live and earn a living.

As Mambud notes:

'The farm and its training programme will focus on inspiring initiatives to build resilience into the farming practices of local communities and provide a platform through which poor farmers, community schools and amputees will gain knowledge in sustainable farming practices.'

This is only the beginning. It is hoped that the benefits from what is happening at the SLASA farm can spread across Sierra Leone and perhaps, in due course, through their membership of the Africa amputee football network, across Africa.

In a printed article it is difficult to provide digital links, so in a separate document – which you can find access <https://rebrand.ly/FoC> – you will find more information about this initiative and how you might support it.

Disappearing pylons

Chris Baines (1966–69) outlines an amazing collaborative project which is restoring some of our most precious landscapes to their former glory. Photographs copyright of Benjamin Graham.

Power brokering

It is a long, long way from sweeping up leaves in Sheffield's city parks – my pre-Wye gap year job – to sweeping away pylons and powerlines from National Parks. The summer of 2022 will see the culmination of eight years of fascinating work, when electricity transmission cables will disappear beneath the ground, and some iconic rural landscapes will be restored to their natural former glory.

Back in 2014 I was asked by the energy regulator Ofgem and the electricity transmission company National Grid, to chair an advisory group of landscape specialists. We were tasked with determining where best to spend £500 million of bill-payers' money, reducing the visual impact of existing national energy infrastructure. Our brief was restricted to National Parks and AONBs in England and Wales (there was a separate scheme in Scotland), and we were supported by an objective analysis of every line of pylons that crosses them. Gradually, the hundreds of miles of offending lines were whittled down to a dozen locations. These were selected in part by the quality of the affected landscape, partly by the scale of the visual intrusion, partly by the numbers of visitors and locals who were affected, and partly by the technical challenge of undergrounding.

My advisory group includes very senior professionals from across the environmental network in both the charitable and the government sectors – The National Trust, the CPRE and the Ramblers' Association for

example, Natural Resources Wales, Cadw, Historic England and Natural England. This Stakeholder Advisory Group also includes a representative from the energy regulator Ofgem and a board member of National Grid. About 15 colleagues in all.

The summer of 2022 will see the culmination of eight years of fascinating work.

Whilst undergrounding new transmission lines is now quite regularly employed in sensitive landscapes, our task of re-visiting long-established lines for removal is a world first, and it is easy to see why. The alternatives to pylons and overhead cables are expensive at the best of times. Undertaking the task in our most sensitive, geologically complex and well-loved landscapes presents a whole extra level of challenge. The first three active projects in the programme will give some measure of the task:

Dorset Downs

It is difficult to imagine now, how anyone thought a line of giant pylons marching along the skyline of the Dorset Downs was ever a good idea. Indeed, one of my early environmental heroes, the broadcaster Kenneth Allsopp, campaigned vigorously against them until his untimely death in



On the skyline of Snowdonia National Park, almost 9kms of transmission lines are disappearing underground.

the early 1970s. As students, Kenneth's son Tristan and I were co-chairs of Canterbury Rag Week in 1968, and it has been a particular pleasure to tell Tristan that, 54 years later, his late father's *bête noire* is about to bite the dust.

It is difficult to imagine now, how anyone thought a line of giant pylons marching along the skyline of the Dorset Downs was ever a good idea.

The particular challenge in this case has been archaeology. The Dorset Downs are an ancient and much occupied landscape, but relatively little studied. The prospect of digging an almost 9 kilometre-long trench, 60 metres

wide through a largely uncharted treasure-trove seemed bound to lead to tears. In fact, the opposite has been true. At the heart of all our advice has been the determination to engage widely and deep with amateurs and professionals from the national to the very local. Consequently, combining the expertise of the archaeologists with the technical resources of the energy engineers, the enthusiastic support of Historic England and the Dorset County Archaeologist has yielded an extraordinary wealth of new knowledge. Sites of major national significance have been identified for the first time. The precise route of the underground cabling has been subtly diverted where necessary, and the sophisticated technology of LiDAR surveys and ground-penetrating radar have been combined with many thousands of hours of fieldwork to great effect.

Snowdonia National Park

Anyone who has visited Portmeirion in North Wales will recall the stunning natural beauty of the Dwyryd Estuary. The famous little

Tunnelling beneath the spectacular Dwyryd Estuary will restore the natural beauty of this corner of the Snowdonia National Park.



trains of the Ffestiniog railway rattle along its shoreline before winding their way up into the mountains – now a UNESCO World Heritage Site as well as a popular feature of the much-loved Snowdonia National Park – and the views are breathtakingly beautiful. Beautiful, that is, except for the line of giant pylons that straddle the estuary.

The result is a complex and unsightly wirescape which has overshadowed Dunford Bridge.

In this case the challenge is largely geological. The cables are to be carried beneath the estuary in a new custom-built tunnel, and because the shoreline itself is both visible and vulnerable the tunnel is to continue right underneath the village of Penrhyndeudraeth.

Challenging and expensive to say the least! To further complicate this project, one side of the estuary is in the National Park and the other is beyond its boundary, in the county of Gwynedd, so there are two planning committees to satisfy. What is more, this is a real stronghold of Welsh language and culture, so my virtual presentations to the local politicians saw me valiantly embracing Cymraeg. Something must have worked as both committees approved the scheme unanimously.

Peak District National Park

Barnsley, in South Yorkshire, may not be best known as a gateway to the Peak District – but it is. Sheffield's River Don rises in a rugged landscape of dark dry-stone walls, sheep pasture and heather moorland, and the village of Dunford Bridge sits astride its headwaters at the eastern end of the abandoned Woodhead railway tunnel. In its heyday this was a busy industrial settlement where trains were stacked in sidings, ready to carry coal from Yorkshire, under the Pennines



Barnsley's Gateway to the Peak District National Park, with pylons about to disappear!

and on into the mill towns of Lancashire. When the trains stopped running, the Woodhead tunnel found a new use, carrying power cables beneath the Dark Peak of the national park. Genius! Unfortunately, where the powerlines emerge from the tunnel, the result is a complex and unsightly wirescape which has overshadowed Dunford Bridge for a couple of generations. Now, those cables are set to continue underground, down the valley and beyond the village.

In this case the issue is one of competition for space. The long-distance Trans Pennine Trail is extremely popular here. It occupies the old railway track, is particularly easy to use, and is much enjoyed by lovers of the countryside who might otherwise find access difficult. The railway line is also the only option for burying the cables before removing the pylons and restoring the long-blighted natural beauty of the valley. National Grid and their contractors have achieved miracles in order to create a temporary alternative route for walkers, wheelchair users, cyclists and horse riders. The scheme involves installing two

long and gently sloping bridges to create an equally accessible route beside the river. This will allow the railway track to be dug up and new cables to be installed before the trail is reinstated over the top of the powerlines.

In all these cases the skill and ingenuity of the engineers has been astounding. For example, in Dunford Bridge new concrete piles have been installed using an auger system that avoids the normal pounding that would have disturbed a colony of hibernating bats. The soil that has been stripped from site has all been very carefully stockpiled for re-spreading in the correct places and layers once the engineering work is done, and hay seed has been harvested from site, and then retained in cold storage for sowing when the job is done.

It is a real privilege to be witnessing such creative collaboration in a field where conflict has generally been the norm. All the very different players seem to agree that there is great added value when stakeholders from contrasting cultures find ways of playing

The Eastern end of the Woodward Tunnel, free of pylons for the first time in 60 years!



to their respective strengths. When it works well, the whole is most definitely greater than the sum of its parts, and in the case of

the disappearing pylons, the benefits will be there for ever.



Withersdane House in c 1898

Cheveleys, the College and Consultancy

David Knight (1968–69) recalls the links between the Cheveley family and Wye.

Three generations of Cheveleys have had strong links with Wye. How it all started I am somewhat uncertain. It seems to have come through contacts in the Worshipful Company of Farmers of which both Stephen and Michael Cheveley were Masters. They had their farming business at Tunbridge Wells where Steven Cheveley had come in 1942 on behalf of ICI to raise food output under instructions from the War Ag Committee. The farm had a dairy herd, pigs and arable cropping with winter sheep grazing. Steven Cheveley became Chairman of ICI Plant Protection before retiring at the end of the 1950s.

After the United Kingdom joined the European Union in the mid-1970s Stephen Cheveley was at the forefront of fundraising for the European Centre of Agricultural Studies which was established at Withersdane. He was part of a team with **Professor Ian Reid** and the Wye Chairman of Governors, Reg Older. Having worked so hard and with plans for the future, they would all be very upset at the post-2000 developments with the closure of the College, disbanding of the European Centre and Brexit.

Steven Cheveley's son, Michael Cheveley, who had a BSc in Agriculture from Newcastle and subsequently trained as an agricultural surveyor with Hobbs Parker in Ashford, then founded Cheveley and Company with his father in 1960. This was one of the first specialist agricultural business management consultancies in the country. Lugg and Gould, now Lawrence Gould Ltd, was also founded the same year by two ex-ICI staff members. AKC based in Wiltshire was incorporated in

1966 but the founder, Denis Carter, later Lord Carter, Labour Leader in the House of Lords, had undertaken detailed full costings for three large farm businesses in Hampshire and Wiltshire by taking on ICI costing clients in the late 1950s. These were the first specialist companies offering independent financial consultancy to the farming industry.

Cheveley and Company's first client was a large construction business in Ireland with land holdings, and they added clients in Wales and Scotland to growing numbers of farms and estates in England. Later an associate office was opened in Ireland.

Michael Cheveley became the secretary for the Company of Farmers Management Course based at Wye, and this course became increasingly well regarded and has attracted many people from the top tiers of agricultural management. Some year groups still meet up years afterwards and the course still runs but is now based at Cirencester. In the Wye days it was based at Folkestone for a long time, and Wye staff were actively involved, particularly **Ian Reid, John Nix and Nigel Williams**.

In 1993 Michael's eldest daughter **Sue Cheveley** came to Wye to study animal nutrition and graduated with a BSc in 1996. After a spell in Thailand doing VSO she trained as a physiotherapist and eventually was based at Tunbridge Wells Hospital until her sudden death from heart failure in 2020. She was an active partner in the family farm which by then was all arable and cattle.

Inkberrow Women's Institute Centenary Wood

Gaby Allison's (1962–64) question at a Parish Council meeting led to a spectacularly successful tree planting community project.

More than a year ago I approached the local Inkberrow Parish Council in Worcestershire (something every taxpayer is entitled to do) to ask, in view of the threat of climate change, why we were not as a community, planting trees? I suggested a possible location, but when the minutes of the meeting were posted on the Parish Council Noticeboard, I saw that the Clerk had written 'Mrs Allison recommended planting a tree on Priory Farm Lane.' I was so exasperated at this distortion of the facts that I went to the next Parish Council meeting to ask for an amendment to the minutes, that I was meaning lots of trees, not just one!

A member of Inkberrow WI with whom I was friendly happened to be at the meeting too, and she mentioned that WI groups nationally were being donated 100 trees to mark their Centenary and she asked me where I thought they could be planted. We met up and I showed her the location, not far from the village centre. The piece of land was in a shocking state of misuse having been used as a dumping ground for brick rubble by the developer who built the housing estate on which I now live and was now infested with a dense growth of brambles. The area was about two acres which older residents refer to as 'Inkberrow Common'.

As my husband, Glenn, had spent almost his whole working life planning layouts for plantation crops in Africa, namely tea, coffee, macadamia nuts and pecan nuts, he knew

what to do to turn misused and neglected land into a productive condition (see Book Reviews, page 000). Having worked as a farm manager in the area for two years he knew all the right contacts for equipment loan. Within a few days he had called a local man who was skilled in handling 'big diggers' and asked him to set about land clearance.

After a few days this attracted the attention of the local WI hierarchy who asked me: 'Whose project is this, ours or yours?' I pointed out that in 10 years' time we were unlikely to still be around, but that with a bit of luck the Inkberrow WI would be, an unarguable point!

