

Number 3

WYE
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of
The Wye College Agricola Club*

2022–2023



Volume XIX

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2022–2023

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**Wye College Agricola Club
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The new home of the Wye Heritage Centre on the College frontage, just yards from its old home in the Latin School. Details on the Centre's opening times and its resources can be found at www.wyeheritage.org.uk

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Chair's report 2022-23

Jane Reynolds (Wye 1973-76)

I'm glad to report that this last year has been much quieter, following the previous year's turbulence. The Committee had a full quota of members for most of the year, but there is now a vacancy following the retirement of John Walters, who has served as Chairman and Journal Editor for many years. Please do get in touch with someone on the Committee if you are at all interested – all our contact details can be found on the inside of the back cover of this Journal.

This year's social event was a very successful Hog Roast, held at the Wiltshire farm of Rupert and Jo Burr in July. Over 170 people attended and enjoyed a splendid Hog with salads, strawberries and goat's cheese all supplied from members farms. It was a joint event organised in conjunction with the mid-'70s members group, who formed the largest number of attendees, but there were folk who had been at Wye in the 1950s, 1960s and the 1980s. We do hope to have some representation from the 1990s and early 'noughties' at our next social gathering....

This year our social event will be a dinner at the Royal Agricultural University in Cirencester on Saturday, September 2nd. Several have already booked their places plus accommodation (which is limited), so please look for the green slip at the back of the Journal if you would like to come.

This would seem to be a good moment to put in a plea for up-to-date email addresses please – do check the back of the Journal. If yours is not there or is wrong, now is the moment to get in touch with database@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk and update it. You will then receive our e-newsletters and the opportunity to book Agricola events in good time!

A Committee sub-group has been set up to consider matters involving aspects of



IT management, such as finding a more convenient way of sending out e-newsletters, and updating the Club website.

We are now no longer publishing addresses in the Journal, as it was becoming too costly. If you cannot find an old Journal with addresses in, then you will be able to contact Sian, our database manageress, on the email above, who can supply you with any address you need. She is also able to select out particular years at Wye. For those without access to a computer, a printed list can be requested from the Database Administrator – please write to the Secretary (see back page).

Another working party has been looking into the future role of the Agricola Club and their results and suggestions will be published in the Journal in due course.

It had also been decided to review the Club Regulations, which had not been revisited for six years.

So in summary, I am pleased to report that you do have a committed and active Committee and I am particularly pleased to have re-recruited Martin Rickatson as Editor this year, to whom I am immensely grateful – it is a big job!!

Editor's page

Martin Rickatson (Wye 1994-97)

The French have all the best phrases. Who else could sum up so succinctly the feeling that one has been somewhere before. It was with a definite sense of *déjà vu* that I sat in (or rather 'in on', as it was held online via Zoom) my first Agricola Club meeting after a decade away, and faced many of the same faces! That, to me, says a lot about the dedication and commitment of a select group of individuals who have put themselves out to ensure Wye College retains a healthy, active alumni association through its annual gathering, this Journal and much more.

That's not to say that there were some notable absences – and perhaps rightly so after many years' service to the Agricola Club. In particular, Francis Huntington as Secretary and John Walters as Journal editor have put in remarkable long-term commitment to their roles, and their contribution has, I'm sure, been gratefully noted by many Agricola Club members.

There are, of course, new members of your Agricola Club committee who have stepped up to take on some of those roles, with James Trounce now well-established as secretary. Jane Reynolds had acted last year as Journal 'co-ordinator', which as far as I can see was no simpler a task than editing the annual! With the Chair's role also to fill, Jane must have had a considerable Agricola workload last year, and quite understandably put out a call for someone to take on the Journal Editor's role. Having edited three Journals a decade or so ago with the assistance of John Walters, I was fully familiar with the size of the task – and so ignored the plea in the last Journal for a new Ed. As an agricultural journalist by trade, the last thing I was keen on was a 'busman's holiday' of evenings doing the same thing but for free!

And then came the phone call from Jane, who, it turned out, has powers of persuasion



The editor with his wife (now, not then...) Rebecca (Wye 1996-99) at the Commem Ball following his graduation in 1997

that prove difficult to turn down. I did explain that the last thing I wanted to do after hard days' editing was hard nights' editing, and that, with two children to chase around after and a business to run, spare hours were in short supply. Those are my excuses for this Journal dropping late through your letterbox anyway. So it is that, just over a quarter century since leaving Wye, and a decade since leaving behind editorship of the Journal, I have a strong sense of *déjà vu*. A lot has changed in the interim – change is life's one certainty – but it's good to see a committed team of people still keen to keep alive the connections between graduates of Wye College.

Secretary's report

James Trounce (Wye 1976-79)

With our main event for 2023 being a dinner to be held in early September, Agricola Club members have not gathered en-masse in the reporting period, save for last autumn's less formal hog roast. I hope everyone is looking forward to this year's event.

Committee matters:

Judith Oakes has stood down as Memorial Fund Trustee and therefore also from the Agricola Club committee.

As an experiment the committee met at the Farmers Club in London in April, with those unable to make the venue able to attend virtually via Microsoft Teams. The venue proved good as a meeting place, though did not ease attendance for some members. It was agreed to look for a venue near the M25 north or south of the Dartford crossing as a good midway point between those members based in Kent and the significant contingent based in East Anglia.

Business discussed has included the planning of the dinner at Cirencester, the future development of the club and the potential to form some form of relationship with another organisation to ensure continuity of management of the clubs assets.

Work continues in a small working group to develop the IT structure of the club, including the website.

Membership

We have lost a number of members over the last year, as acknowledged in the Journal. We are still open to new members, so if you know of contemporaries who are not members please extol the virtues of membership and encourage them to join. There is a form in your copy of the Journal or available on the club website <https://wyeagricolaclub.org.uk>.



Events

This year the main event will be a dinner, being held at the RAU, Cirencester. Please elsewhere in this Journal for details.

Plans are being developed for future events, with a summer farm-based event in 2024 the preferred option.

Club merchandise and College memorabilia

There is a plan is to have an offer of College logoed merchandise available to order at the dinner in September. Agricola Club ties and bow ties remain in stock.

Wye College Agricola Club AGM

Minutes of the 70th Annual General Meeting held on Friday 30 September 2022 at 5:30pm online via Zoom

Present:

Paul Webster (PW, President and Chair), Sue Atkinson (SA), Chris Baines (CB), Charles Course (CC, Hon Treasurer), Berkeley Hill (BH), Michael Payne (MP), Jane Reynolds (JR, Committee Chair), Martin Rickatson (MR, Journal Editor), Gary Saunders (GS), David Simmons (DS), James Trounce (JT, Hon Secretary), and 19 Members

The Chairman, Paul Webster, welcomed Members to the meeting.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Malcolm Alexander, Geoff Dixon, David Gooday, Francis Huntington, Peter Newell, Judith Oakes, Anthony Palmer, Chris Reynolds, Andrew and Angela Simpson, Daphne Spurling, John Walters, Chris Waters.

2 Minutes

Confirm the Minutes of the 69th AGM published in the Journal

It was resolved that the Minutes of the 69th AGM were a true record and signed as such.

3 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4 Chairman's Report

The Committee Chairman, Jane Reynolds, reported that the last year had been much quieter, following the previous year's turbulence. The Committee had had a full quota of members for most of the year, but there was now a vacancy following the retirement of John Walters. She invited anyone who would be interested in joining the Committee to contact one of the members. Someone

younger would be particularly welcome.

Committee had continued to discuss the situation regarding the College buildings, and had maintained the Club's neutral stance on developments. She had heard no updates on progress regarding the Wye Buildings Preservation Trust (WBPT). This year's social event had been a Hog Roast, held at the Wiltshire farm of Rupert and Jo Burr; JR expressed the Club's thanks to them. Over 170 people had attended; it had been a joint event organised with the mid-70s member group, so that cohort formed the largest number, but there had been a range from the 50s to the 80s. The 2023 event was already being considered – to be discussed under Item 10 below.

A Committee sub-group had been set up to consider matters involving aspects of IT management, such as finding a more convenient way of sending out e-newsletters, and provision of the membership list on the Club website. JR confirmed that the full list would no longer be published in the Journal, as it was becoming too costly. For those unable to access the website, a printed list could be requested from the Database Administrator, who would also be able to extract more specific lists by date etc.

It had also been decided to review the Club Regulations, which had not been revisited for circa six years.

On behalf of Martin Rickatson, the new Journal Editor, Jane put in a plea for members to send in more articles for next year's edition.

5 Secretary's Report

The Hon Secretary, James Trounce, noted that much of his report overlapped with that of the Committee Chair.

Regarding Committee membership, two members (Martin Rickatson and David Simmons) had been co-opted by Committee, also Judith Oakes as a Memorial Fund Trustee, and subsequently Chris Reynolds, also as a Memorial Fund Trustee. All to be formally elected by AGM, under Item 9a below (a separate item raised as a Point of Order by the Chair). JT also reiterated JR's request for prospective new Committee members to come forward as there was now a vacancy.

He called for suggestions from members regarding the direction the Club should be taking for the future.

As mentioned in last year's AGM, there was a possibility of providing clothing with College logos. JT showed some sample items to the meeting, including possible prices – polo shirt c£20, hoodie sweatshirt c£30. There was flexibility with the suppliers about colours, and other possible options such as a padded gilet. Another option was College (not Club) ties – this would depend on a minimum order of 50, so an expression of interest would be useful. A rough price guide would be £10 for polyester/£20 for silk, but an order would need to be for one or the other. The Club would prefer not to keep stocks of items, with members ordering directly, though it might be possible to do a bulk order of ties. Agricola ties were still in stock and could be ordered from Wye Heritage.