The first clearance was very rough with thick woody stems of brambles strewn the surface, so the digger returned with a



My husband Glenn Allison (1959–62) planting holes dug with a 'graft'



Glenn and Gaby on the right

different attachment to tidy up. This was an improvement but it still left a lot of surface brick rubble, so the WI members were urged to come and remove the rubble and place it in heaps on the edge of the lane. Using lengths of baler twine Glenn marked out a grid of planting stations and an assortment of bare-rooted cuttings of common deciduous native species arrived. Using a heavy narrow-bladed

planting spade called a 'graft', slits were made into which a tree slip was inserted, protected with a tree guard and staked.

Within a few sessions with lots of WI volunteers and their spouses, the whole area was planted. The WI organiser had the brilliant idea of posting a notice saying 'Adopt a tree, for free'. A person could then write their name on a tree stake and take 'ownership of the tree', keeping it free from weeds and watered. Another local man collected all the heaps of rubble and removed it to somewhere that hardcore was needed.

This was in early spring, and we waited for Mother Nature, who unfortunately was in an uncooperative mood. The newly planted slips had to endure a record dry spring and would have failed completely but for the loan (now donated) of a redundant cattle trough, plus

The first leaves are showing.

Glenn and others beside the water trough



a generator and a pump installed in a small stream which ran along the edge of the site. The pump was used to fill the water trough overnight and then 'tree-parents' came along with buckets and watering cans to water their trees. There were a few losses but most of the trees survived.

Many other local businesses supported the venture with generous donations including a load of compost delivered from the local tip, plus a local seed company, who supplied a 'wildflower' mix to cover the whole area. At the end of June this was flowering profusely, having been broadcast on the compost surface and then rolled with a manual lawnmower. A small bench was installed near to the lane by a flat stone inscribed with:

*Centenary Wood 2020
A Hundred Trees for a Hundred Years
WI Nurtured, Community Grown*

A large apple tree trunk was also donated as a bench, though strictly for the long-legged! Some WI members were anxious about possible insurance liability if a member of the public tripped and broke their neck, but as the area remains 'common land', the WI is not liable. The rules regarding public access are clear: walking and picnicking are permitted, but camping and wheeled vehicles are not allowed.

The sight of all the flowering poppies and cornflowers in many shades right alongside Priory Farm Lane was much enjoyed by walkers and cyclists out for their daily 'Covid' exercise. With continuous care the trees should grow big enough to lock up some 'green house gases' in their trunks and branches plus providing an attractive location for locals and visitors to enjoy.



Now transformed into a glorious wildflower meadow beneath the young woodland

Registering remote bush graves in far South West Queensland

Rob Savory (1957–61) provides a moving pictorial record of his retirement project.

Some people spend their retirement playing golf. When I retired I decided to research the history of Eromanga (population 35), the 'Town Furthest from the Sea in Australia'. I am familiar with that country from my days as an environmental auditor on the oilfields and opal mines.

There are many lonely graves dating back to the early days of European settlement in the Eromanga District. Thirty-five have been registered so far, with more than one hundred anticipated. They are located at isolated homesteads, along stock routes and on the opal fields. The reasons for those

bush burials were: isolation; lack of medical facilities, the cruel heat of summer; drowning and horse accidents. One third of the graves registered to date are recorded as 'Unknown'.

Two previous attempts to register these graves were undertaken by local police officers. In 1994, S/Const Brien Ledger tagged 12 graves. In about 2005, S/Const Conrad van Egmond returned to those graves and photographed and 'GPS-ed' them. The details are recorded in the Eromanga Register of Bush Graves. All this information is about to be transferred to the national database: www.outbackgraves.org.



Effie May Jacka, a mother of three, is buried on Tallyabra Station. Her Death Certificate states that she died of a shot gun wound to the head. Supposedly, the gun discharged accidentally while she was climbing over a fence. There are some who question this version of events.



Another tragic story. Evelyn May Mott, aged 10, was killed when she was thrown from her horse and her foot got caught in the stirrup iron. She is buried in the sand dune just to the west of Kyra Homestead. From that time on, the family only ever used clog stirrups.

The grave of an unknown opal miner on Keeroongooloo Station. The recently installed steel rails round this and other graves in the area prevent them from being inadvertently excavated or covered over with spoil by future opal miners.





Left: this is the grave of an unknown Aboriginal man. Its location, close to the woolshed on Kyabra Station, indicates that he was probably an employed stockman. The small metal tag reads 'Grave Site No. A4 Unknown Pre-1919' and on the reverse 'B. Ledger S/Const. 10-11-94'.



Below: this unmarked grave is located beside the Windorah-Adavale stock route. The presence of a cue, symbolically placed at the foot of the cross (opposite and right), tells us that he was either a drover of a wagon teamster. [A cue is half a horseshoe. They were nailed to the hooves of bullocks in order to protect them while crossing the stony 'gibber' plains.]





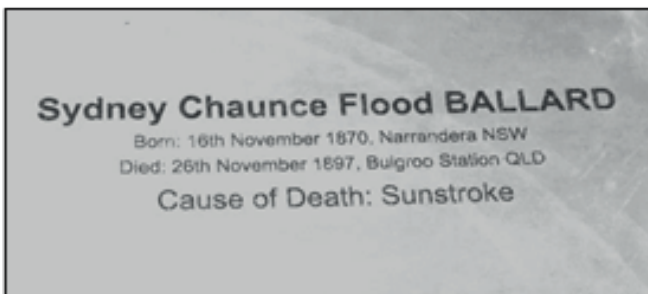
Left: 'Baby June Crowson 1913' are the simple words welded on the steel plaque marking this grave. Baby June died soon after she was born. Legend has it that she was buried in a coffin made from the wooden box which had contained two four-gallon tins of kerosene. This site is very rarely visited.

Right: Luodo Goodam was an opal miner and snake catcher who died in 1949, aged 64. He was found dead in his swag and is buried on Burkobulla Station. This country is periodically inundated by floodwater from Kyabra Creek.





This grave of an unknown traveller lies in a gidgee grove beside today's Kyabra Road. It dates back to the era of Cobb & Co coaches and drovers moving mobs of cattle south to market in New South Wales.



Sydney Ballard is buried beside Hobson's Creek on today's Trinidad Station. He was a drover who died in 1897 while on the track. The plaque, erected years later by his relatives, tells us quite categorically that he died from 'Sunstroke'. But legend has it that he was poisoned, either by his Chinese cook or by his Aboriginal horse-tailer.

The future of degree education in the agriculture sector

James Trounce (1976–79) offers some thoughts from a small provider.

For the last 15 years I have been teaching agriculture at Easton College on the outskirts of Norwich. For much of that time I have been focused on a small Agriculture degree programme run at the College and validated by the University of East Anglia (UEA). This may seem strange to those who knew me at Wye where I studied Agricultural Chemistry and knew very little of crop or livestock production let alone business. Twenty years of trials work put the crops bit straight.

Two years ago we were faced with a significant rewrite of the programme, which had become over-complex for the size of cohort and effectively undeliverable with resources available.

This set interesting challenges – what was essential content? How can you design a programme that can tailor to individual aspirations but remain compact (options were not an option)? What management skills would the industry need – at this stage Brexit and the loss of Basic Farm Payment were on the horizon? What USPs could we build into the programme to enhance recruitment?

Linked to this initial programme was the intention to develop parallel programmes, one much more focused on the food industry – a much larger employer than primary agriculture regionally and a rural business management degree programme to equip those wanting to develop careers in other land-based sectors with the necessary skills to run a business.

As a provider the College has recruited a varied cohort of students – career changers, progressors from the colleges own FE provision (National Diploma in old fashioned speak), some coming straight on and others after a period in the industry (got fed up with driving tractors all day). Some straight from A-levels others are returners to education coming through an Access to HE course.

How can you design a programme that can tailor to individual aspirations but remain compact.

Careers our graduates have followed have been varied: practical farming into farm management, agronomy, Tesco buyer, animal nutrition, quality management, NFU work, Sandhurst, accountancy, cluster lead for Environmental Stewardship group, probably much as you would find from any group of Agriculture graduates.

This led to some serious thinking: what higher level skills would be required by the industry going forward? We were helped and challenged in our thinking by among others Andrew Fearne who is now the Professor of Food Chain economics at UEA, but had been on the staff at Wye in the 1990s/2000s and had grown up on a farm at Boughton Aluph.

The key conclusions were: 'the times they are a changing'. Farming needs to see itself as part of the larger food industry, with a clear grasp of who the customer is and what drives their buying choices. Commodity production is going to struggle to support smaller family farm businesses – diversification and adding value need to be considered. Climate change and environmental concerns are going to drive land use policy. Good decision-making is based on knowledge and analysis. Management skills is an area where UK agriculture is falling behind others in Europe. 'We have always done it that way' is not going to be the answer.

The key conclusions were: 'the times they are a changing'.

From these conclusions a programme was developed with the first year being 'science and production principles', the second year focused on 'systems of production – this includes a focus on fresh produce – a significant sector locally' and the final year summarised as 'business into industry', there being a theme of business management running through the whole delivery. There is strong local industry support for the programme and engaging with progressive local businesses enhances delivery.

The delivery is planned round two days of intensive learning per week, with the students encouraged to take industry-based part-time employment – along with self-study – for the rest of the week. This works well on a number of levels: the students can link their study to an agri-business and often use their workplace for project-type work. On an economic level it helps the student financially – often leading to reduced student loan borrowing (and much smarter cars than we ever aspired to as students). It may not be the preferred model for everyone, but I was interested in the comment from one second year who had gone to Harper Adams, but had to move their study back to Norfolk because of family circumstances. His view was at Harper it was one lecture at 9am and another one at 5pm, with very limited chances for local industry employment – fine if you played rugby, but a lot of dead time otherwise.

The final piece of the jigsaw was developing wider interaction – to this end, part of the delivery is in sessions with students on programmes such as Wildlife and Conservation, which in a small way challenges thinking outside 'farming' which can be a rather insular industry.

The programme was approved as a BSc in Agri-business Management by the UEA in July, and our first cohort of students started in September.

Computers at Wye: a personal ramble

Paul Webster (1964 staff) heads off down memory lane to the days of dropping a tape of data into a postbox and waiting a week for the results to come back from London.

In previous issues of the Journal there have been a few accounts outlining the struggles of members coming to terms with the computer revolution. This revolution was one of the constants of my career ever since I first started at Wye. But I was always impressed as to how the College managed to keep abreast of all the changes. I never felt that we lagged behind in any serious way and this was because we had enthusiastic staff who did their best to ensure that we always kept up with whatever developments were happening at the time.

People often forget the amount of sheer drudgery that went into simple arithmetic calculation before computers. I remember undergraduate statistics classes in the early 1960s where I spent more time working out how to use the mechanical calculators rather than gaining any idea of the significance (pun intended!) of the numbers coming out. I remember when I got to Wye the long hours spent getting cash analysis rows and columns to add up correctly. Later, as a lecturer, some readers might remember my dreadful blackboard arithmetic, and my attempts to cover it up by getting them to provide the answers! What follows therefore is an account of my own experience with computing at Wye. I was never particularly interested in the electronic and machinery side of computing, but rather in how the machines could help me avoid the boredom, consequent errors, and waste of time that calculation seemed to need.

Early days and mainframe computers

When I first arrived on the staff at Wye in 1965, I was given a list of tasks to carry out. Perhaps number six on that list was to learn how to write programs for the newly installed Atlas in London. In those days, if you wanted to use a computer you had to write the software yourself or beg it from someone else. So I spent three weeks commuting up to Gordon Square. Atlas used a language called



Burroughs Portable Adding Machine, 10kg in weight. Built around 1930, in use in the Farm Surveys Section up to decimalisation in 1971. In those days they built them to last. Note the red keys for farthings!

ExCHLF, which was an extended version of a language which would only run on the four Atlas computers in the world at that time (CERN, Harwell, London, Frankfurt, hence ExCHLF) – an obvious limitation.

At the time, modelling whole-farm systems using linear programming (LP) had just started to become popular. Indeed, Godfrey Tyler told me that he had built an LP model of the College farm a few years earlier. But he said to me that it had taken him a week or so of solid eight-hour days just to do the calculations. I'm afraid that sort of tenacity was not for me – far too lazy!