6 Treasurer's Report and to receive the Club accounts for 2021-2022

The rôle of Treasurer had passed to Charles Course, but circumstances had precluded him from acting until mid-year. Paul Webster had therefore continued to act until the end of the financial year, and

presented the examined Club accounts to the meeting.

There was an unexpected surplus of £2861, due to the Hog Roast; last year's Dinner had made a small loss of £300.

Annual subscriptions continued at their recent levels.

The main expenditure had been £23k for the hefty Journal edition, largely funded from the Memorial Fund.

The accounts were accepted and approved by the meeting.

CC thanked PW for all his work as Treasurer over many years.

7 Memorial Fund – Trustees Report and Accounts 2021-2022

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

The examined accounts for the Fund as a whole showed a deficit of £14.7k on a net dividend income of £11.5k. £25k had been transferred to the Club account, mainly to support the Journal. There had been £3800 expenditure on governance and advisory fees.

The value of investments had fallen from £497k to £436k. This included sales of parts of the holdings in BNY Mellon, Fidelity Asia, Invesco and M&G within the Club Fund in order to support activities. In addition, the forced liquidation of the Janus Henderson holding had left a £30k cash holding at year's end. This was awaiting Candour's advice as to reinvestment opportunities.

Due to the continued impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, there had once again been no calls on the Fund for the usual activities. The Trustees would welcome suggestions for worthy causes fitting the Fund's objectives, including alleviating member hardship, supporting ex-students and supporting research and education which would formerly have been carried out at Wye College.

David Leaver had resigned as a Trustee during the year, and had been replaced by Chris Reynolds, appointed by the Committee on 16th Sept 2022. Judith Oakes had also been appointed. Both have extensive business experience.

8 Appointment of Independent Examiners of the Accounts for 2022-2023

PW 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

Martin Rickatson wished to express his thanks for being re-elected onto the Committee to serve as Journal Editor. He thanked JR for producing last year's issue, and congratulated her on the content, particularly for obtaining the 'Life after Wye' articles, which formed the 'heart' of the Journal. Some contributions had been coming in for the next issue, though sadly mainly obituaries so far. He made an appeal for more 'Life after Wye' articles and news items, and ended by confirming that there would definitely be a 2023 issue.

The Chair expressed thanks to MR for taking on the Editor's rôle and reiterated the request for contributions.

9a Elections

The Secretary reported that three Committee members had been co-opted during the year – Martin Rickatson and David Simmons (returning), and Judith Oakes as a Trustee. There was also another Trustee nomination, Chris Reynolds, for consideration at this meeting. JT proposed an election en bloc, the Chair agreed. Election approved by show of hands.

Berkeley Hill had a query on the Regulations - he believed he had now come to the end of his period of office on the Committee, and could not be re-

elected for at least a year. He was quite happy to continue with the work he had promised to do regarding the future of the Club, but thought Committee should take a view on his position. JR noted that the same probably applied to several of the Committee members. As he was willing to continue, the Secretary pointed out that there were now three possible vacancies for co-opted members; he proposed, seconded by the Treasurer, that BH be co-opted for a year to work on his project (CC remarked that he would then be eligible for re-election). JR thanked him for being willing to serve another year, and for his many years of service to the Club.

10 Future plans for Club events

JR reminded members that the annual event had traditionally alternated between a formal Dinner at Wye and a hog roast or similar occasion elsewhere. In recent years the Dinner had taken place at Wye School. The organisation of this had landed a lot of work on a few people. There was also less enthusiasm to come to Wye, given the inaccessibility to the College buildings, and their depressing condition, also the location made travelling more difficult. She asked if members were still attracted by the prospect of holding the event in Wye.

One idea previously discussed by Committee had been an alternative, more accessible location, possibly for a lunch rather than a dinner. One thought had been the Farmers' Club in London, which JR was looking into. Several members commented at this point – Gordon Rae had attended an event at the Club, and had found it good and convenient for transport access. Simon Harris agreed. Andrew Blake queried the Wye reference, but would be fine with London.

JR and the Chair invited any suggestions to be emailed to JR for venues which would be able to accommodate 100+ guests e.g. a country house hotel

or similar. The Chair thanked JR for organising many excellent events over the years.

11 Report on Wye Heritage Centre

Francis Huntington had supplied a brief summary report which was read by the Secretary. Members were referred to the report published in the Journal for a detailed account.

The Heritage Centre had been open regularly during the summer; the current display featured the life and poetry of Anne Finch, Countess of Winchelsea, who lived with her husband in the mediaeval College buildings, 1699 – 1703.

The Centre Archives continued to receive the attention of the Archive Group, and significant gifts to the collections had been received from alumni and others, all hugely appreciated.

Work on the detailed plans for the new Heritage Centre was taking shape in collaboration with Telereal Trillium.

For further details members were invited to email admin@wyeheritage.org.uk

12 Update on the redevelopment of the Wye Campus

Francis Huntington had again supplied a brief summary report, which was read by the Secretary. Members were referred to the article in the current Journal, since which there had been no significant changes. It was very much hoped that there would be further news to report in the next few months, once the ongoing impediments to the planned work were cleared. For enquiries about specific developments, members were invited to email francis@lucyhuntington.co.uk

13 Any other business

The Chair had not been made aware of any other business, but opened the floor to members.

Gordon Rae asked why the full address list was no longer to be included in the Journal. JR explained that it was mainly

down to cost – the bulk of the volume, which could also cause packaging issues, also postage costs. She pointed out that the printed version of the list was soon out of date in any case, as there were constant updates and corrections being made. The information on the website would be much more current, and for those without internet access, the Database Administrator could provide a printed version.

Berkeley Hill asked the Editor for critical submission dates for next year's Journal, as he was preparing an article. MR would be consulting with JR about last year's timetable. JR had requested contributions by 1st Feb, which seemed early, but the timescale to printers was quite tight and the Production Editor had to prepare the Journal first. A newsletter would need to be sent out when deadline decided. Andrew Blake confirmed he had submitted something.

Sally Leaver requested the opportunity to give a brief update on WyeCRAG and WBPT (Wye Buildings Preservation Trust).

WyeCRAG, as a pressure group whose purpose had gone, no longer had a current rôle, although the website and accounts will continue to be active for a while.

WBPT had a wider buildings remit, which Wye Heritage didn't have, considering not just the College but any buildings in Wye of particular beauty or architectural interest. WBPT had links with Ashford Borough Council's conservation department, and had involved an architect with a particular interest in outstanding buildings (the author of a 2017 report on the College buildings). SL wished to make clear she was merely a supporter, not a Trustee or Committee member. She wished to put on record her hope that WBPT and Wye Heritage could work together.

The meeting closed at 6.00 pm.

Wye College Agricola Club – Notice of Annual General Meeting

Please note that the 71th Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 2 October 2023 at the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester. Meeting starts promptly at 5.30 pm

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes – confirm the minutes of the 70th AGM published in the Journal.
3. Matters arising
4. Chairman's Report
5. Secretary's Report
6. Treasurer's Report – and to receive the Club accounts for 2022–2023
7. Memorial Fund – Trustees Report and Accounts 2022–2023
8. Appointment of Independent Examiners of the Accounts for 2023–2024
9. Journal Editor's Report
10. Elections:
 - Committee – there are two vacancies.
 - Vice Presidents
 - Honorary Membership – to receive and vote on the Committee's recommendations
11. Revision of Club regulations
12. Future plans for Club events
13. Update on the redevelopment of the College Campus
14. Any other business

Marriages

James O'Mahoney (Wye 1995-98) writes:
On Saturday 16th July 2022, Andrew Ritchie (Wye 1995-98) married Georgina Eyre at St Mary the Virgin, Ross on Wye, with the reception held afterwards at their home in Brampton Abbots. The groom, best man and the ushers, all 1998 Wye graduates, all proudly wore their Wye College ties.



Andrew and Georgina Ritchie



Left to right: Brian Abrey, James O'Mahony, Andrew Ritchie, Ben Rich and Chris Stubbs.

Deaths

Christopher Duncan (Wye 1961-64)

Christopher Duncan passed away on 28th January 2023, aged 80. It is hoped to publish an obituary in the next edition of Wye.

John and Ann Attfield (Wye 1952-55)

Peter Attfield writes: I regret to have to inform you of the death of my father, John Guy Attfield, on 21st February 2022. He studied agriculture at Wye College from 1952-55. My mother, Ann Dorothy Attfield (nee Crane), was at Wye at the same time, studying horticulture. Sadly, she passed away on 7th April 2020.

Helen Lucas

Dr Cathy Lucas (Hawkes), youngest daughter of former Wye College principal Prof Ian and his wife Helen Lucas, passed to the Editor the sad news of Helen's death on May 16th 2023, following a short illness, aged 101. Her funeral took place at Brook Church.

Graham Donaldson (Staff 1965-70)

Peter Bailey and Fergus Donaldson write: Our father Graham Donaldson, a member of the Wye College Economics Department from 1965-70, passed away peacefully on Thursday, March 16, 2023 at Baywoods Nursing Home.

Paul Webster recalls: Graham and I jointly published a number of articles on Monte Carlo programming whilst we were both working on our PhD theses at the time. He left Wye in 1970 for a distinguished career with the World Bank and I went off to Uganda for a year. He was a much valued colleague with whom I kept in contact over many years.

John Caseley (Wye 1956-1959)

Stephen Moss writes: John Caseley died on 24 September 2022, aged 87. His well-attended funeral was held at the Bristol Memorial Woodlands on 18 October 2022, and attendees included many former colleagues from the Weed Research Organisation and Long Ashton Research Station, where he spent most of his research career studying how different environmental factors affected herbicide efficacy.

John Williamson (Wye 1958-1961)

John Williamson passed away on October 17th, 2022.

Obituaries

Mick Wright (Wye 1968-71)

Ben Woods (1968-71) writes: Mick died on 9 March 2023. He had suffered from heart problems for a number of years.