In those days, if you wanted to use a computer you had to write the software yourself or beg it from someone else.

So we managed to beg a program for solving LPs from a colleague at the LSE. We modified it for our purposes and in the process learned that a good way to learn a language is to play about with an existing program. The College farm model took about five minutes for Atlas to solve, which was great. Following the emergence of a plan, the question that any manager would ask, would be along the lines of 'What happens if the price of wheat goes up?'. Faced with another week of drudgery, you can imagine what Godfrey Tyler's answer might be!

In fact, we were not that much better off because, without a direct link, we had to put in the mail a reel of seven-hole tape up to London and wait for the results to be posted back. It would usually take a week or so. But

at least we could do something else whilst we waited.

Shortly after the ExCHLF course, a bulletin appeared in the library. Although it was written in Swedish, there was an outline flowchart of a procedure which promised to get round some of the problems of LP. I looked at it and thought 'I can write a program to do that!'. So with Robin and Graham Donaldson on board, we did so. We duly published some results which created a bit of interest. Folk then started asking for the program. But it was written in a language which ran on only four computers in the world! So we set about rewriting it in Fortran which was then becoming the dominant language for scientific use. Fortunately, the university had recently invested in a big (for those days) CDC machine which would run it. But we still had to use the mail to get stuff to and from the computer.

There was quite a bit of discussion as to whether we should publish our complete Monte Carlo program rather than keeping it to ourselves and publishing a series of articles detailing the various applications but without giving away our workings. In fact, we published the lot: computer code, example data, and results. With hindsight I think we did the right thing. People in different countries picked up the program and ran it for themselves. Some groups within Europe sent researchers to spend time at Wye. Others farther afield had a shot at it, and when I travelled later in my career, I had many pleasant conversations about how my hosts had had a go with it 30 years previously. It seemed to have got the Wye name out there.

I then had a year's interval at Makerere in Uganda. Like many universities, they had invested in a new computer but had little software beyond a few statistical packages.



*Paul (on left) with **Pete Cornish** (1972–75), Assistant Farm Manager, in Coldharbour Farm office in 1976 using a Hewlett Packard 9830. Note the telephone modem. The idea was to download comparative data. I can't remember whether it worked!*

I wrote them an LP package, this time in Fortran and started on programs for analysing farm economic surveys. At that time there were many such surveys being carried out in developing countries. But there were big blockages in getting the analysis done, as many Journal readers will testify. Church halls full of clerks would be going through field books, turning them into something that could be aggregated, and tables drawn up. This was a slow business and cabinets full of field sheets began to accumulate in project offices while the world moved on.

Back in Wye, I had the ideal situation to tackle. The College was responsible for the collection of around 300 farmers' accounts across the region for the Farm Business Survey (FBS). Staff would go out to collect the books,

produce a set of accounts in standard form, relay the results up to MAFF in London and send a report back to the farmer. It was all done by hand.

At the end of each year, farms would be grouped by type, and statistics produced for farms with average and high-profit results, published each year as Farm Business Statistics for South East England. (No, we didn't produce results for farmers broken down by age and sex!). The computerisation process started with the accounts standardisation process, then the production of the farm report and finally the production of the averages. Probably the most mind-numbing bit was getting the farm reports formatted in a readable way in Fortran which was designed just for number crunching and

not for easily readable layouts! As far as the averages were concerned, we had previously had one clerk doing nothing else for four months, so publication would necessarily be six months out of date. Don't ask what happened in those days if we discovered an error (a yield wrong, or whatever) after the process had been completed! But when the new system was up and running, turn-around times improved as did error checking.

In the late 1970s Wye got its own 'minicomputer' (which filled most of a room)

All this was excellent training for me to be able to help with the basic plumbing of the construction and analysis of farm economic survey data. Botswana, Pakistan and the Philippines were just some of the interesting places where I was able to work on farm surveys. Talking to the farmers in these countries was always a pleasure and gave me many insights into the problems of development.

In 1971 the College invested in a dedicated phone line which meant that we could cut out the posting of tape or cards to and from London. Life for the computer user began to look up! Throughout the 1970s links to other mainframe computers around academia were made. It became easier to get things done. But we relied largely on homebuilt software, as the lists each year in the Principal's Report will attest. If you wanted something done you had to do it yourself. Fortran was taught but other languages were also necessary. I remember struggling with Algol and Pascal, and deciding that life was too short for such

diversification. Fortran was enough! In the late 1970s Wye got its own 'minicomputer' (which filled most of a room) and with it some serious local computing capacity. **Paul Kentish** was a tower of strength over the whole of the period. In the early 1980s Plans for a LAN (Local Area Network) were fulfilled, and we could access the London and other university computers from terminals in our own offices. Links to JANET enabled us to access the wider world. Thus the mainframe side of computing came to Wye. In parallel with these developments, the microcomputers appeared, and it is to these that I now turn.

And it had a display! Only a single line of 32 characters, but it was enough to enable you to write a program which asked you questions as it went. True interactive computing for the first time! Naturally, it was in great demand for data analysis. The next step was that Brian bought one of the first true PCs, a SWTPC 6800 from California. This would be around 1976; a couple of years before Apple etc and well before Sinclair got going. It came in kit form, and you had to attach your own terminal. Ever the enthusiast, Brian unsheathed his soldering iron and spent many hours on it but never got it to work properly. Soon many companies started offering stand-alone personal computers. Every year there were newer and faster models. It became a bit of a jungle since each had its own slightly different operating system, its own format for floppy discs and its own version of the BASIC programming language. We bought some Kaypros (nicknamed 'Darth Vader's lunchbox' because of their metal case) for the FBS. The floppy discs had to be rewritten in other formats used by other machines. But at least you had command of the machine in front of you. You didn't have to



Paul demonstrating a Vector Graphic microcomputer with MSc students: Fernando Balester, Robert Aldous, Robert Gooch, unknown, P W, Agnes Luhangu, and John Temu in 1988. MS-DOS but not IBM compatible. The company disappeared a few years later.

go through the 'priesthood' of the operators of mainframes to get anything done. The machines were expensive (say £3000 in 1985 for a standard device) and obviously only one person could use them at a time. The confusion of formats and operating systems all changed when IBM brought out its PCs and the industry consolidated towards compatibility.

It was quite clear early on that there were going to be many applications for these machines on farms. I got involved in giving talks and demonstrations in this country and abroad. I remember taking a computer to the Kent Show with a program which involved asking a sheep farmer a few questions about his flock. It then gave him an estimate of his gross margin and compared his performance with his peer group. A well-known local farmer came up and started answering

the questions. After about 15 minutes a thunderstorm intervened. There was a flash of lightening and an enormous clap of thunder just outside the tent. The machine went dead, and I feared for the worst. Amazingly, the power returned almost immediately, I pressed the on-off switch, and the machine came back to life. But we'd lost the farmers data. When I asked him if he wanted to start again the farmer politely said, 'No thanks, I've other things to do' and left. Lesson: write interactive software so that the user can input the data without getting bored: 15 minutes is too long!

Throughout this period the user of the small PC had to rely on much home-built software. There were attempts by the big software companies to move into agriculture, but none succeeded. The ones that did succeed were often started by farmer-hobbyists



Sharp pc-1251 together with its peripherals. A true pocket computer. BASIC plus 4k memory: 1982. Great for walking through cereal crops deciding whether it would be cost effective to spray!

themselves and by the 1990s the three major agricultural software providers had started this way. You must understand the system if you are to write good software!

I rewrote my LP package in BASIC and sold copies around the world. It didn't make me a fortune, but it was enough to allow me to upgrade my desktop when necessary. We sold the LP in compiled form, and I remember having to buy a BASIC compiler from a little-known start-up in Seattle called Microsoft. I often wonder what happened to them!

Spreadsheets arrive on the scene

The management of any sort of business, including farms, all changed when spreadsheets came on the scene in the early 1980s. They really were interactive, and you could change cells at will. At last, we were able to manipulate tables of figures without having always to write new programs each

time. Cashflow statements linked to trading accounts and balance sheets became easy to do. Sensitivity analyses became less of a chore. Formatting understandable reports was made easier. Visicalc, SuperCalc and Excel. Windows came along at a similar time, and I don't think I wrote another program again. We transferred all the FBS calculations on to a spreadsheet system. It didn't get rid of the potential for errors, but we put in checks to avoid the more obvious ones. Making sure that ABM students left College with a good knowledge of how to do budgets and the other standard financial analyses on spreadsheets became a priority.

It seemed to pay off. In the 1990s, Wye students won the *Farmers Weekly's* Farm Planner of the Year competition a number of years in succession. It so happened that an agricultural software company, one of the sponsors of the competition, gave the

six finalist teams a free copy of their farm planning software to use in the final round. But year after year the Wye students never used it. One day, the company's CEO came up to me at the Royal Show and asked why our students didn't use their software. Was there something wrong? No, there wasn't. It was just that the students had built up many sets of plans using spreadsheets on earlier case studies and it was easier for them to build their own rather than having to familiarise themselves with a new software package. A feather in the cap for Paul Hill's determination that every ABM student should master the links between budgets, cashflow, and projected balance sheets!

The close of the first computer revolution

By the mid 1990's, the Kempe Centre had been built and the teaching environment at Wye went up many notches. We had a

roomful of networked PCs to use for lectures. Email arrived, followed by the World Wide Web, together with the browsers allowing us to 'take a drink at Niagara Falls' as Arthur C Clarke put it. By the time of the merger with Imperial in 2000, we were linked to the world, and could carry out at speed whatever calculations our research required. As such, I feel privileged to have been able to participate in what might be termed 'the first computer revolution'. The second one involving smartphones, surveillance capitalism, and social media started as I moved towards retirement in 2005. It is still underway with consequences both exciting and worrying. I wish the present generation well in coping with it.



The author addressing a conference on Microcomputers in Agriculture in Hanover, mid-1980s.

Knight Tustian and fruit farming in Kent

David Knight (1968–69) on his two Kent-based businesses.

In 1988 **Richard Tustian** (1968–69) and I took on the consultancy business after Michael Cheveley's retirement (see page 192) and renamed it Knight Tustian. Farming was rapidly evolving and we took on the new challenges. Diversification was a buzzword, and the South East had plenty of opportunities for converting redundant buildings, developing niche products and introducing new enterprises.

We also developed and launched specialist software for farm accounting, budgeting and payroll. This was in response to a need for simple systems designed for farming since much available software at the time was industry-based and too complicated for farms. We produced relatively unique programs with names rather than codes and with innovative techniques to work out gross and net margins for enterprises. Budgeting and financial control were to the fore. Over the years the programs were refined, and some still operate today though we dropped payroll when the Chancellor introduced more and more variations for NIC, personal allowances, tax and pensions.

Another part of the work was expert witness evidence, and we were both much involved in planning applications as well as insurance claims and family disputes. This involved some appearances in court and others at public inquiries, but timings were uncertain so it was hard to integrate with other work.

Grant applications for small and large projects were a constant part of the service provided, and like all consultants there was increasing paperwork with subsidies as IACS (Integrated Agricultural Control System) was replaced by

the SPS (Single Payment System) followed by the BPS (Basic Payment System) with its flat rate per hectare for qualifying land. Today another scheme ELMS (Environmental Land Management Scheme) is evolving to replace BPS, and I am involved with design and piloting for DEFRA (Department of Environment and Rural Affairs). The common theme with all these schemes is the need to keep a clear head in navigating the rules so as to avoid any pitfalls.

Going back to 1981, I, personally, was fortunate to obtain the tenancy of a mainly fruit farm of about 100 acres near Tunbridge Wells. The practical involvement was a good foundation for advising others with the advantage of direct experience in management of a farm business.

After about four years, my wife and I were able to purchase our farm from the local council under Thatcher reforms. It was very rundown, but we then borrowed money and set up a Pick Your Own soft and top fruit enterprise. The first 'farm shop' was a pole barn and shed which suffered in the great storm of 1987. We then built a new shop with café, and went on over the next 30 years to restore and convert traditional barns and oast houses in the farmyard into offices and workshops. We replanted and established new orchards, which has now happened a second or third time. We stopped growing soft fruit in the late 1990s and concentrated on apples, plums and cherries. Recent further simplification means the farm now only grows apples with a few pears. Sales go through a marketing group to a number of the major retailers. Since 2020 a large local

grower has taken on the management, but I still grow and market some heritage varieties. I can now let someone else handle the burden of employing staff with all the associated paperwork and the farm audits demanded by the supermarkets.

For over 20 years I was heavily involved with the local grain cooperative, Weald Granary, which now handles around 100,000 tonnes of grain for farmers in Kent, Sussex and Surrey. I have also been director and chairman of fruit cooperatives in Kent. I developed software for fruit costing and analysis which

has assisted the industry, and I was proud to win a Grower of the Year award. Over the years I have gained a good insight into the agricultural and horticultural supply chains from grower to consumer. Undoubtedly, pressures continue to increase, and there is a never ending trend towards larger units to combat rising costs. The present Government seems to be lukewarm about home food production, but I hope they don't lose sight of the broader picture. Farmers still have a huge amount to offer and the countryside is their legacy. I continue to watch and participate with interest.

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Please don't try to blame me for climate change

AS A dairy cow, I feel much maligned by misconceptions concerning my contribution to climate change.

Plants and trees are nature's way of dealing with carbon emissions, but this process produces cellulose, a carbohydrate you humans are unable to digest.

However, I love to eat it and I convert it into milk and beef, which you enjoy as part of your balanced diet.

I do apologise for the methane I produce, but have your scientists told you that this breaks down naturally and is reabsorbed by plants, thus completing a natural cycle?

Because of better breeding, I produce more milk and meat than my grandparents did, so fewer cows are needed, hence our carbon footprint has actually decreased.

I do wish you humans would acknowledge that 80 per cent of greenhouse gasses come from the fossil fuel-consuming



Chewing the cud: Dairy cow

industries, which include factories producing processed soya, almond and other somewhat artificial drinks masquerading as milk!

**PURESNOW, c/o NICK HEBDITCH,
Chard, Somerset.**

*Sent in by Jonathan
Calderbank of
the mid-1970s
Whatsapp Group*

Wye Rustics' Cricket Tour 2021

Dickon Turner (1982–85) offers a comprehensive overview of 2021's eventful tour.

Kilmington: Sunday 4 July 2021

As the Rustics accumulated in The Old Inn, the weather forecast was as indifferent as the barmaid's reaction to **Richard Poole's** (1971–74) inappropriate remark over the availability of large jugs. Squire was evidently perturbed by another senior tourist upstaging him in the wokelessness stakes and endured a rare failure as he opened the Rustic innings. With **John Dinnis** (1979–82) and rookie **Tom McCarty** falling for ducks, the side were soon stuttering at 17 for 3.

For those of us arriving late on tour, the remarks about Jack resembling a 'proper batsmen' were hard to swallow until the scorebook revealed this was not the agricultural wafting of Jack Upton, but the elegant driving and cutting of new recruit, Jack Griffiths. He found support from **Martin Hole**, one of the Rustic woolly mammoths,

who took 25 balls to open his account, and was eventually out for a glacial knock of 7 (in a partnership of 56 with the galloping Griffiths).

With an encouragingly large touring party, many of the Rustics had enjoyed the lunchtime ale as they contemplated a rest day. When Kilmington announced they were 3 men short, the relaxed demeanours of **Waldock**, **Preston** and **Douglas** were substituted by a panicky rush for whites as they guested for the opposition. Waldock proceeded to drop Griffiths on 31, but Preston prised out the Jurassic middle order of Hole and **Chris Neild**, while **Kick Douglas** took a dramatic one-handed catch to dismiss **Archie Johnson**. A late flurry of boundaries by Pool did little to bolster the modest score of 132 all out, of which Griffiths contributed more than half.



The selection committee of Neild, Holborn, Snape and Pool study the form.

For many generations, Kilmington's family of Rockets have dined heartily on the Rustic bowling, and young Matt was the latest to feast on what was served up. Archie Johnson was producing some particularly rapid deliveries but aimed unerringly at the centre of Rocket's blade as he put the tourists attack to the sword.

It took the slower, beguiling arm of Dinnis to gain the breakthrough, skilfully stumped by Robert Pinney off a wide delivery. But at 84 for 1, there was little danger of a Rustic comeback. Pool's belated introduction to the attack proceeded to double the number of dismissals, but Rocket's unbeaten 87 saw the hosts home by 8 wickets and with 10 overs to spare.

It is recognised that puzzles keep an aging mind active, and **Peter Holborn's** (1974–76) 'apple in the jacket lining' conundrum kept him amused for the several hours as the touring party wiled away the evening in The Old Inn garden. Hole was less successful at solving the 'find the oars' mystery.

Devon Dumplings: Monday 5 July 2021

Cricket can induce a variety of injuries, but a facial disfigurement due to an encounter with a flying spider crab was a novelty in the Rustic accident book – poor Josh Holmes.

With the rain predicted at 6pm, the Rustics arrived at the Exeter County Ground early (and not so bright) for the 11:30 start. The wicket had been protected by covers but the rest of the square were still saturated from heavy showers the previous day. The laying of hessian matting on the boggier patches enabled the match to commence some two hours late, after the Rustics had partaken in a rigorous warm-up programme of beer and pizza.

Skipper Craze 'organised the toss' to enable recuperating Rustics to field first. Opening bowler Jack Upton had the wind in his sails and the opening batsmen in his pocket. On three occasions he found the edge of their bat and the ball went unerringly into the hands of Preston at second slip, only to pop out again. To rub salt into Jupton's wounds, Preston did then cling onto a catch, but from the bowling of Richie Turner who was now spinning his web at the other end.

Having ridden their luck, the Dumplings batsmen started to take control. Read despatched Turner for two consecutive sixes (the latter into the car park of the nearby student accommodation) before being bowled next ball, attempting a reverse sweep. The scoreboard was racing ominously towards 200 when, in the 32nd over, **Craze** eventually introduced himself to the attack

*Turner
Junior
spinning
his web
from the
student
car park
end*



and immediately halted the charge with a succession of wickets. Nonetheless, a declaration at 202-8 left the tourists with a challenging total.

Just as Preston thought his day was at rock bottom, a chasm opened up before him. As the first batsman to the crease, he survived three deliveries before being caught at point off a leading edge for a duck. The next ball saw Douglas's stumps in disarray as he bagged a golden quacker, and while Squire survived the hat-trick delivery, there was little magic in his wand and his departure in the 5th over left the Rustics at 20-3. **Craze** had already started fighting back the waves of hostile bowling with two sumptuous cover drives, but he could do nothing about the heavens opening, and the downpour sent the players scurrying to the pavilion. The pessimistic weather forecasts were correct, and the abandoning of the match saved the Rustics from drowning.

On the subject of drowning, Dinnis and Hole returned from their canoeing trip ... without a canoe. The misjudgement of a bend, and the failure to avoid an overhanging tree, had left it irretrievably embedded within a bank

of the River Exe. Their delay in returning to their car prompted a £50 parking penalty which would be insignificant compared with the Environment Agency's fine for plastic pollution of the Devon waterways.

It wasn't Hole's last navigational error of the day as his after-dinner shaggy dog story became hopelessly lost somewhere between Tooting and Barking. Drinking beer from sneakers was the only way for his visiting daughters to relieve their excruciating embarrassment.

Rest Day: 6 July 2021

The match at Shobrooke Park fell victim to a Covid outbreak within the home team, so Rustics indulged in alternative sporting ventures. The oarsmen took to their reserve canoe, only for Hole to drop it onto the delicate head of Dinnis.

Most tourists ventured to the breath-taking scenery of the Axe Cliff Golf Course, encountering sun, wind, rain and hail in the 18 holes. Craze showed professional nous in successfully tackling the elements and winning the day. Waldock was left a



George Dinnis's brave backswing on the Axe cliff top

Upton swings and misses under the watchful eye, and twitching finger, of umpire Hole



broken man by the experience and had to be negotiated away from the edge of the vertical limestone cliff.

The day ended with beers and curries in Seaton. The abused Dinnis required the counselling of his son, George, as he was calmly guided back up the path to the Rustics' retreat.

Beaminster: 7 July 2021

As Dinnis retrieved articles of clothing from around the retreat, the more youthful members of the tour refreshed themselves with a traditional swim in the English Channel. The invigorated squad arrived at Beaminster Rec at 1.15pm to be confronted by a large board advertising the match as a 1.00 start. A rapid turnaround and the Preston/Waldock opening combination were taking guard. These broken men of previous days were rejuvenated as Preston stroked the ball effortlessly through the covers and Waldock unleashed a lofted straight drive that was quite out of character for the prince of the swivel pull.

With the dismissal of the openers, Tom McCarthy had ample opportunity to show his solid, solid, solid defence, before smashing a mighty 6 into his snoozing teammates on the boundary. Craze performed to his usual elegant and assured standards, piloting the Rustic innings to a commanding 111-3 at the

halfway stage (20 overs).

For several minutes, the tourists were without the mammoth support of Holborn who was weirdly rummaging through the undergrowth beyond the far boundary. Having relieved his bladder, he had noted that his wallet was absent from his numerous pockets and was desperately searching for it among the well-watered weeds. As he contemplated life without his bus pass, he felt the movement of something solid around his midriff. The wallet was resting in the lining of his jacket, snuggled up against a rotting apple.

The second half of the Rustic innings was lit up by the occasional sparkling 6 from the swashbuckling blades of Griffiths, Upton and Johnson, but generally it coughed and spluttered its way to a groggy 203 all out. Craze's 69 was the settling antidote that ensured the Beaminster batsmen would face a challenging total.

The generous Rustic fielding eased that challenge with a series of spilled chances. Turner senior had replaced Preston in the slips, but could only swat away the flying edges that buzzed his way. Holborn tried to assist the team with a vociferous appeal for a run-out, but as the square leg umpire, his behaviour was a serious blot on the proud sporting history of the Rustics.

At 98 for 2 in the 20th over, the home team



were looking comfortable until Johnson returned for a second fiery spell and ripped out the middle order with a trio of wickets. Holmes and Craze chipped in with a pair of wickets each, and Jupton pouched three catches to show how a cricket ball *could* be cradled safely in a tourist's hands. Beaminster subsided to 181 all out and the teams retired to the pavilion to watch England's footballers snatch an extra time victory in the semi-final of the Euros.

***Note from the Ed.** The Rustics team these days seems to consist of Agricola and their sons and a few invited extras, so please forgive me if not all names have been highlighted or dates added where they should have been. Nonetheless, thanks to Dickon it always makes for a hugely entertaining read!*

The Tour Party

Ex Wye College: ... Simon Richardson (1971–74), Peter Holborn (1974–75), Nigel Snape (1977–80), John Dinnis (1979–82), Martin Hole (1982–85), Dickon Turner (1982–85), Charlie Squire (1987–90), Richard Poole (1992–95)

Wye College Progeny ... Robert Pinney, Richie Turner, Robert Craze, George Dinnis

Honoured Guests ... Chris Neild, Ryan Waldock, Josh Holmes, Jack Upton, F. Preston, Kick Douglas, Jack Griffiths, Archie Johnson, Tom McCarty

Statistics

Rustics: 132 all out J Griffiths 69
Kilminster: 133 for 2
Kilminster won by 8 wickets

Dumplings: 202 for 8 dec R Craze
 5-1-13-3, R Turner 12-1-50-3

Rustics: 22 for 3
Match abandoned due to rain

Rustics: 203 all out R Craze 69, F Preston 28, T McCarty 21

Beaminster: 181 all out A Johnson 8-0-40-3, R Craze 8-0-32-2, J Holmes 8-1-39-2
Rustics won by 22 runs

HRH Prince Philip and Wye College

Michael D Payne (1978–81) looks back at the two visits that the late Duke of Edinburgh paid to the College.

The Wye College Agricola Club and Wye Heritage wish to extend their condolences to her Majesty the Queen and the Royal Family on the recent death of HRH Prince Philip.