He was the first person I met on day one at Wye, when the alphabetical allocation of rooms made us next door neighbours at Withersdane. He came from a family farm between Newport and Cardiff.

Straight away, it was obvious that Mick was a proud Welshman, proud of the high spirits of his countrymen. Before long, I got a slight feeling that, when it came to the serious business of having fun, he wasn't sure we'd match up to his Welsh friends back home. Well, we certainly did our best, often led by him and his partner in crime, tall Tim Parker (1968-69 only!)

Mick was a passionate character who put his heart and soul into everything he did – work, play, and the causes he believed in. He had an open nature, so you were seldom left wondering what he was thinking, even if it was personal and less than complimentary.

Back home he had been a keen member of the lively Pony Club, and achieved its highest riding qualification. This resulted in his selection as the Club's representative for the whole of Wales at the investiture of the Prince of Wales in 1969. He competed in point-to-point races until a serious fall put a stop to that. He occasionally rode for London University while at Wye, and followed all forms of equestrianism (especially racing) with enthusiasm throughout his life.

On graduation, he went to work for the Meat and Livestock Commission (MLC) in the Midlands for a couple of years before moving back to the family farm. His father had been one of the first to bring Texel sheep into the country from the Netherlands in the early 70s. Together, father and son embarked on a busy breeding programme and became well-known in both the Lleyen



Mick Wright (top), with Miles Hillman and Ben Woods on an industrial horticulture visit to the Netherlands in 1971

and Texel sheep societies.

In our final year at Wye, the M4 motorway had been completed from London across the Severn Bridge to Chepstow, and he often praised how it had transformed his journeys back to Wales. But he was less impressed on learning that its extension further west would be built straight through their farm in 1977, with the big M4/M48 interchange coming within a hundred yards of the farmhouse. The family chose to sell up, and moved to a rather different farm at

*British White*

Hampton Lucy in Warwickshire.

They seemed happy and successful there, but the family's hearts must have remained in Wales. After eight years, they were unable to resist the opportunity to move to a sizeable farm on the Glanusk Estate in the Brecon Beacons National Park, just west of Crickhowell. It was to be a partnership with aristocratic owners who had a minor connection to Royalty.

Proceeds from the sale of the Warwickshire farm allowed them, eventually, to buy a neighbouring farm – a wise move, because it allowed them to continue farming in the area they loved when, in 2016, the arrangement at Glanusk was unexpectedly terminated after 30 years. Renowned for hosting the Green Man Festival, new management of the estate had new ideas about what they wanted to do with their land.

Mick's father was an early supporter of rare breed preservation, and it was way back in 1973 that Mick used his savings from the MLC job to buy his first British White

cattle. They became his life-long number one passion. He built up a leading breeding herd of British Whites which celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2023. His energy and enthusiasm made a huge contribution to the British White Cattle Society and the current success of this once-rare breed. He was made president of the Society in 2021.

These days, his herd's bloodline can be found world-wide, including North and South America and Australia. At home, he supplied bulls occasionally to the Royal farm at Highgrove, taking the opportunity, of course, to deliver them personally. His Lleyen ewes and lambs have been exported to France, Poland and the Azores.

Mick kept many different breeds of cattle and sheep over the years, both commercial and otherwise. So it's no surprise that his expertise and knowledge put him in high demand as a respected judge of various breeds at many of this country's major shows. On such occasions he always wore his Wye College tie, wearing out several over



Presenting awards 2021

the years. He was always impressed by the number of people who recognised it.

Although often a traditionalist, Mick had an inquisitive nature, interested in learning from the bigger picture of the workings of the modern world. He became NFU County Chairman for Powys for a spell, reportedly not afraid of speaking up at the national AGMs.

In this role he was able to organise fact-finding group visits to some far-flung places, including one to Hungary and one to Poland. Another to the Czech Republic conveniently coincided with the running of that country's major horse race, their equivalent of the Grand National!



Next generation: David and Liz, Royal Welsh Show 2022

In 1999 he won a Nuffield Farming Scholarship to spend six weeks in New Zealand, and then hosted annual return visits of farming groups from there. Then still at Glanusk, he was very proud to show off what he was doing on more than 1,000 acres, with 1,800 sheep and several hundred cattle, including dairy cattle at the time – all in a beautiful setting.

Over 300 people came from far and wide to his funeral, held in the small village church that stands within yards of the farmhouse. He is survived by wife Jodi, their successful family - Will, David and Liz, and granddaughter Lowri.

Shirley Hewett (Wye 1950-55)

Roy Hewett (Wye 1950-53) writes: My wife Shirley Langton Hewett (nee Highton) died on 9th May 2022 aged 92 after a very short illness. She grew up in Cumberland, was head girl at Roedean School and attended Wye from 1950-53. After graduating, she was asked by Professor Miles to stay on for another year as a junior lecturer. As a result, she found she was teaching students who

were first and second years when she was in her third! Shirley and I met at the Freshers' Dance. She played lacrosse, beagled and played cello in the orchestra.

She was then sponsored by Fulbright and Nuffield to travel to America to study landscape design and architecture for a year at Atlanta University. The good ladies of the

Garden Club of America looked after her. As she and I had become engaged before she left she was invited to take off her engagement ring, so she hung it off a chain around her neck!

On her return from the USA we got married on September 1, 1956, and moved into a cold farmhouse with no electricity and a coke stove to heat the water – quite a shock for my new wife! However, we survived, had three children, and after six years moved to Claveys Farm at Mells, Somerset, dairy farming for another 37 years.

Shirley became involved in the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies, later known as the Arts Society,

was national chairwoman and visited societies in Europe and Australia. At home she founded two new societies locally, Mendip and Mid-Somerset.

Retiring in 2000, we spent happy years gardening and travelling extensively. Throughout our married life, Shirley was an enormous support to me in my various roles as a JP, High Sherriff of Somerset, Master of the Worshipful Company of Fletchers, chairman of Mendip district council and chairman of Frome branch of the NFU. With Shirley's passing I lost a wonderful companion, and the world lost a very talented lady.

David Price (Wye 1950-53)

Jeremy Price notified the Editor that his uncle, Dr David Price, passed away on 22 March 2022.

"David joined my father John Price (dec.) and my mother Wendy Price (nee

Youngman, dec.) at Wye shortly after WWII. After graduating in 1953, he worked for some time in Cameroon managing banana plantations. After returning to England, he worked at the Glasshouse Crops Research Institute."

Robin Reeks (Wye 1961-1964)

This tribute to Rob was provided by Geoff Goodson (Wye 1961-64) and is based on the eulogy given by Robin's son Marc at his father's funeral at Gussage All Saints on September 26th 2022. Rob died on 5th September 2022.

Robin was born at Salisbury Hospital 23rd July 1942 and grew up in Gussage All Saints, Dorset. He went to the village primary school and passed his 11+ to go to Blandford Grammar School where he played cricket for the U14s and then the first XI.

Cricket was, along with his farming and his family, the thing that really made Robin tick, and he was good at it. He played for Dorset at various age groups and had trials for the English Schools' XI, narrowly missing out. He was a fast bowler, and preferred only just

ahead of him was John Snow, who went on to play many a Test for England.

After A-levels Rob decided that he should take up the offer of a place at Wye on the general Agriculture degree course. After completing his year on a farm locally he came to Wye in the autumn of 1961. I met Rob and we soon discovered our mutual interest in sport, particularly cricket. We played together for three happy summer terms, with fixtures most Wednesdays and both days at the weekend. In the second and third years I was captain and saw first-hand what a fine bowler Rob was. Summer term ended with Cricket Week, with matches against the staff and the village, as well as the Agricola Club and other invitation sides.



Wye College cricket team 1963

Back row: Ted Harvey, Paddy Johnson, Simon Dudley Harris, Scorer, Dave Harrison

Middle row: John Roberts, Richard Thorogood, Geoff Goodson, Robin Reeks, Bruce Boys

Front row: Mike Rayner, Brendan Wright

College dances at Withersdane were memorable for the imbalance between the sexes being supplemented by young ladies from Nonington PE teacher training college near Canterbury. It was on one of these occasions that Rob met Ann, one of a number of us who met girls at college including myself. This over the succeeding years has given Rob and Ann, Phil Charlton and Beryl, Tony Williams and Carol, and myself and Judy double reason for life-long friendship.

The following is from Rob and Ann's son Marc's eulogy at Rob's funeral:

"Robin's communication skills were never his best trait, and after a two-year courtship and about to leave university he announced to Ann "oh, by the way, I've applied for a

certain job I've seen advertised and said I was engaged to be married. Is that alright with you?"

Ann and Robin were married in 1965 when Ann had finished her college physical education qualification. On leaving Wye, Robin became a management assistant on a fruit/hop/arable farm at Faversham, while Ann was a PE teacher at Tankerton Grammar School. The teaching didn't last long, as within two years of marriage along came my sister Tracey.

After four years at Faversham, Ann and Robin moved to Norfolk where Robin's work gave him his first farm manager's job on a dairy, pig, poultry and arable farm. Life in Norfolk took some getting used to, and just as that was being achieved it was time to move on

*The Reeks
family 1975:
Robin with son
Marc, daughter
Heide, Ann with
daughter Tracey*



again – but not before my sister Heide was born in 1970 in the village of Brooke.

A very brief interlude as a farm management consulting officer with the Milk Marketing Board based near Newbury was followed in the autumn of 1971 by Robin's appointment as farm manager, or rather Steward, to HM Queen Elizabeth II on the Royal Farms at Windsor. Robin was then, and I believe remained, the youngest farm manager ever appointed by HM The Queen over all her farms.