The Duke of Edinburgh had himself made two visits to Wye College, the first of which was an informal visit on 5 November 1958.

The occasion was an opportunity for members of the Icelandic Exploration party from the College to recount their visit the previous summer to Prince Philip. After tea in the Staff Common Room, **Peter England** and the students who had conducted some surveying work in Iceland were introduced to His Royal Highness and gave a summary of their experience. The expedition itself had been supported by a grant from the Duke of Edinburgh Foundation. **David Hart**, one of

the students present, had the privilege of taking the group photograph in the quiet common room.

Prince Philip also showed his personal interest in **Professor Wain's** fascinating research as well as the farm management advisory work in the Department of Economics. His ability to get immediately to the essential point, together with his lively and constructive criticism, as well as his charming informality were to be remembered by both the staff and students who had the privilege to meet him.

The Duke of Edinburgh also met the Wye College Beagles at the front of College where a plough had mysteriously appeared on the morning of the visit!

Dunstan Skilbeck, the Principal, or 'Prin' as he was affectionately known, had arranged for Mr 'Ben' Coulter, a 76-year old whose family had been carriers for over 500 years, to harness up a flat, horse-drawn trailer, with



HRH meeting the Beagles at the front of College. Mr R I Mackenzie, the President of the Union (with beard), HRH, Mr John Sampson the Master of the beagles.



Note the ploughshare on the roof! The flag is declaring FREEDOM (1958).

straw bales, to drive the party around the College Farm.

Students caught up with the tour at the dairy to see Prince Philip riding seated upon a haybale cloaked in a tartan blanket on the back of Ben's open horse-drawn flat cart, accompanied by Lord Brabourne and Dunstan Skilbeck.

They were then driven down Silks Lane, pursued on foot by The Duke's overworked detective as well as half the College at a smart trot! The cart eventually arrived at the sports field where the Wye College First Fifteen was playing, ironically in view of the later history of Wye, a team from Imperial College, London!

HRH joined the Principal and other top table members of staff in the Dining Hall for lunch. However, this was interrupted, in the words of **Stewart Richards**, by an officious file of Beefeaters who, to everyone's surprise and good fortune, located Guy Fawkes lurking



From left: Dunstan Skilbeck (Prin) with Duke of Edinburgh and Prof William (Wally) Holmes.



*HRH with Prof William Holmes (facing camera) and **Phil Keene**, the Farm Manager (in cap): possibly also **Dr Peter Payne** on right, Lecturer in Farm Mechanics and Engineering.*

From left: Lord Brabourne with HRH being 'detained' by the Beefeeders!



menacingly beneath a table. With due disregard for ceremony, the intruder was removed forthwith and his 'mortal remains' were suspended from an upstairs window, later being spotted by The Duke. David Hart's recollection is that by prior arrangement a fresher, **David Evans** by name, was 'lowered on a rope from one of the windows in the roof'. He was dressed in sack cloth and pronounced 'Free Rule for Wales' before being unceremoniously dragged from the room, much to the amusement of everyone present!

Despite all attempts by the Beefeaters to detain Prince Philip for the evening Bonfire Night celebrations on the Crown, he had to return to London and his family's firework party at Buckingham Palace.

Undeterred by the capers of his first foray to Wye, a further visit was organised in 1964 when he was again met by the Principal, Dunstan Skilbeck, and transport was a little more up to date with Prince Philip's arrival being by helicopter. The previous November Professor Wain had been presented with the John Scott Medal at the Royal Society. Upon hearing this The Duke had expressed both his congratulations and a wish to learn more about the work of Professor Wain's Agricultural Research Council Unit. Hence at three o'clock on the 17 October the duke arrived at the College playing field accompanied by his Equerry, Squadron Leader David Checketts, and Lord Brabourne. The helicopter of the Queen's Flight was piloted by none other than The Duke himself!



From left: Prof Louis Wain, HRH and Dunstan Skilbeck

The 1966 Wye to Canterbury Boat Race

Peter Cooper (1964–67) recalls a successful day on the water in the pre-health and safety risk-assessment era.

Recently, on a cold and wet winter's day in deepest rural Dorset, I was flipping through an old photograph album and came across this 50-plus year-old picture of **John Luckock (1964–67)** and I 'floating and boating' down the Great Stour River. That bought back some memories!

Whilst I was at Wye during the 1960s, every summer Wye College organised a 'boat race' along the river, starting at Wye and ending about 11 miles downstream in Canterbury. It was open to all and sundry, but of course Wye provided the bulk of the entries. Nowadays I imagine that the Wye Parish Council would have to give permission and a 'health and safety' risk assessment would be undertaken, but luckily not then, since without a doubt, it would have failed the risk assessment and permission would not have been granted!

The rules, as far as I recall, were simple enough:

- 1 The craft had to be hand made by the entrants from materials costing no more than £1.
- 2 Each team had to pay a small entrance fee which (I think) went to an approved charity.
- 3 Once underway it was quite OK, indeed expected, that teams would try to sink any opposition that came near them or threatened to overtake them, although quite often folk just sank all by themselves without any help! Luckily, the river wasn't very deep.
- 4 Spectators and supporters following along the banks or standing on bridges

over the river were also allowed to interfere, traditionally by throwing bags of flour, but were banned from entering the water.

- 5 The winner was the first craft to pass, still more or less intact, under a certain bridge (I forget which one) in Canterbury.

Given the £1 limit on building costs, come the day an amazing range of totally 'un-river worthy' crafts always appeared on the scene.

In 1966 I remember one intrepid sole who planned to float down the 11 miles in an inflated inner tube from a tractor tyre, and yet another who felt that an old bathtub was just the ticket. Sadly, both came to a sticky wet end with the former discovering that the



1966: on our way to victory; before we lost our mast and sail!

inner tube had quite a severe leak and the latter capsizing almost immediately!

Perhaps the most ingenious entry in 1966 was an old motorbike mounted on a floating platform with the rear drive wheel replaced with some form of paddle. When the bike was fired up, a huge plume of spray erupted from the paddle end, but practically no forward movement occurred and it had hardly got off the starting line before the whole contraption sunk.

Of course, John and I also had to build our own craft which we made from some old metal spray drums from my father's apple farm near Benenden, a few planks, nails and lots of wire to hold it all together. We initially tested the raft on a local pond and much to our delight found that it supported both our weights and that we actually stayed afloat, albeit low in the water. But at least it seemed relatively stable. Come the day and with the help of some paddles, a mast, a sail and the

gentle current we made excellent progress down the Great Stour towards Canterbury! Sadly, our mast and sail snapped off as we passed under the first low bridge, but even so and despite being attacked from all sides by other teams as well as spectators, we eventually won by quite some distance, much of it due to John's excellent and quite aggressive 'attack and defence' work against all comers!

I have no idea who took the picture of John and me or how I came by it, but I do wonder if there are other pictures of this typically Wye College event to be found in other folks' old albums? I also wonder whether this event continued across the years or whether it eventually fell foul of those dreaded risk assessments!

Hey ho! 'Les bons vieux jours' as us French scholars are prone to say!



*Sticking with a nautical theme: Wye College 1963 Concert Version of Pirates of Penzance – the cast includes Back row: **John Taylor**(white shirt with medal), **Roger Shippey**, **Geoff Goodson** (dark shirt with truncheon). Middle row: **Andrew Vivian**, **Stuart Hukins** and **Stanley Lawrence** (with sword).*

The Great Storm of 1987

Remembered by Sarah Jackson (1987–88), who had only been at Wye for three weeks at the time.

At the end of my third week in Wye, the morning of Friday 16 October 1987 dawned bright and sunny. The blue skies and sunshine completely belied the horrendous weather of the night before. The night of Thursday 15 October was, of course, the night of the Great Storm, and despite Michael Fish's assurances to the contrary on the lunchtime weather forecast that day, the South of England had been battered with hurricane-force winds throughout the night. As a postgrad student, I had gone to bed late, lulled to sleep by the increasing noise of the wind. Needless to say, the sound of slates pinging off the roof and smashing on the ground below was somewhat disconcerting!

The calm of Friday morning was in stark contrast to the havoc wreaked by the storm. Amazingly, though neighbours either side had lost some roof tiles, and a shed had

relocated from the garden on one side to the garden on the other side, my own lodgings in Orchard Drive had not suffered any damage at all. However, the same could not be said for the rest of the village. I have no recollection of how we gathered, but I and a number of friends toured the village that morning, quite astounded at the sights. The power lines were down and Wye was without electricity for several days, so with no TV or radio news we were unaware of the extent of the devastation caused by the storm. (No internet and mobile data back then, remember!)

The College had lost a lot of tiles from the apex of the roof. The chimney had fallen through the roof of the Kings Head pub on Church Street, but that didn't stop it opening over the weekend, serving beer by candlelight!



The College roof



The King's Head, minus a chimney

A house on Bridge Street



Daylight could be seen through the rafters of a house in Bridge Street that had lost the entire roof, but I am pleased to report that its 80-year-old occupant was unharmed. Along Oxenturn Road, a new build property on the edge of the village had also lost its entire roof, which had only been installed that week. A tree came down in the garden of the Vicarage, the top most branches just brushing the roof, thankfully without causing any damage.

It is estimated that 15 million trees were lost in the Great Storm.

The most remarkable destruction occurred at the Village Hall. The wind must have gotten inside the building and lifted the roof up. The walls collapsed inwards, and the roof crashed back down still more or less in one piece. Incredibly, most of the equipment was later rescued from the rubble intact.

One of the most astonishing sights on that side of the village was a row of tall, slender trees in the distance, possibly on the edge of Paddock Plantation, which had all been snapped in two, like matchsticks.

As we returned to the village, I jumped out into the road to stop some poor hapless HGV driver heading up Scotton Street. There was a tree across Coldharbour Lane just beyond



The Village Hall!!



Trees in the distance 'snapped in two, like matchsticks'



The Hengist aground in Folkstone

Withersdane, and he wouldn't have been able to turn his lorry around there. He was desperately trying to find a way across country to his destination because many of the main roads were closed or partially closed due to fallen trees (and we didn't have sat nav in those days either!).

My landlady resided in Canterbury most of the time, so she wasn't in Wye on the night of the storm. She eventually got through on the phone to check if there was any damage to the house.

Once I had reassured her that everything was fine, I had to confess that since our house had both a gas fire and a gas cooker, I had used up her defrosting food from the freezer and had hosted some friends who had no heat or means of cooking that evening.

A few days later, when power had been restored and we'd caught up with the news a bit, a bunch of us headed down to Folkstone to gawp at the Sealink ferry, *The Hengist*,

that had run aground on the beach there. The strength of the winds in Folkstone had forced the ferry to put to sea at the height of the storm, but the conditions were so bad, the waves caused damage to the ship and all electrical power was lost. The stricken vessel was driven by the winds onto the Warren between Folkstone and Dover, where she became impaled on the concrete sea wall. It is nothing short of miraculous that none of the crew were hurt.

The Great Storm of 1987 was a surprising introduction to Wye. I think it is fair to say that the rest of my year there was fairly uneventful by comparison!

The Social **Secretary** Network: the murkier side of the Wye College Union Society

George Hosford (1978–81) recalls his days as Wye Social Secretary and asks which budding impresario booked Coldplay in 1998?