Seven and a half years were spent at Windsor attending to Her Majesty's Jersey and Ayrshire dairy herds, her pigs and her flocks of sheep as well as other arable operations. All this attending, managing and breeding took up a great deal of time, but Robin didn't neglect his other duties, and I duly arrived on the scene in August 1973.

When it came time to move on from Windsor, the family moved to Christchurch, back home to Robin's Dorset roots. Five years spent managing for Meyrick Estates at Hinton saw the first venture by Robin into the world of PYO and farm retailing, an area of farming which was to dominate his working life until retirement in 2009.

In 1985 Robin started work for Dan Tanner at Sopley, where PYO sales rapidly expanded so that by the year 2000 Robin was organising six PYO farms, as well as starting to attend large numbers of farmers' markets over the succeeding years and opening a number of farm shops. Sadly, this period coincided in the late 1980s with Robin and Ann separating and eventually divorcing. This was a very painful period, eventually followed by their continued lifelong friendship while living with new partners. In 1992 Robin met

Margaret Cohart, his partner with whom he lived with until Margaret's death in October 2007 from secondary liver cancer.

In later life, Robin nearly died from a vasovagal attack on a flight to Goa (he never did get there) in 1997. Further challenges included losing a kidney with cancer, losing half his bowel with cancer in 2004, and in 2007 suffering from angina followed by a mild heart attack and quadruple heart bypass surgery.

As a man of the soil (Dorset soil) Robin was also mindful of the cycle of spring, summer, autumn, and winter rather than the cricket season and the rest. The cycles I refer to include Robin being born in Dorset, moving away to Wye and his early career and eventual return to Dorset. A boy is born and a man dies but his genes live on. Robin's three children and six grandchildren and great grandchildren will continue the line. He has definitely been there for my son

Harry and in particular his young cricket career. I can't tell you how much I'll miss him being there on the boundary's edge at Harry's games. We never want to say goodbye. It's just sometimes we have to.

And so, my dignified, modest Dad passed away the same week as the Queen, his old boss. She once referred to him, as folklore goes, as the whizz kid – and I feel like she was a good judge of character. Quietly, without making a fuss the whizz kid did great. And I think we should all be very proud of him and grateful to have had him in our lives.

And so we are here today to lay Robin to rest in a grave very near to his father and in the same grave yard as his grandfather and other relatives of bygone days. From Robin's grave you can look across these familiar Dorset Downs even to the field where the Gussage cricket team played in the 1950s in Geoff King's field."

Footnote from Geoff Goodson:

Rob kept in touch with many of his Wye friends and frequently attended Agricola Club reunion dinners.

In September 2021 Judy and I visited Rob at his home in Bournemouth and were delighted to meet up with Ann again. We talked about our time at Wye and the upcoming Agricola dinner in October. Rob said he was not well enough to come, but

wished to be remembered to the entire 1961-64 cohort, and gave me a contribution to buy those present a glass of wine. As Robin's health deteriorated Ann was there for him, nursing him to the end. He died on September 5th 2022, and as his son Marc said, in the same week as his former 'boss' Queen Elizabeth II.



*Wye reunion dinner 2004:
John Roberts,
Judy Goodson,
Nick May, Kit
Smith, Enid
Roberts, Robin
Reeks*

Jeremy Rider (Wye 1952-55)

Jerry Rider passed away on October 28th 2022. The eulogy here was given by one of his grandchildren at his memorial service in October 2022

Jeremy was born at Blundell Sands, near Liverpool, on 21st May 1932. He was the only child of Clifford and Dorothy Rider from Heswall on the Wirral Peninsular, where Clifford ran the family pharmacy. It was here in Heswall where Jerry met his childhood friend, or the brother he never had, Gilbert Kelly.

Both Jerry and Gil were mischievous and like-minded, enjoying collecting fragments of German shrapnel, which they bartered for sweets at school. They relished working on the local farm at weekends and during the holidays, and developed a passion for farming that both would follow in later life.

An only child with six maiden aunts, Jerry attended a co-educational boarding school, the Queen Elizabeth at Kirkby Lonsdale. Here his Latin master told him he was so bad at the subject that if he were to follow his father in the pharmacy business, he would poison someone!

Jerry replied: "Don't worry sir, I'm going to be a farmer."

It was suggested that he should apply to Wye College in Kent, and this started his family's happy association with London University's agricultural faculty. Susie, Jonny, and Stafford followed him there.

Jerry discussed with his father how he was going to get from Cheshire to Kent. "Don't worry Jem," said his father, who had always wanted to be an engineer. "We will build you a car."

They bought a Ford Prefect, and together they improved the engine performance from 30hp to 95hp and modified the saloon body into a sporty two-seater, with a flat deck in the back for his trunk.

In 1952, Jerry started at Wye, where he began his life-long enthusiasm for grass



Jerry (right) receiving a badger sporran from Reg Haydon on his retirement as vice chairman of the Tenant Farmers Association.

under the tuition of Professor Mac Cooper, a New Zealander. As well as being fanatical about grass and head of the agricultural department, Prof Cooper also organised the College rugby team. Fortunately, Jerry was an excellent front row forward, which must have assisted him in securing a solid farming degree!

While Jerry was getting practical experience supervising Londoners hop picking in Kent, he joined Tenterden Young Farmers Club. There was a party to attend, and Jerry agreed to drive. The car was overloaded with a passenger in the front and eleven friends on the rear deck. The police stopped and arrested him, and Jerry went before the local magistrate. "It's a poor do if you can't take your friends to a party," he ordered. "Case dismissed!"

Jerry's car continued to get him in trouble, with one employer shouting out of the window: "Don't drive across the gravel in front of my house in your vulgar tart crate!"

Despite advice that he could be a difficult man, Jerry started as farm manager for Stanley Morrey at Horton House Farm, Devizes, Wiltshire. Here he met Carol, Mr Morrey's middle daughter. She was repairing sheep fencing on the Downs and the young

farm manager must have been impressed with the quality of her workmanship! After a two-year courtship, the couple were married in this church on 17th October 1964 and moved into Dairy Farmhouse, Horton, where David was born in 1965 and Susie in 1967.

He worked hard, but always managed to have time to play hooker for Devizes Rugby club. And this is exactly what he was doing when his first son David was born!

In 1970, after 15 years as a farm manager, and keen to develop his own business, the family left Wiltshire to take on a Church tenancy in Cheshire. Jonny was born later that year.

After family, farming and rugby, Jerry's other obsession was motor racing and he enjoyed adventures in the car with his family. One such trip took the family to Wales to try and rediscover a mountain pass that he had rallied with his father. Unfortunately, a drainage channel had been dug into the middle of the road and a long reverse was impossible, so the family was encouraged to assist with turning the car around in the rain alongside a steep Welsh cliff! Thankfully the only loss was the car exhaust, which will forever be part of the Welsh mountains. There were no more car trips for quite some time!

While Carol juggled three young children at Church Farmhouse, Jerry focused on his farming and began to develop his production methods. He was not from a farming background and when he entered farming, he felt this gave him a crucial advantage, helping him see the wood from the trees and relieving him from peer pressure.

In 1975 he became founding chairman of Deeside Dairy Farmers, a co-operative set up in a 'New Zealand discussion group' style by John Butler, a Milk Marketing Board consultant, who had just returned from an exchange in New Zealand.

The collaboration led to lively debate among local farmers, but Deeside's co-operative methods soon earned them a worthy reputation and highlighted the benefits of farmers working together.

In 1978 the family moved back to Wiltshire and Jerry took on the tenancy of the 600-acre Horton House Farm. His father-in-law had always been a great advocate of milk from grass, and Jerry, already a keen grassland farmer, developed the system further.

He travelled to New Zealand on three occasions, visiting dairy farms, learning from their farming systems, and speaking at the Large Herds Conference there. This enabled him to view dairy farming from a new perspective and helped him to manage, measure, ration and feed grass – and most importantly make money from it through milk production. He strove for high quality grass using irrigation and fertilizer, and his cows milked well off his simple but strict 21-day grazing regime.

He recognised the importance of Cow Genetic Indices and was proud to have many of the highest indexing cows in the country. He was the first to obtain semen of New Zealand cattle – smaller and more efficient than the Holstein cattle normally used in the UK. This paved the way for the influx of Kiwi genetics which is so prevalent in the UK grazing herds today.

As a new entrant to farming, Jerry was always interested in encouraging others to farm, and this led to him helping to form the Tenant Farmers Association (TFA) in 1981, becoming its vice-chairman under Reg Heydon. This gave all tenant farmers a strong and dedicated political voice.

He was supportive when Jonny took over the farm tenancy – deliberately standing aside and biting his tongue when the grass became more ragged, the cows changed colour and his beloved fertiliser spreader was consigned to the nettles!

In 1996 he became president of the British Grassland Society and during this time he set up the Pasture to Profit initiative, which helped farmers get back to the basics of growing and grazing grass. The concept was to learn through practical experience and harness the benefits of co-operation and sharing information. Key to this was

Jerry's decision to bring across New Zealand grassland consultants and arrange meetings throughout the country. Farmers adopted peer-to-peer learning with remarkable success.

In 2004 he received the Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers award for outstanding services to the industry. The Princess Royal presented the award at Buckingham Palace, in recognition of his innovative and pioneering work in grassland management.

(Following Jerry's death) the family received kind letters of support, in which many commented that Jerry was the forerunner of grass-based dairying in the UK. His leadership inspired many dairy farmers, and as a result his farming legacy is high-quality pasture supporting thriving livestock businesses and families across the UK and beyond.

Jerry farmed until retiring in 2006 but continued to represent the TFA on committees for Defra, including a key role in the TB forum and acting as Uncle of the Venison Project.

As a Grandpa he also had more time for his eight grandchildren. Always a keen and talented artist, he produced handmade Thomas the Tank Engine, John Deere tractor, or Pony birthday invitation cards for their childhood parties. These invitations set a high standard which Grandma had to follow with intricate tractor, rugby or pony cakes and

birthday food, which Jerry enjoyed serving, occasionally after a taste test!

His other hobbies in retirement were his D-type Jaguar, his Harris hawk, and sampling diverse flavours of ice cream. Grandma joined him in the Jag and out hunting with the hawk but kept a tight control on the ice cream intake!

Despite his varied and multiple farming successes, Jerry's biggest achievement was how he coped with his last 11 years living with Alzheimer's. Supported and guided by Carol, he was positive throughout, even towards the end of his life. We can all celebrate his fortitude, sense of humour and mischief.

Jerry enjoyed attending Alzheimer groups each week, the art group, an outdoor walkabout called Muddy Boots, and especially he loved his day a week at his Alzheimer's day club, where he enjoyed telling stories of his Scouser youth!

Carol's unbelievable dedication to his care ensured he enjoyed his art and daily trips around the farm. Her love has been unwavering, and the family cannot thank her enough for enabling him to live out his life at home and on the farm he loved.

We are all immensely proud of Jerry, and we thank God for a life dedicated to family, farming, and the farming community. Jerry, Rest in Peace.

Anne Carr (née Grant) (Wye 1948-51)

Malcolm Alexander (1963-67) writes: Anne Doris Gordon Grant was born to wealthy parents on 16th May 1929 in Pinner, Middlesex, later moving further out to a Queen Anne house, set in eight acres in Rickmansworth. Her father, Gordon Grant, was a descendant of William Grant who had built the Glenfiddich Distillery in 1886. Her mother, Doris (née Cruickshank), born in Banff, was an ardent and effective



campaigner for natural food, well ahead of her time and a strong influence on Anne.

Following a good education at private schools, Anne arrived at Wye College in 1948. Having her own pony as a child, Anne was already a competent rider, and her hunter mare accompanied her to Wye. Perhaps this was not so unusual at the time, as the Principal (Dunstan Skilbeck, of course) kept horses, which students were sometimes allowed to ride. Her future husband, Stephen, had also arrived at Wye that year. Stephen had spent the war years in Argentina, so was well able to accompany Anne on daily rides on the Downs, starting at 5am, returning exhilarated for a quick breakfast before starting the day's studies.

When Anne's parents met Stephen, he was warmly welcomed into her family, but their approval of her choice waned when they heard that a missionary career in Africa was being planned. Nevertheless, even though an official engagement announcement had been made, Anne returned to the family home, while Stephen spent two years in Nigeria with CMS (the Church Missionary Society) on a bachelor basis. Anne's father had hoped that his future son-in-law's missionary zeal might evaporate – or that his daughter might make a different choice! This was not to be and Anne and Stephen were married at Holy Trinity, Northwood on 8th May 1954, with the eventual support of both her parents.

For much of the next 30 years, Anne supported Stephen in some pretty tough situations, the first being in southern Sudan at a Village Teachers' Training Centre in Yei. Here Anne had to settle into a round mud hut some 15ft across, with her chauffeur-driven Daimler exchanged for a bicycle. Life went smoothly until disrupted in 1955 by the outbreak of violence marking the start of the first Sudanese civil war. Although independence followed in 1956, the ethnic and domestic tensions against Southern Sudan escalated further during the post-colonial reconstruction. After being forced

to leave for some months, Anne and Stephen were able to return to southern Sudan in 1956, until in May 1962, they were expelled on orders from central government.

This abrupt exit led to many happy years in Uganda where, with funds provided by Christian Aid, Anne and Stephen started two schemes designed to show young people that it was possible to make a living from farming by adopting good agricultural practices and planting appropriate cash crops. The first scheme was started at Nyakashaka in the hills of Ankole, where Anne spent several months living in a grass 'bivouac' whilst more permanent mud-and-wattle thatched houses were built. The climate was good for tea growing, where a few sunny days would be followed by cloud and drizzle. Anne had the compensation that at a higher altitude, horses could thrive and made a good way of getting around, even if not at a gallop.

A young graduate couple from Nottingham University, Karl and Gay Edwards, gave support. Gay recalls how Anne was adaptable and resourceful, using all her agricultural knowledge to make life work for her and Stephen in undeveloped rural Africa, with no running water or electricity. She continues: 'In 1965, when we arrived by Land Rover, at a thatched mud hut on a steep hillside, I was amazed to see a row of luxurious, very English, fuchsias growing under the windows. The flowers were unusually large and vibrant growing together with purple-fruited seed heads as large as cherries. My exclamation of delight gave Anne the opportunity to explain that the plants were regularly treated to the coffee hullings used in the toilet box, close to the bedroom, the 'long drop' being too far away for a quick dash during a wet night'.

It was during her time at Nyakashaka that Anne and Stephen had to recognise that they couldn't have children of their own and they made the decision to adopt. Christopher 'arrived' as a nine-day old in Kampala. Three years later, a fatal car crash,

meant that a two-year old, David, had been orphaned and became a younger brother for Chris.

Home leave typically included doing the rounds of various churches and groups who were providing financial or moral support for their work. This included Wye College, where Stephen became known as the 'Wye Missionary'. In 1967, he talked one evening about his recent work in Uganda, explaining that he would be starting a second scheme in Bunyoro and that he was looking for volunteers to assist him. This led to Richard Adams (Wye, 1964–67) helping as a VSO for a year, and the writer (with his wife, Hélène) spending two years working with Stephen and Anne at Wambabya, where we quickly learnt about village life and the practical problems of establishing tea in a hot tropical climate, where it might not rain for two or three months. Anne showed Hélène how to develop a productive vegetable garden and the intricacies of a charcoal iron. An invitation to supper would include a request from Anne for Stephen to carve the groundnut roast. In return, Hélène was able to give the boys their first two years of schooling. As well as bringing up two small boys, Anne ran a daily dispensary and clinic, although she didn't stand any nonsense from those she believed to be shirking.

Moving on from Wambabya, Anne and Stephen spent some time developing disease-resistant varieties of 'English' potatoes in the hills of Kigezi, before being forced by Idi Amin's regime to leave Uganda. A short spell in Mwanza on the shores of Lake Victoria was followed by Stephen joining the World Bank, based in both Nairobi and Washington, a much more

'civilised' existence, whilst travelling widely across southern Africa.

With retirement drawing nearer, Stephen and Anne decided to set up home in Malawi on the Zomba plateau. The climate there suited Stephen, but it was also decided to have a base in England and Anne then lived increasingly back in Wye, making regular visits to Malawi, whilst Stephen would come to England in July.

In 1987, the Grant family had decided to reorganise the now widespread family shareholdings in the eponymous whisky distillers, giving some family members the option to sell their shares. Anne accepted this proposal which enabled her to establish the Grant Charitable Trust. With Stephen and four close friends as co-trustees, over the next 15 years, the Trust was able to donate £1.2m (capital and income) to support projects mainly in east and central Africa, supporting rural medical services, disabled children, orphans and child nutrition.

The title of Stephen's memoir, *Surprised by Laughter*, also echoes Anne's belief that 'laughter is the best form of medicine'. Her son, Chris, recalls – not that long ago – watching Mr Bean videos together, Anne reflecting wisely that 'there are times to be serious and also times of great merriment and joy'.

Anne's funeral service was taken by Rev. Linda Cross (Wye 1979–80) in Wye Parish Church on Thursday 26th January, followed by a burial in the churchyard. Anne is survived by her husband, Stephen (*please see below – Ed*), son Chris, and sister, Elizabeth. Her younger son, David, died suddenly on 26th January, a few hours before the funeral.

Stephen Carr (Wye 1948–51)

Stephen Carr died in Blantyre, Malawi on Friday 2nd June at the age of 95. After an upbringing in both England and Argentina, Stephen studied agriculture at Wye, where he was to meet his wife, Anne (née Grant);

they married in 1954. Working with the Anglican Church Missionary Society, they spent eight years helping farmers in a remote area of southern Sudan, until they were forced to leave in 1962. They moved to

Uganda and started two projects supporting young farmers planting tea as a commercial crop. For many years, Stephen would return to Wye to talk about his work and became known as the "Wye College missionary".

Stephen went on to have a significant career with the World Bank as an adviser on smallholder agriculture projects, before

retiring to Zomba Plateau in Malawi. Anne preferred to be mainly in England, making her home in Wye, where she died on 24th December 2022. Their son, David, who had just flown in from the USA, died on the morning of his mother's funeral on 26th January this year. Stephen is survived by his son, Chris, who lives in Switzerland.

Ian Dormor (Wye 1990-1993)

Richard Bartley (1990-93) writes: Ian Dormor died aged 76 in February 2022 after a short illness. After graduating with a first in Countryside Management, Ian moved to York to take an MSc in Heritage Management. This too he passed with distinction, before studying at Leeds for his doctorate, titled 'Ancient woodland management in two Yorkshire dales since the 15th century.'

Ian's path to Wye and academia was long and unconventional. He left school at sixteen to become an apprentice printer, working his way up from the shop floor to own a successful typesetting and printing business in Farnham. Motivated by reading numerous articles in *The Countryman* as he prepared the magazine for printing, Ian committed to study at evening classes at Birkbeck College. At the age of forty-five he gained the qualifications that he needed to read for a degree. Ian's research was characteristically thorough, and in 1990 he concluded that Wye College was the best place to start a new career, so when his children left home Ian sold his business and moved to Wye with his wife Lorna.

Despite being more than twice the age of other undergrads, Ian settled into Wye College life and soon earned respect for his knowledge and ability to apply himself to

tasks. Ian's IT troubleshooting skills were second to none, and fellow students had much to thank him for in the dark ages of MS-DOS, a time when personal computers were scarce, slow, and prone to crash, especially when essay deadlines loomed.