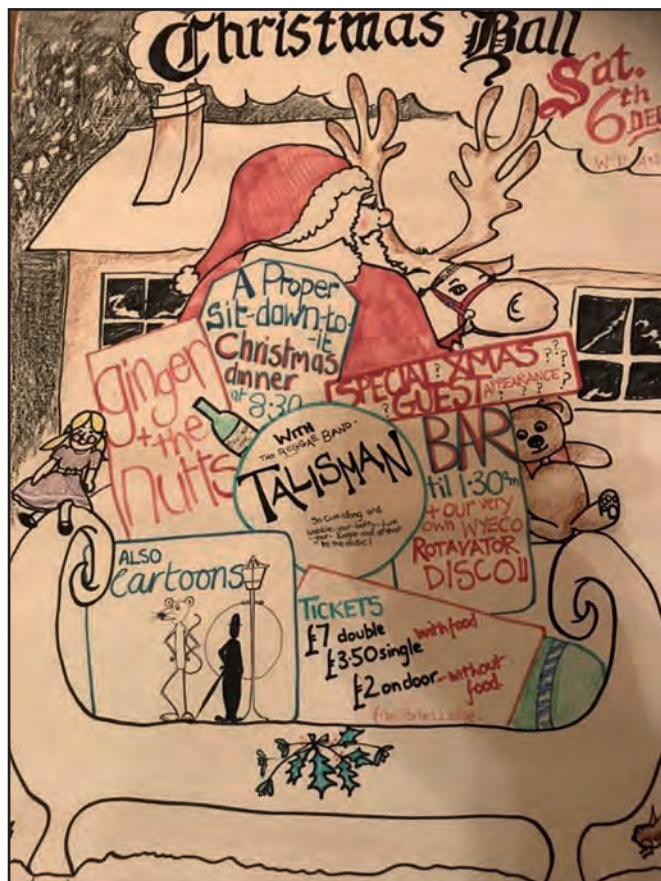
One day a while ago I was watching the Coldplay documentary film, *A Head Full of Dreams*, enjoying the story of the formation of the world-famous band and the explanations of the creation of many of their greatest songs. It is particularly entertaining because it tells the story of a band who grew up in the era of video cameras and modern mobile phones, which means that there is a huge treasure trove of footage of the band in their early years at university in London, their rehearsals, early gigs, sitting around chilling out, and generally mucking about. I nearly leapt out of my chair, however, when a clip is shown of an interview with a very young Chris Martin, in a rural setting, headed by the caption 'Wye Farming College End of Year Ball', dated 26 June 1998, where Chris Martin

is seen very excitedly delivering a warning to the cameraman that in four years' time, 'by the 26th June 2002', Coldplay would be known all over the world.

Exactly four years and three days later, Coldplay were headlining the Pyramid Stage at Glastonbury festival. Boy, do I wish I could claim that I had booked them. The trouble is I was 18 years too early. And if I am honest, whoever the social secretary was at the time, they may not be able to claim the honour of booking Coldplay to play at Wye: it was more likely the band was booked by the Commem Ball Committee, which in 1980 was headed by **Chris Woods (1979–82)**, my successor as Social Sec, who loves to remind me that he booked Humphrey Lyttleton that year.

*Coldplay's
Chris Martin
at Wye in
1998*





Christine Richardson's fabulous poster for the Christmas Ball 1980

This got me wondering how to track down who did make the Coldplay booking, so I asked my old chum Chris for some inspiration, but he was no help at all so I gave up trying and decided to write this instead.

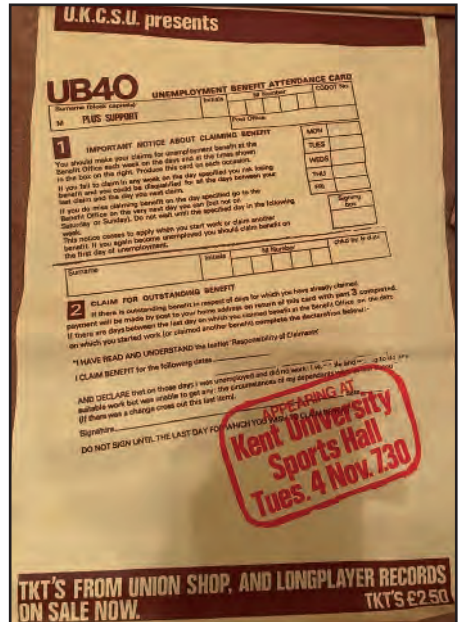
I enjoyed my time at Wye enormously, not least because of the year I spent as Social Sec, which gave me endless opportunities to organise parties, gigs, balls and discos. The job description, if there had ever been one, would have read: 'Organise fun stuff for your fellow students, but don't render the Union broke in the process.' When I took on the job,

it was impressed firmly on me by my exec colleagues, and probably Bob Wyatt the College Bursar at the time, that no financial risks should be taken, such as booking the Ashford Stour Centre sports hall, for a gig by a largely unknown band, and failing to sell more than 20 tickets for it. No names, but this was definitely not my doing, and may well have had more to do with my predecessor. The band as it happens were excellent, called Fischer Z. I bought their albums and still enjoy their songs, but very few people had or have ever heard of them,

and they were definitely not on a Coldplay trajectory.

Partly as a consequence of the hole in the union budget following that unfortunate incident, I was dispatched, early in my SS career, to a course at Sheffield University, known as the National Social Secretaries conference, or similar, to learn how to stage events successfully. It stood me in good stead. I learnt a lot of useful stuff, and it even gave me the ridiculous notion that perhaps I should go into the entertainment industry as a career after leaving Wye, instead of sensibly heading back to join the family farm in Dorset. Well long-story short, I have been happily farming in Dorset since 1983, and have enjoyed co-hosting a modest number of family parties in that time, which is the way it should be.

During my time as SS I had a hand in organising, along with a stellar team consisting of such luminaries as **Phil West** (1978–81), union bar manager, **Martin Coffin**, disco beast and pyromaniac, and many other friends too numerous to mention, a Christmas Ball, the Easter Ball, visits by Radioactive, Stan Arnold, The Arizona Smoke Revue, and many others that I have forgotten. Also a string of minibus-loads to Canterbury (Uni or Odeon) to gigs as diverse as The Jam, UB40, Dexy's Midnight Runners, Squeeze, The Darts, The Cure, The Specials (in Margate), Elvis Costello (in Folkestone). Well, perhaps not minibus-loads, but they were mostly great gigs and loads of fun for a bunch of hardened music lovers, such as **John Dinnis** (1979–82) and others. One highlight was the night **Mark Rogers** heckled Kevin Rowland, the notorious leader of Dexy's, and it brought the Odeon to a standstill momentarily, this from a student who reputedly once asked a sheep farmer on a field trip if his sheep died less often.



The UB40 poster for the Kent University gig

If any reader can lay claim to booking Coldplay in 1998, I would love to know who you are, and whether you have made a career in the entertainment business, or are simply farming, dibbling, working for Natural England, or even retired.

Wye College Social Secretaries role of Honour:

1979–80 **Madeleine Bohringer**

1980–81 **George Hosford**

1981–82 **Chris Woods**

1982–83 **Jim Kirke**

And a few more ... 2005–06

If you can remember who was your SS, or if it was you, why not get in touch, see email below. Let us know your best memories, and see if we can find some more good stories.

Email: george@durweston.org.uk

A photo album of Wye from the 1950s

The following photos were all sent in by Jennie Juckes (née Catling) 1956–59) and so all relate to that period.



A visit from HRH The Queen Mother, possibly 1958: to the right of HRH is Peter Juckes (1955–59), Union President, who had a year out due to TB; on the left of HRH is Rene Thompson (née Garas) (Union Vice-President); side profile of Mike Upcott, seated on left of photo.



What was going on here? Do let us know.



Huntsman above is **John Sampson** (1955–59), followed by **Jennie Juckes** (1956–59), whipper-in for the day). Jennie adds that for forty years she would not have dreamed of hunting hares as they used to have them on the farm!



The beagles make their way through the village.



Another 1950s beagling event: do you recognise anyone?



Wye Sports in the 1950s: but who is the long jumper, captured in full flight?



And is this the Commem Ball or Hunt Ball – any IDs anyone?

And some memories of Brian Lovelidge on Wye Sports Days

Sent in by Tim Threadgold (1954–57)

Brian Lovelidge's (1953–56) obituary prompted a few thoughts about the Wye College Annual Sports held in mid-May on the cricket ground at Coldharbour. Sports Day was taken seriously with about half the events decided before Finals Day on the Saturday afternoon. Staff provided a starter, eight JUDGES and four timekeepers. There were 16 men's events and 11 women's events plus some team events, like inter-year relay and tug-o'-war, and fun novelty events like tossing the caber, sack race and obstacle race. Programmes were sold at 3d.

In 1955, Brian was secretary of the Athletics Club when he won hammer, weight, throwing the discus, javelin and throwing the cricket ball (with a College record). He obviously excelled at throwing as he won these events again in 1956, apart from in the hammer. In throwing the cricket ball, he broke his previous year's record with a throw of 291 feet 9 ½ inches. He could not, however, break the discus record of 120 feet 6 inches set by D E T Kingsford in 1953.

Wye Ploughing Matches

Kate Hillerton (née Luton) (1978–81) took part in Inter-Universities Ploughing Matches in 1978 and 1980 and has sent some photographic memories.



Winners of the 1978 Inter-Universities Ploughing Match: Charles Batt, Pennie Barnard (age 21 and in her final year doing Agriculture), Team Captain Hugh Schneiders, Catherine Luton and Robert Miller with the Cup and tankards.

1978 winners

This story appeared in a local paper with the above photo:

'Pennie wins for Wye

The Inter-Universities' Ploughing match was held at Wye College on Saturday, 4th November, and for the first time ever a female won the individual competition. Third year student Pennie Barnard came first in this competition winning a tankard kindly donated by William Cory and Sons

of Ashford. Second was Charles Batt a second-year student at Wye and third was Mike Banks of Oxford University.

Twenty students took part from Oxford, Nottingham, Reading and London (Wye College).

In the team events the Harry Ferguson Challenge Trophy went to London University (Wye College). The successful team consisting of Charles Batt, Hugh Schneiders and Robert Miller. Second

were Oxford, third Reading and 4th Nottingham. All were male teams.

For the female teams, the Wye College Agricola Club Trophy also went to Wye College. Team members were Pennie Barnard and Kate Luton (first-year agriculture student). Second in this event were Nottingham with Oxford third.

This event circulates the major universities taking part and is held at Wye every four years. After the match competitors sat down to a meal prepared by some female undergraduates at Wye College. They then attended the bonfire and barn dance representing the start of Wye College Charity week.

The College would like to express their thanks to Massey Ferguson for providing all the tractors and equipment, without which the match would not have been possible. Also to William Cory for providing the tankard. Both companies go to considerable expense to provide such an entertaining event.'

1980 winners

And two years on, Wye's team was successful again:

'College team wins match

Wye College students are tops when it comes to ploughing. At the recent inter-varsity match against Oxford, Reading and Nottingham universities they swept the board.

The team of male and female students, all members of the College's ploughing



Ploughing champions Kate Luton, Meryl Arden, Phil Gladwin, Robin Milton and Jim Cross

and machinery club, seen here, were led by their captain, 19-year-old Robin Milton. He is a farmer's son, a second year student from Exmoor, and won the men's championship. Philip Gladwin, a first-year student from Norfolk, and Jim Cross from Hertfordshire were joint second. In the female section Meryl Arden from Lincolnshire and Katie Luton from Berkshire were joint first.'

And some final snippets from the past ...

From Ben Woods (1968–71), Richard Hardwick (staff 1962) and the complete line-up of the 1963 Cricket Team!

Ben Woods (1968–71) on Withersdane

I enjoyed Lucy Huntington's article on the History of Withersdane, back in the 2019/20 Journal. Her reminder of the locked doors between the men and women's blocks brought back some fond memories.

I was a resident in the men's side from 1968 to 1971, by which time things were a bit more liberal. The doors were open all day, but the warden came round at precisely 2200 hours to lock us away, rather like a jailer.

But, due to fire regulations, there had to be a key on the men's side of the door. It was mounted on the wall and kept secure inside a small glass-fronted wooden box. What a challenge! I may be wrong, but I think it was someone heading for Vet school who practised some clever surgery on the protective box, after which it could be gently removed along with the key. All could be replaced later without leaving any trace.

This gave our budding entrepreneurs plenty of ideas for making money, but, in the end, the capability was not publicised and only used carefully and sparingly. Looking back, I think the wardens must, surely, have eventually become aware of it, but maybe they were wise enough to turn a blind eye if it wasn't being openly abused.

After all, the traditional methods of defeating the 10pm lockdown were much more dangerous. These included clambering onto a roof to gain access to the first-floor windows of the women's block, or, for those travelling

in the other direction, climbing up the balconies on the outside of the men's block.