After Ian completed his PhD he took consultancy and lecturing work until he found a permanent post as the landscape conservation officer for the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership, working there until he retired. However, retirement was a notional concept, as Ian's many voluntary commitments around Church Stretton kept him busy. Notably he was a long-standing trustee for the charity Caring for God's Acre. In 2004, Ian became chairman of the Offa's Dyke Association, having previously for many years edited its newsletter. Ian's design and print experience also drew him back into production work for the Stretton Focus magazine for his last eight years.

The natural world, landscape ecology and social history inspired Ian, and he continued to help the many countryside causes that he loved, until he was diagnosed with thyroid cancer. He is survived by his wife Lorna, children Nick and Rachael, and four grandchildren.

Clive Landshoff (Wye 1964 – 67)

Chris Mathias (1964-68) writes: Clive was born in 1945, the youngest son of German parents who immigrated prior to

the Second World War. His is a very gifted family, not least because Peter, his older brother, became Professor of Mathematics

at Cambridge University, while Clive was an undergraduate and his sister, Barbara, became an account manager as well as raising money for charities.

Although Clive came from an artistic family, he was not artistically creative himself, but always loved animals. He had many pets as a child as well as an interest in science. For these reasons and his obvious intelligence, he gained a place at Wye to study agriculture. Apart from the usual student activities he demonstrated his extensive DIY skills by, for instance, undertaking the electrical wiring for the college balls. While at Wye, Clive demonstrated a very strong interest in and desire to go farming. After three years he graduated with a first in Agriculture and, upon graduating, persuaded his mother to sell her house in Canterbury and use the proceeds to help buy a hill farm near Lampeter in Wales.

There he established his first dairy herd, which numbered only 10 cows, but he gradually started the process of herd expansion. The farm was a usual wet Welsh hill farm and suffered from the normal problems associated with wet soil conditions, including a limit to the eventual herd size. Thus after a very few years this farm was sold and a lowland farm was purchased near Whitland in Pembrokeshire, which allowed the herd to be expanded to 40 cows, his mother also helping on the farm. Again, after a few years this farm was sold and they bought a larger farm near Tiverton in Devon, in an area that was known locally as Bankruptcy Triangle. This of course had little impact on Clive because he not only lived in an old caravan because there was no house but also improved the farm and expanded the herd still further. It was here that he met Bernie when she was TB testing his cows. As she is a qualified vet, Clive always said that one of the reasons he married her was so that he could benefit from reduced veterinary and medicine bills...

They married in 1977 and in doing so Clive had a ready-made family with Mark, who was only two at the time. They started married life by still living in the caravan and Emma

was born in 1979, but by the time their second daughter, Rebecca, had been born in 1980, the house had been completed. They have been either building or doing up houses ever since.

The farm soon became too small for the ever-expanding herd, so they sold and bought another in 1982 near Battle in East Sussex. As there was no farm house they lived in a run-down cottage which was soon renovated. However, as the children got bigger the ever declining space meant that a new farm house was needed. As indicated above, Clive was a very practical man and did all the work he could himself and only employed tradespeople for bricklaying and plastering. As with previous builds, they moved into the house as soon as it was watertight and finished the work off while living there.

The dairy herd continued to be expanded to over 100 cows but in time Clive and Bernie realised that the bank was earning more than they were due to interest charges and the milk quota system. So following 30 years of getting up early to milk the herd Clive decided to use the European Union's 'get out of milk' scheme and these funds, together with the sale of the farm, were used to take over the Domestic Fowl Trust in Honeybourne, Worcestershire. This was open 364 days a year and visitors could see a variety of traditional poultry breeds as well as a few rare types of farm animals. It was also a mail order poultry equipment company, a large part of which was solid wood poultry houses. Consequently, Clive and Bernie spent nearly every weekend during the spring and summer on their trade stand at agricultural shows, where they made most of their poultry house sales. Clive would then travel the country delivering these and installing them in customers' gardens. He loved this part of his work where he got to visit all parts of the country and meet many interesting people. He also claimed on frequent occasions that this was the most profitable part of the business.

Clive and Bernie finally decided in 2012 that it was time to 'retire'. They bought a

derelict farmhouse with 30 acres in Low Habberley near Kidderminster, and lived in a small touring caravan while they rebuilt and extended the house, also building a bungalow on the grounds. They have remained there happily ever since.

Clive had a keen interest in old farm machinery, being treasurer of the National Vintage Engine and Tractor Club. He preferred to use old tractors and loved tinkering with them to keep them going. Clive was also a fan of the theatre. He and Bernie would take regular trips into Birmingham to see whatever musical production was currently on tour. In their later years, Clive and Bernie had a love of travel, visiting far-off countries such as India, China, Vietnam, Borneo and parts of Africa, the latter more than once. But their holidays always included visits to farms and animal sanctuaries and often a visit to a zoo where Clive could be found having conversations with the animals, much to the amusement of others. In fact Clive and Bernie were on holiday in Africa (where the photograph was taken) only a month before Clive died.

Clive was always very proud of his children and their achievements, being happy to support them in their choices. He was

delighted when he became a grandfather to Mark and Wanda's son Alex in 2004, and then more recently to Rebecca and Andy's children Daniel and Eleanor and finally Emma and Graham's son Arthur. Despite part of the family being in Canada he kept regular contact with their news by emails.

Clive never stopped working and could often be found tinkering with his tractors or other jobs well into the evening. Even during retirement, once the work on the houses were completed, he spent his time volunteering at the local British Heart Foundation charity shop, travelling around collecting donations and house clearances.

Clive was a very bright, kind, cheerful and caring man who was happiest when he was helping others. He loved to put his strong problem-solving brain to practical use, always fixing things for himself and for others. He was always positive, and only looked forward. He was always calm and even tempered, and if he found he was getting frustrated, he would talk to his beloved animals to calm himself rather than getting angry with others. He will also be always remembered as a hardworking 'improver' with very great DIY skills and will be very much missed.

Elfrida Savigear (Wye 1968-71)

Marion Robeson, nee Haines, Wye 1968-71, writes: When Elfrida arrived at Wye in 1968 the college was changing in character, moving into providing courses for a new wave of young idealistic students from urban and suburban areas. The Green Revolution, in which the college's Prof. Wain was a leading figure, and the awareness of environmental issues had created a demand for training in the science of food production.

Elf, as she was known, was one of those students. Already firm in her Christian faith and driven by a determination to help people. She later told Farmers Weekly of her career choice: "I wanted to save the starving millions, so science and food it was."

Elf's time at Wye centred on her studies, her faith and her friends. Although she did play in a women versus men charity rugby match, her character and her faith meant she generally chose not to take part in the boisterous, sometimes riotous, activities that at that time were expected of agricultural students. She stood aside from the Black Hut parties, the Hunt Balls and the raiding of other colleges' mascots. Elf never tried to convert other students to her faith or censured them for their behaviour. She had a circle of friends, mainly women from the same non-farming background as her, and preferred to spend her leisure time in her flat in Withersdane, with friends, music (including her French horn) and her books.

Leaving Wye during the economic crisis of the early 1970s, as she told *Farmers Weekly*: “Farmers’ sons went back to their farms – and the rest of us struggled.” Her response to this was to try to fulfil *her ambition to help others*. Elfrida spent a short time as a volunteer in Swaziland (now Eswatini). The Agriculture in Schools project was getting started and needed volunteers from overseas while Swazi teachers were getting trained. She was posted to a secondary school in the Mankayane area, a somewhat isolated area in the highveld. The school was quite Spartan, and although Elf felt the work worthwhile she did find the conditions difficult, returning to the UK after a short tenure.

In 1973 Elf started her first career as a lecturer. She taught at Merrist Wood agricultural college until 1979, while living in Guildford. She then moved to Somerset and taught at Cannington agricultural college from 1980 to 1989, living in North Petherton near Bridgwater. During this time she completed an MPhil at Bath University. Her book ‘Garden Pests and Predators: How to Identify Them and Encourage the Good and Discourage the Bad’ was first published in 1980.

As being a Christian had always been a major part of Elf’s life, it was no surprise when she began the path for her second career and studied at theological college in Bristol (Trinity

College). She funded her own place as the Church of England had not yet accepted her for ordination. It was only in 1994 that the Church of England accepted women priests and Elf was one of the first. She trained at Ridley theological college in Cambridge, and she was ordained as Deacon in July 1993 and then as Priest in 1994 in Hereford Cathedral.

Initially Elf faced an uncertain welcome from both parishioners and clergy, as a woman vicar. She found that being seen as part of the community, particularly while walking her dogs, helped her to be accepted. She served at many rural parishes, mainly in the south west of England but her last role as a full time priest was in Darlington. In 1996 she published her book ‘Servant Church, Organising Rural Community Care.’

She retired to Bridport in Dorset in 2010, but remained part of the church community. The last few years were difficult for Elf as she became unable to do many of the things she loved because of her illness. Fiercely independent throughout her life she found it hard to rely increasingly on her friends and her family. Moving into a care home in January meant that for the first time in fifty years Elf did not have dogs to keep her company. She will be missed by her family and many friends.

Paul Timms (Wye 1961-64)

Colin Myram (Wye 1961-65) gave this address at the funeral of Paul Timms on November 16th 2022: A number of us here today first met Paul just over 61 years ago at Wye College. He had been at Wymondham College, the first state boarding school of its kind, where he started to expand his wisdom, intellect and street cred. The first example of this was on the first night at Wye when it was custom for older students to take the freshers out of their beds to be plunged into a cold bath. Two large rugby players, Arthur Williams a front row and Ian Sandall a second row, burst into Paul’s room – but there was no Paul. It was a good job that they did not look up as they left – Paul

was on top of the wardrobe!!