Richard Hardwick (staff 1962) writes from Brussels

A librarian at our local (Meise) Botanical Garden has just published a history of the vasculum.¹

I couldn't stop myself from adding this story to other little contributions on the author's webpage.

In 1955 or so I was botanising on the North Downs near Dorking (UK), putting the specimens in a brand new, shiny aluminium, vasculum – which I had chosen as a school prize.

As well as the plant specimens, I had come across a nice big grass snake, which I had also put in the vasculum.

Two ladies stopped me 'What have you got in that box, little boy?'

I opened the lid and showed them, 'I think it's a *Natrix natrix*'² I said.

They almost fainted!

¹ *Le vasculum ou boîte d'herborisation. Marqueur emblématique du botaniste du XIXe siècle, objet désuet devenu vintage.*² *Natrix natrix* = Grass snake



Wye College Cricket Team 1963

Back row: David Williams, Dave Harrison, Paddy Johnson, John Roberts, Nick Craze, Richard Foss, Robin Reeks, Brendan Wright, Richard Thorogood, Dick Wood, Nigel Berresford, Richard Hughes. Middle row: Mike Atkinson, Ted Harvey, Martin Tetlow, Geoff Goodson, Mike Rayner, Bruce Boys. Front Row: Simon Dudley Harris (Scorer), Phil Charlton, Glen Allison, Dave Carr, Richard Constanduros (Scorer).

Books

In this year's Journal we bring you recently published works from **Glenn Allison (1959–62)**, **Christian Curle (1959–63)**, **Richard C G Smith (1961–64)** and **Patrick Dobbs (1954–57)**.

Sixty Years in the Maw of Africa

By Glenn Allison

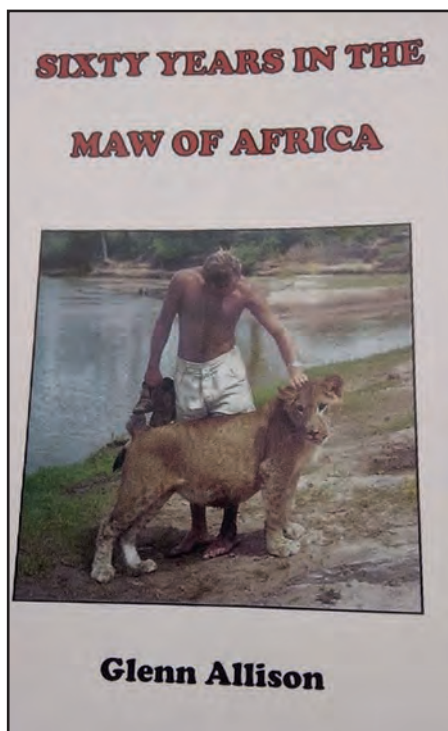
Glenn has written a fascinating account of his life in Africa, showing an amazing recall of events and people that he met along the way.

He enjoyed a privileged childhood as the son of settler farmers in Kenya and first came to England to attend Cheltenham College. He gained experience in Kenyan agriculture for three years before coming to Wye, where in his final year he met a fresher called **Gabriel (Gaby) Newton (1961–64)**, who later visited him in Kenya and became his wife. After Wye, he worked in the Kenya Game Department, working as a game warden where he was able to indulge his love of hunting game in the interests of conservation.

In 1976 he returned to England to commence a career as an Agricultural Consultant working in eight different African countries. Glenn was obviously a well-respected soil conservation and irrigation specialist, and his advice must have made significant improvements to crop performance over his career. Gaby and their ever-expanding family enjoyed all the trials and tribulations of colonial life during the independence of many countries in that great continent. Eventually, to ensure a good British education for their four children, Gaby returned to England and found a smallholding for the family in Inkberrow, Worcestershire. Until 2005, Glenn remained largely in Africa working as an agricultural consultant, at which point he also returned to Inkberrow.

Anyone knowing Glenn at Wye or with connections to Kenya, Zambia or Nigeria during the last 70 years would find many of his connections of interest. This book highlights the quality of colonial life and the turbulence that occurred in many African nations as they sought independence.

If you would like a copy of the book, Glenn suggests you email him glenn.dingleend@outlook.com.



Letters home from Liberated Ethiopia, 1941–1945

By Sandy Curle (Aldridge Press, 2021),
edited by his daughter, Christian Curle

This book is the second volume of Sandy Curle's 'Letters Home' to his father, who was Director of the Royal Scottish Museum.

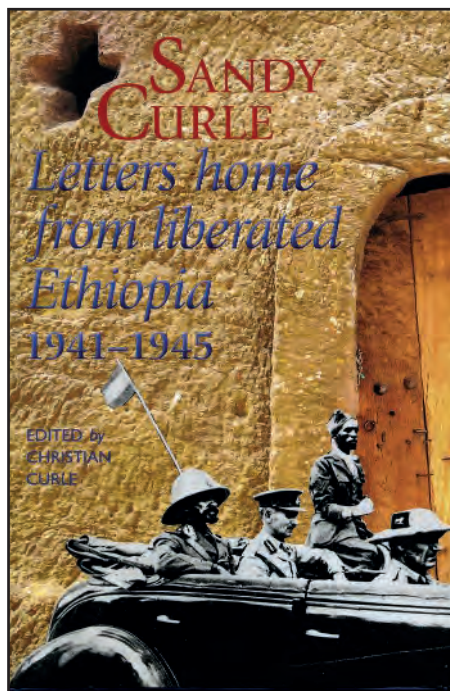
The first volume, covering 1923–42, was published in 2008 by Pen & Sword. **Christian Curtis (née Curle)** (1959–63), the editor of both volumes, was the only daughter of Sandy Curle. Brought up in Ethiopia from the age of four, Christian was educated in Addis Ababa and then in England, before reading horticulture at Wye, where she met her husband, John Curtis (1959–62).

Lieutenant Colonel Alexander (Sandy) Curle was a member of a dying breed from our colonial days. A Scot, commissioned at the close of WWI into the Gordon Highlanders, he found that peace-time soldiering did not appeal, and he was seconded to the King's African Rifles, subsequently transferring to the Colonial Service. With the advent of WWII, he joined up again and raised the second Ethiopian Irregulars, who played a unique role in the liberation of Ethiopia from the Italians, for which he was awarded the DSO. Although Ethiopia was never colonised, it was recognised as an independent country by the British and our advisers were retained in the aftermath of the liberation.

Sandy Curle spent seven months in the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration (OETA) and was then appointed in 1943 to advise the Government of the south-west in Jimma. Curle won the trust of the 'old school' Ras Birru and helped support the Emperor's modernising policies. His family were at last able to join him there in 1944, after an adventurous wartime voyage.

Full of telling detail, the Letters bring alive a complex society recovering from the unpredictable and brutal Italian occupation. Curle's extensive social circle included friends from across the nations from his 20 years spent in East Africa, old comrades and, of course, Scots. His Letters show his wide interest in archaeology, religion and the natural world, not forgetting domestic worries and family drama.

The book, which has been published both in the UK (Aldridge Press) and in the USA (with the rights for the Ethiopian market), was recently given a long and comprehensive review in the *Journal of the Anglo-Ethiopian Society*. Like the first volume, this book records a period of exciting history in Ethiopia's development and will be of considerable interest both to academics and



those with a love of Africa and its fascinating history.

The publication of this volume of Curle's diaries demonstrates the strength of the Wye network, as this reviewer was contacted by Christian, who was looking for a publisher with an empathy for African history. It is anticipated that the third and final volume of the diaries will be published later this

year. Very sadly, Christian died suddenly in September 2021 (see Obituaries page 64) and John Aldridge, founder of the eponymous publishing company, died very recently on 14 January 2022.

Reviewed by Malcolm Alexander (Wye 1963–67), January 2022. Published by Aldridge Press: www.aldridgepress.co.uk/sandy-curle.

Eyes In The Sky

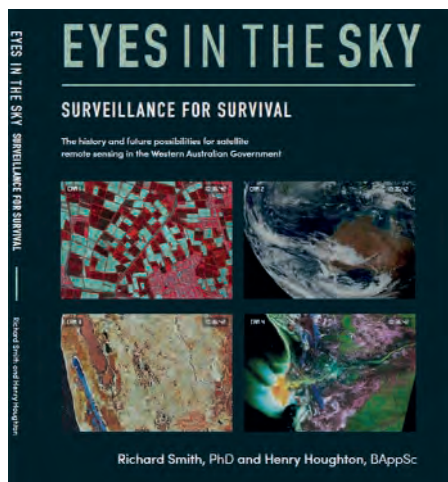
By Richard Smith (1961–64) and Henry Houghton

This book is a must-read for anyone concerned with climate change and lack of Government action addressing this rapidly unfolding crisis.

The authors, tell their story of introducing the new technology of observing Earth from space into the Western Australia Government, following the first images of Earth being sent back by man from space some 50 years ago.

Earth Observing Satellites (EOS) soon followed, giving a new and unique view of the Earth revealing the massive human impacts driving climate change, species extinction and human conflicts. For the first time in history key WA Government agencies had unparalleled access to the means of measuring and sustainably managing WA's natural assets across the whole continent and surrounding oceans. Many new and innovative applications of EOS were developed.

However, these applications encountered the fundamental conflict between Ecology and Economics, which caused a drastic cutback when WA's Land Information Authority found that in pursuit of its commercial goals, sustainability was unsustainable. A fatal paradox that the authors argue, urgently needs to be addressed if climate catastrophe for future generations is to be avoided.



Richard Smith and Henry Houghton

Available from the Australian Authors website: <https://australianauthors.store/richard-smith-and-henry-houghton>.

Tales from a Mountain Farm

Patrick Dobbs (1954–57)

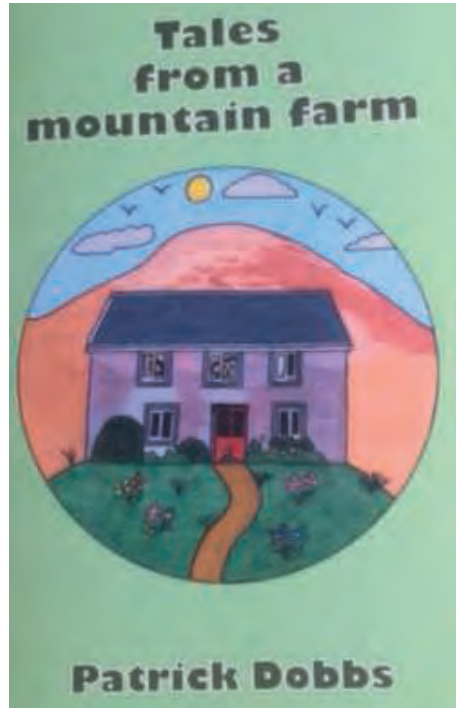
Patrick Dobbs, a sheep farmer, has been writing poems on and off all of his life and his poems and stories have been broadcast and published in a variety of magazines and anthologies.

After leaving school he was an itinerant agricultural worker, travelling far and wide and acquiring a degree in agriculture from Wye College along the way.

Sixty years ago, he managed to buy a small mountain farm in the Brecon Beacons where he has lived ever since.

This a delightful collection inspired by many of his experiences over the years.

Patrick's first print run sold out more quickly than expected, and now I am told there is an enhanced edition available with a few added extras. Published by Cowry Publishing: www.cowrypublishing.co.uk.



Call for contributions

Martin Rickatson, our new Editor, will need material for next year's Journal. So, do please think about sending something to him at:
jmr.agriculture@gmail.com

Come to the Agricola Hog Roast!

**Sunday 3 July 2022
at Roves Farm,
Swindon, Wiltshire.
See Green Form at
back of Journal.**

Agricola Club Accounts

Accountant's report for the year ended 31 July 2021

In accordance with the engagement letter dated 4 September 2019 we have compiled the financial statements of Wye College Agricola Club for the year ended 31 July 2021 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 Accounting Principles.

As a member firm of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) we are subject to its ethical and other professional requirements which are detailed at www.icaew.com/en/membership/regulations-standards-and-guidance.