I would like to show you now ‘Exhibit A’. My theme is one of Paul the Builder

Paul is pictured sitting on the lavatory pedestal that we cemented into Trafalgar Square to publicise Rag Week to raise funds for charity. Pete Young’s ex Post Office van was used to carry tools and materials and we managed to stop the traffic and dig up the pavement – no mean feat as it was during rush hour!!!

This was the beginning of Paul’s building skills. The next was to build the Guy Fawkes bonfire on the side of the Downs. When you build a bonfire on the side of a hill it can

*Exhibit A*

have a habit of rolling down said hill and hence a massive base had to be constructed to prevent this from happening. Needless to say Paul completed this with consummate ease and November 5th went off without a hitch and the lighted bonfire stayed at the top of the hill. Paul continued to hone his skills eventually to become '10shedtimms'.

His fascination with fires did not stop there and after leaving Wye we would all rock up with families and caravans and tents for summer reunions around the country - at Geoff Goodson's, Chris Duncan's, Roger Shippey's and Paul's at Huntingdon. He would always be the one to build the camp fire around which we would all sit with a pint and mardle into the night.

Paul was also famous for his imaginary fires as, around the hallowed quadrangles of Wye, he had, at one time or another, set off most of the fire extinguishers!!

Paul's building experiences were further enhanced one night outside Canterbury College – which I believe may have been a girl's college. Some remedial groundwork was taking place and there was a road roller. This was like a red rag to a bull for Paul and soon it was started. Fortunately he could not get it into gear because as the rugby song goes, "there was no way of stopping it!!" Eventually the stop lever was found but not until the Principal appeared in her nightgown. She did not appear as amused as we were!!

Paul and I went to Norfolk one summer and I met his parents in Loddon. It was Paul's idea for us to go and earn some money picking strawberries. As it was piece work it was obvious that we were going to earn very little doing this so it only lasted a day!!

As students, of course, we would spend hours discussing the higher things of life such as religion, politics, philosophy, affairs of state, and so on.

*Exhibit B*

In a study/bedroom: Paul eating his words!! On occasions he would also strum away on his guitar. He only knew three chords but



Paul and Bridget on holiday in Cornwall circa 1967

seldom got them in the right order!!

And so all good things come to an end and final exams loomed. We both tended to leave our academic studies to the last minute and hence hours had to be spent in the library cramming. Every night Paul would interject, "It's nine o'clock- time for a pint", and we would adjourn to the George for a pint or two before returning to our revision. Professor Milbourn, our then Crop Husbandry lecturer, is here today and Graham can vouch for the fact that Paul got a degree - eventually.

So Wye ended and Paul got a job with Lawes Fertiliser Company just north of the Thames and I was working just to the south and we would meet up on occasions for a pint or three. On one such evening at a pub in Alresford we met up with some fellows who invited us back to Brands Hatch Club and after a very pleasant evening we left. However, Paul's sense of direction was never very good

and instead of turning right he turned left and we ended up on the track. I have to tell you that a lap of the long circuit with Paul hammering round in his Cortina was pretty scary!!!

Whilst at Wye Paul frequented the girls PE Eastbourne College and it was here that he met the Blonde Bombshell Bridget – EXHIBIT C

I had the honour of being Paul's best man, and as a result of this union we, here today, have the honour of being amongst their children and grandchildren to celebrate the life of Paul:

The family man, the character, the fireman, the fire builder, the builder of sheds, the footballer and rugby player, the businessman, the fisherman and good shot – but mostly his humour and stoicism and being the Farmer's Boy.

The following poem, portraying his love of the countryside and conservation, was written by Duncan, Paul Timms' son:

This Is Where You Will Find Me

*Next year the snowdrops will hang their heads
And the birds will sing remembrance
My guard of honour will be the trees
This is where you will find me*

*As a boy I roamed the countryside
Through golden fields of wheat and rye
Down Norfolk lanes I wandered free
This is where you will find me*

*Rows and rows of runner beans
Children picking blackberries
Cabbage whites and honey bees
This is where you will find me*

*All my life I've worked this land
I've run the soil through my hands
Providing for my family
This is where you will find me*

*Walk with me beneath the trees
Did you know I planted every one of these?
Creating life beneath the canopy
This is where you will find me*

*I grow weary now and rest upon my spade
And think of all the memories we made
The bonfires and the cups of tea
This is where you will find me*

*As the rooks call for winter I am gone
But through you, my family, I live on
I am your strength and your integrity
This is where you will find me*

*And should you ever need to hear my voice
Or smell the collar of my work shirt as we
embrace
Then sit down somewhere quietly
This is where you will find me*

*I am a man with no headstone
But there is a place that I call home
Across salt marches going out to sea
This is where you will find me*

Michael Crowther (Wye 1957-60)

Following the passing earlier this year of his father Michael (Wye 1957-60), Angus Crowther kindly forwarded the eulogy given at the funeral held in late March:

Thank you all for coming today; it means a lot to the family to see so many of you here. Thank you also to Ronald for those superb words and Peter was very upset not to be here but wanted everyone to know that he held Michael in the highest esteem as both a man and a friend.

I am going to talk about the various aspects

of my father's life and try to explain what a great bloke he really was.

As many of you here will know, Dad was brought up on the farm by Bunty, his doting mother, first in Park Gate and then The Nunnery in Castle Hedingham.

The war of course snapped them out of their idyllic way of life and Michael used to tell stories about doodlebugs travelling overhead on their way to smash the East End of London.

During the Blitz, Michael and his sister, Juliet, were evacuated to North Wales where he went to Hillcrest prep school. Thinking her darling children would be rather lonely, Bunty signed on to be the cook at the school. What devotion. Whilst they would queue up for supper, my father would hear a 'psst' from under the hatch and she would discretely pass him a handful of raisins and nuts, then a complete luxury.

The war also had a severe effect as Bunty's brother, called David, was killed, aged 18, when his Destroyer was sunk by a u-boat off Aberdeen, and his name is the last to appear on the war memorial outside this church.

Michael Ruffel, Bunty's other brother, was a lovely man and great company but perhaps not the ideal role model and when barely a teenager, my father was introduced to the joys of The Bell, where his appreciation for malt-based produce was firmly off and running.

He then went to Oundle where he was in Bramston House in the middle of the town. I think it would be fair to say that both his academic and sporting record was modest but he certainly enjoyed himself.

After school he did his equivalent of a gap year in America where he hitch-hiked across the country in his school blazer and tie and did not lack for lifts although this young English gentleman must have, rather amusingly, stood out.

He then joined the 33rd Parachute Field Regiment Royal Artillery as a very young officer and straight after graduating from Sandhurst, he was sent to Northern Ireland. He was involved in many 'lively' situations and one time, he radioed his sergeant to approach the back door of a suspect while he kicked in the front door. A bomb went off at the back door and the sergeant was killed.

He was then sent to Suez which is one of the last times the Paras have actually jumped into action. We used to enjoy him

illustrating to people how to conduct a parachute jump roll, often after several beverages, and in someone else's sitting room which would send glasses and tables tumbling, to much general laughter. Stories of the Suez including the famous Gunner Rose (which is not appropriate for this church) have gone down in Crowther household history.

Upon leaving the army, he was told by his commanding officer: "Now look here Crowther, You are blasé and you are idle and you would do well to remember that. Do sharpen up. Dismissed." This amused him no end.

So returned a very fit and very sun-tanned lieutenant who then joined Wye College, where he met Peter Simmonds, and were Peter able to make it today, I suspect we would have heard stories such as them being the only ones that were in the pub during their 3rd year which again could explain my father's continued, modest academic record. He then joined Pauls which is where he met the three other founders of Moray Firth Maltings.

Back then, weekends were spent returning to Castle Hedingham where Bunty would do his washing even though he was nearly 30. He played for Sudbury Rugby Club where they had an imposing front row consisting of Michael Crowther and John Gardiner as props, and Wilfred Teverson as hooker.

But let's return to Scotland where in 1970, one night out in Inverness, he caught sight of rather an attractive young lady in her early 20s called Catherine McDougall, my mother. It seems he persisted in following her to a couple of bars (perhaps she was initially put off by the pig castrators in his pocket) and eventually succeeded in talking to her. She went home that night and told her mother (Granny Macdougall) that she had met the man she would marry. Soon after, I was born in Inverness quickly followed by my sisters Sarah and Nicola. We lived in North Kessock on the Black Isle

to begin with before moving to Beldorny in Nairn which was a truly fabulous house and as a family we were very happy.

Spotting an opportunity to produce malt to supply the exponential growth of the Scottish whisky industry, Dad was the managing director at Moray Firth Maltings, and along with the three other founders led the team in helping obtain the investment, get the planning permission and build the plant in the middle of Inverness, all within 18 months. He then persuaded hundreds of farmers to grow the right variety of malting barley and the rest, as they say, was history. Not bad for a 30 year old and it was perhaps his sheer optimism, drive, energy and vision for what could be done, which was truly inspirational. Nothing was impossible.

He was a member of Nairn Golf Club where, due to his relatively high handicap, he would be coached round the course by the likes of Nairn legends such as RD Gordon (the President of Nairn Golf Club) and Ronnie Mitchell who once said to him, during a tense competition on the notoriously intimidating 16th tee: "Come on Michael; hold it together" – he did and he won the Park Cup. As caddy, I received 10% of the winning amount of £15 which involved considerable negotiation.

We also used to visit Murrayfield frequently where Scotland back then, were used to winning. Not so much these days perhaps, except for the Calcutta Cup.....but he loved the Scots and they loved him. The late Kenneth Ross who played for Scotland was one of his best friends and his usual spectating companion, and all I can say is that the result was utterly irrelevant but the celebrations did take a while to get over, much to my mother's irritation. My father and Kenneth also had discussions about creating a distillery together but it was probably a good idea that they didn't. Especially as Kenneth's email address was stilldrinking@btinternet.com

Dad was part of the rather smart Rosehaugh

shooting syndicate on the Black Isle and I remember well one of the few times he seriously lost his temper when Maggie, his notoriously badly behaved labrador, ran in to the first drive, sending the pheasants the wrong way. He lifted his shotgun to aim before I managed to tackle the dog a couple of pegs away, where I heard the always kilted Captain Elliot remark, "Oh dear, Daddy's going to shoot the dog"....