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. 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 2021 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 FCA
Chavereys
Chartered accountants
Faversham
Date: 3 November 2021

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 July 2021

1 Accounting policies

- i) The club prepares accounts on an accruals basis, using UK Generally Accepted Accounting Principles as guidance.
- ii) 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.
- iii) The club elects to write off the income from 'lifetime membership' applicants in the year of application.

Wye Agricola Club

Income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 July 2021

	2021		2020	
	£	£	£	£
Income				
Sale of ties, prints etc.		43		82
Subscriptions		1,688		1,594
Donations		100		
Annual dinner		-		
Hog roast		-		
Memorial Fund journal contribution		20,000		18,000
		<u>21,831</u>		<u>19,676</u>
Expenditure				
Opening stock	780		843	
Purchases of ties, etc.	-			
Closing stock	<u>(751)</u>		<u>(780)</u>	
		29		64
Annual dinner	-			
Hog roast	-			
Wye Journal	19,127		26,597	
Website expenses	178		166	
Meetings, expenses and secretarial	1356		2,178	
Wye Heritage donation	81		-	
Insurance	366		355	
Subscriptions TAA, Heritage	145		145	
Accountancy	<u>318</u>		<u>312</u>	
		21,570		29,753
		<u>21,600</u>		<u>29,817</u>
Net deficit		<u>231</u>		<u>(10,141)</u>

Wye Agricola Club

Balance sheet as at 31 July 2021

	£	2021 £	£	2020 £
Current assets				
Lloyds Bank	574		326	
Stocks	751		780	
Debtors	-		28	
Prepayments	200		160	
		1,525		1,294
Current liabilities				
Accruals		(300)		(300)
Net assets		<u>1,225</u>		<u>994</u>
Accumulated funds				
Opening reserves		994		11,135
Deficit for the year		231		(10,141)
Accumulated reserves		<u>1,225</u>		<u>994</u>

We approve the accounts set out on pages 2 to 4 disclosing a net deficit of £231 and we confirm that we have made available all relevant records and information for their purpose.

These accounts were approved on 30 October 2021.

Prof J P G Webster

Treasurer

(for and on behalf of the committee)

Agricola Club Memorial Fund Accounts

Accountant's report for the year ended 31 July 2021

In accordance with the engagement letter dated 3 September 2019 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 Accounting Principles.

As a member firm of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) we are subject to its ethical and other professional requirements which are detailed at www.icaew.com/en/membership/regulations-standards-and-guidance.

This 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.

You have approved the financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2021 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 FCA
Chavereys
Chartered accountants
Faversham
Date: 3 November 2021

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 July 2020

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 31 July 2021

	Note	2021	2020
		£	£
Income			
Dividends received		15,280	17,512
Donations		-	-
		<u>15,280</u>	<u>17,512</u>
Expenditure			
Student / member awards	2		4,000
Support of Wye College Agricola Club		20,000	18,000
Governance expenses		<u>3,839</u>	<u>3,862</u>
		<u>(23,839)</u>	<u>(25,862)</u>
Net deficit for the year		<u>(8,559)</u>	<u>(8,350)</u>
Retained surplus brought forward		<u>445,395</u>	<u>506,219</u>
		<u>436,836</u>	<u>497,869</u>
Net decrease in value of investments		75,681	(52,474)
Retained surplus carried forward		<u><u>512,517</u></u>	<u><u>445,395</u></u>
All receipts are unrestricted funds			

Statement of assets and liabilities as at 31 July 2021

		2021		2020
	£	£	£	£
Cash funds				
Current account		5,263		3,489
Cash held by broker - Portfolio 1		6,780		4,404
Cash held by broker - Portfolio 1		4,044		2,591
Investment assets				
2,052.00 Charifund Income Units		31,652		51,201
915.39 BlackRock European Income Units		32,991		-
Portfolio 1				
846.42 Rathbone Income Units	7,224		5,930	
2,248.85 Artemis Income Fund Class R	4,995		8,079	
- Invesco monthly inc plus fund	-		7,116	
- Ninety One UK Total Return Fund A	-		4,399	
- IFSL Brooks Defensive Capital Class B Acc	-		3,399	
88.00 Veritas Global Equity Income GBP Class A	17,891		16,037	
85.13 Fidelity Cash W (inc)	85		56	
10,000.00 Threadneedle High Yield Bond clas1	4,279		4,104	
21,079.87 ARC TIME Commercial Long Income D (Inc)	21,040		22,028	
1,746.00 Aberforth Smaller Companies (ASL)	27,098		14,370	
5,514.41 VT Gravis Clean Energy Income C (Inc)	8,347		-	
3,092.96 BNY Mellon Global Emerging Mkt Fund				
Inst. W(Inc)	7,875		-	
458.71 Ninety One UK Special Situations B (Acc)	6,507		-	
		105,340		85,518
Portfolio 2				
900.91 Fidelity Asia A (Acc)	15,648		14,108	
22,317.05 Janus Henderson UK Property	21,851		26,337	
17,176.63 Invesco Monthly Income Plus Fund	18,595		17,460	
49,211.15 M & G Global High Yield Bond X Class	23,508		22,918	
167.04 Fidelity Cash W (inc)	167		172	
45,000.00 Threadneedle High Yield Bond Class	19,256		18,468	
- Threadneedle UK Property Trust	-		5,275	
4,722.00 Murray Income Trust (MUT)	42,805		34,707	
1,862.00 Aberforth Smaller Companies (ASL)	28,898		15,324	
7,282.55 Stewart investors Asia Pacific Leaders Class A	64,881		54,677	
22,484.83 ARC TIME Commercial Long Income D (Inc)	22,442		23,497	
14,147.86 ARC TIME Freehold Income Auth. H (Inc)	30,807		32,756	
16,445.79 BNY Mellon Global Income (Inc)	38,088		32,995	
		326,947		298,693
Less accruals				
Accountancy	(500)		(500)	
		(500)		(500)
		<u>512,517</u>		<u>445,395</u>

We approve the accounts set out on pages 2 to 5 disclosing a net deficit of £8559 and confirm that we have made available all relevant records and information for their purpose.

These accounts were approved by the trustees on 30 October 2021.

Prof J P G Webster, Trustee

Mrs J D Reynolds, Trustee

Agricola Club Members' Lists

Message from the Database Administrator, Siân Phelps

We try to keep our database as up to date as possible, so many thanks to those of you who have sent us your address and email updates in the last year.

Thank you also to those who have given us information about members on our 'Lost' list, so that we have been able to find them again, and also updated us on members who have passed away. In the latter case, we would always be pleased to include an obituary or notes of memories in the next edition of the Journal.

If you are able to update us about other members, please do so, or encourage them to contact us. We have had a few new members join this year after being contacted by friends!

We have picked up quite a few email addresses this year, but if you have not previously given us yours, please do so – then you will receive our email Newsletter, which will keep you more up to date with what's going on.

For all of the above, please contact me at the postal or email address below.

Best wishes to all

Siân Phelps

Agricola Database Administrator

6 Scotton Street

Wye

Ashford Kent TN25 5BZ

database@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk

Wye College Agricola Club

Summer Hog Roast: application form

This year we are organising an informal summer event in the form of a Summer Hog Roast (with salads, puds, cheese & drinks all included)

Sunday, 3 July 2022 at 12 noon

**Roves Farm, Sevenhampton, Swindon,
Wilts SN6 7QG**

By kind invitation of Rupert Burr (1973–76) & family

I wish to purchase tickets at £30 per head (cheques payable to Wye College Agricola Club)
OR BACS alternative – see below

Please indicate any dietary requirements _____

Email _____

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ tel no _____

Please give names of everyone you are buying a ticket for.

Please return to Mrs Ali Wright, Brownings Farm, Blackboys, Uckfield, East Sussex
TN22 5HG aliwright8@aol.com OR contact Ali by email if you wish to pay by BACS.

You will be acknowledged by email (please write it clearly!) otherwise please send an SAE.
PLEASE RETURN ASAP AND BY 13th 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 31 January.

Name _____ Name at Wye _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Tel no _____

Email address _____

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.

PREFERABLY reply to Jane Reynolds by email info@janesgardendesign.com

OR return this form to Jane Reynolds, The Pent, Postling, Hythe, Kent CT21 4EY

Wye College Agricola Club

Application for membership

Surname/familyname _____

Name at Wye _____

First names (s) _____

Permanent address _____

Postcode _____ Tel no _____

Email address _____

Applicant's academic details: graduate/MSc/PhD/staff (*please delete as appropriate*)

Year of entry _____ Year of leaving _____

Degree course (dept if postgrad 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). 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: **James Trounce, Hon Sec, 32 Mill Lane, Besthorpe, Attleborough, Norfolk NR17 2NL.**

Email: secretary@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk

Wye College Agricola Club

Change of address or email

Please return this form before Christmas to Siân Phelps, Database Administrator, 6 Scotton Street, Wye, Ashford Kent TN25 5BZ

Email: database@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk

Surname/family name _____

Name at Wye _____

First names (s) _____

Permanent address _____

Postcode _____ Tel no _____

Email address _____

Applicant's academic details: graduate/MSc/PhD/staff (*please delete as appropriate*)

Years of attendance at Wye _____

Degree course (dept if postgrad or staff) _____

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 Club website.

Signed _____ Date _____

Wye Heritage

Our past shapes our future

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 names (s) _____

Permanent address _____

Postcode _____ Tel no _____

Email address _____

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, Admin Office, Cumberland Court, 24 Church Street, Wye TN25 5BJ. Email: admin@wyeheritage.org.uk.

Notes

Notes

Wye College Agricola Club Committee Members 2021–2022

Elected 2020	Retires 2023	Position	Name and Address	Tel no
		President & ACMF Trustee	Prof Paul Webster 25 Chequers Park, Wye, Ashford, Kent TN25 5BB jpgwebster@gmail.com	01233 812786 07950 822869
2021	2024	Chair	Mrs Jane Reynolds The Pent, Postling, Hythe, Kent CT21 4EY info@janesgardendesign.com	01303 862436 07518 769826
2020	2023	Secretary	Mr James Trounce 32 Mill Lane, Besthorpe, Attleborough, Norfolk NR17 2NL secretary@weagricolaclub.org.uk	01953 455997 07969 499173
2020	2023	Treasurer & ACMF Trustee	Charles Course Whitehouse Farm, Whatfield, Ipswich, Suffolk IP7 6LL charles@dairyfarmoffice.co.uk	01449 744685 07889 218590
2020	2023		Dr John Walters Akermans, 38 High Street, Wye, Ashford, Kent TN25 5AL akermans38@yahoo.co.uk	01233 812823 07969 739974
2020	2023		Prof Berkeley Hill 1 Brockhill Road, Hythe CT21 4AB b.hill@imperial.ac.uk	01303 265312 07777 696945
2021	2024		Prof Geoff Dixon Hill Rising, Horncastles Lane, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 6BH geoffrdixon@gmail.com	01935 812010 07774 628641
2020	2023		Dr Susan Atkinson 52 Maxton Road, Dover CT17 9JL susan.atkinson@talk21.com	01304 211977 07808 435968
2021	2024		Mr Gary Saunders Elms Cottage, Hinxhill, Ashford, TN25 5NT garybroadoak@aol.com	07816 332190
2020	2023		Mr Malcolm Alexander 28 Friars Stile Road, Richmond, Surrey, TW10 6NE malcolm.alexander28@gmail.com	020 8940 8078 07860 503053
2021	2024		Michael Payne 37 Maltings Close, Hadlow, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 0EQ payne.michael@btopenworld.com	01732 852187 07485 727997
2021	2024		Professor Chris Baines 28 Parkdale West, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV1 4TE chris.baines@blueyonder.co.uk	07736 409924
2022	2025		David Simmons Whithill House, Brogdale Rd, Ospringe, Faversham, Kent ME13 0DN dhsimmons@btconnect.com	01795 532100 07850 872342
2022	2025		Martin Rickatson Tall Trees, Church Road, Garboldisham, Diss, Norfolk IP22 2SE jmr.agriculture@gmail.com	01953 688531 07595 031217