In 1986 Dad bought the farm next to Bunty, but not before a two year stint in Thailand helping them build dryers for cooperatives. Then in 2003 he built Tuffon Hall, again no mean feat and, like everything else, he threw himself into farming although he admitted to being rather tractor shy, which Leslie Hardy, who has worked on the farm for over 60 years would not disagree with.

He was a great conservationist and planted tens of thousands of trees to create drives such as Carters and his beloved Captains Grove, which many of you enjoy today.

I should say a big thank you to Leslie, Paul, Ryan and Dean who have carried him into church today and who knew him so well. Thank you for everything you did for my Dad, especially Leslie who he respected and admired so much, as did Bunty. But I think both of them would be delighted at the dedication you now apply to the vineyard. They would probably like the wine too!

As I have already mentioned, his relationship with various gun dogs was not perhaps as good as it should be and Paul Harper, our ex-keeper and gun dog trainer, would often say "it's not the dog's fault Michael". Communication was sometimes not enhanced by his choosing to speak to the dog in German when irate "kommt mal her du blude schwarze hund" which the dog did not seem to understand either.

He was a great Dad to Sarah, Nicky and I. He was a great listener and was incredible with all our friends who felt as though they were being treated as a peer, and he used to encourage and exhort them to live life

to the full. And such was his unconditional love for his beloved Nicky, our mentally disabled sister, he would sing to her, wash and dress her every morning. In return she would smile at him with such affection and gesticulate with joy.

We also had some memorable skiing holidays with both Sarah and my friends all together which could not have been more fun. As he was being forced down Tortin in Verbier at the age of 65, he said he had not just lost his bottle, but that the bottle was completely empty. He described his skiing style as 'judder, judder, wrench, judder, judder, wrench'. He then famously founded the 'special needs skiing group' for which a relaxed pace of skiing was required along with frequent stops and a serious lunch. The group was full up by the next day....

As the years wore on, his friends and the family all used to joke about his memory. The gun would be forgotten. Or the dog. Or the date. And then he would forget our names. Although his grandchildren saw the funny side as Grandad used to call them by the wrong names. It became clear that this would only get worse and he subsequently fell into the devastating and slow cruel grip of vascular dementia. Upon the diagnosis, the doctor solemnly told him that he would henceforth only be allowed one glass of wine per day. "It's

going to be a bloody big glass," came the defiant response.

And I remember him, as my caddy, the roles reversed, during the Nairn Open semi-final, giving me an eight iron on the 16th fairway, when I had requested a four iron. "But I want my four iron," I repeated. "You've got your 4 iron, just get on with it. Don't be so wet!" This did not help my fragile state of mind and I duly lost the hole and the match – and all I can say is that I was a much better caddy than he was.

We need to find a cure for this awful disease and some of us are walking quite a long way in June to raise funds. Details are on the back of the order of service should you wish to donate. A huge thank you to Ruxi, Jake and Nadine for looking after him with such care – you have been truly amazing.

But let's not let the illness define the man. I say again, we will not let the illness define the man.

Rather, let's remember a loving Dad, brilliant businessman, countryman and farmer who was loved by family and friends alike and who will not be forgotten. Dad, we will see you up there for a glass of the strong stuff at some stage. Thank you for everything. We loved you so much. Goodbye.

Tim Dent (Wye 1956-59)

Andy Long writes: Tim (Timothy Jonathan) Dent died on 6th April 2022. After leaving school in Altrincham, Tim attended Wye College from 1956 to 1959. He spoke with great fondness about Wye. Set in a small Kent village in the North Downs, the heart of the college had beautiful buildings dating back to the fifteenth century. It specialised in agriculture from late Victorian times and had a farm, woodland and ancient grassland along with specialist laboratories. Tim told us of playing in the football team and how much he learnt there. He was with like-minded people who like him cared about nature and good farming methods. He was a life member of the Wye College Agricola Club for those who graduated from Wye.

After a few years of practical experience working on farms, he joined a new research station created by the Potato Marketing Board. It was set up on the former RAF Sutton Bridge airfield in Lincolnshire and the building he worked in was part of the airfield's main hangar, still standing today. He joined in 1963, before the research station was officially opened, and so he was there to set up the facilities and to start the research programmes. He was always interested in the history of the RAF station and stayed in touch with Sutton Bridge long after he retired. He was there at its 50th birthday celebrations, 25 years after he retired from the institution.

Before Sutton Bridge was established, the potato growers used traditional methods of storing potatoes but this led to large losses due to weather and disease. Tim led the research and development team working on potato storage, establishing the storage of the crop indoors as an integral part of the potato industry.

Tim was involved in developments which are now routinely used by all the major processing businesses such as McCain and PepsiCo, all the supermarket retailers of fresh potatoes and the makers of potato crisps.



Colleagues still in the industry and research said that they learnt much about potatoes from Tim, which put them in great stead throughout their careers. He was generous in sharing his knowledge and insights about crop storage and potato physiology.

He travelled widely, sharing knowledge and he told us of various trips he had made including to India and to the home of the potato, the Andes. When my wife Sara and I were in a remote part of northern Ghana we met a travelling Lincolnshire potato farmer who of course knew Tim well from his work and shared stories over the camp fire. Tim retired in 1988 at the age of 50 after working at Sutton Bridge for 25 years.

Life after Wye

After graduation, Simon Harris (1962-65) moved from ag journalism to the civil service and, latterly, into the sugar sector, working at home and abroad.

I would like to start by paying tribute to Wye for the excellent education it gave and to Professor Wibberley in particular who, through his brilliant teaching, inspired a generation of Wye economists. In my case I had not come across economics before Wye as, at that time, it was not thought to be a suitable subject for schools. Luckily the grounding in economics Wye gave enabled me to pursue a career as an agricultural economist.

During my working life (not yet finished I am pleased to say) my career has played out against the background of three major geo-political developments: first the evolution of the European Union¹ and its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), second the liberalisation of economies that were formerly under Soviet-style central planning and, third, the gradual freeing-up of international trade following successive negotiating rounds in the GATT², now part of the WTO³.

The first issue on leaving Wye in 1965 was to get a job. Here I was lucky to be accepted by the 'Farmer and Stockbreeder' (the then pre-eminent farming magazine) as a journalist in their markets section. I had two years with them which trained me in writing to a set length and to time. It was here I had my first exposure to the nascent CAP, with a trip to Brussels in 1967, to have its wonders explained by the European Commission's then visionary (not so much these days) staff in their newly-built Berlaymont headquarters.

It was at 'Farmer and Stockbreeder' I realised I needed to further develop my economic skills and so moved in 1967 to MAFF⁴ in Whitehall Place, as I knew the civil service was good on staff training. It

was a move which paid-off. In 1969 I was given a Treasury bursary to do an M.Sc in agricultural economics at the University of Newcastle, where the Kellogg Foundation was supporting the new Agricultural Adjustment Unit. My M.Sc dissertation on UK sugar policy, published by the Trade Policy Research Centre in 1973, was my first exposure to the sugar industry for which I was later to work.

My time with MAFF was fascinating for the variety of topics covered. There were the annual agricultural reviews where all the costs incurred by farmers had to be calculated and agreed with the NFU before the next year's farm support prices could be set (this was in the days when a Prime Minister could be dragged into the final settlement). Then there was the 1967-68 foot-and-mouth outbreak, the second largest ever in Britain with over 2,000 outbreaks and nearly half a million animals slaughtered. My boss and I used the then-new economic technique of cost-benefit analysis to evaluate the options for controlling foot-and-mouth disease as MAFF evidence for the Northumberland Committee's review of UK policy.

But the most significant project I was involved in was the negotiations for British entry into the EEC at the beginning of the 1970s, where I was the economist responsible for cereals. The effects of entry on cereals were crucial for British farming and food prices. Again a then-novel technique, the use of least-cost ration formulations, was employed to assess the impact of various CAP cereal market price scenarios for animal feed prices. The potential inflationary impacts were so sensitive that at one moment I was passing information daily on world cereal

price changes to Ted Heath, then Prime Minister, sailing on his Morning Cloud yacht. We had two years of negotiations with the European Commission with the six original Member States⁵ sitting behind them. In personal terms we would fly to Brussels on Sundays and return on Wednesdays with Thursdays to debrief and Fridays to re-brief. Saturdays were our day off. But we believed it was worth it.

As part of this process, we found negotiating with the European Commission not easy and that one needed to be very well prepared before sitting down with them, as they always seemed to have a perfect grasp of the detail of their dossiers, something recent British Prime Ministers would have done well to emulate.

After EEC entry in 1973, the intimate knowledge of the CAP I had absorbed enabled me to move to the City of London in 1974 to work as an economist for S&W Berisford, a then major international commodity trader and agricultural merchant. Berisford at that time was the epitome of modernity, being the first company in Britain to have its own dedicated telephone line (copper) to its New York office, which gave a significant advantage in arbitraging between London and New York commodity markets.

Although I had left the civil service, I was still involved with European affairs as, in 1975, there was the referendum on UK membership, where Tim Josling (1961-1964)⁶ and I prepared a study for the Federal Trust showing that because of high world commodity prices at that time, the CAP was holding down UK food prices rather than putting them up. My formal involvement with the CAP continued for the next few years as Specialist Adviser to the House of Lords European Scrutiny Committee which, at the time, involved a more professional scrutiny process than in the House of Commons and, indeed, the EU's original members.

It was again in 1975 that I became involved with FAO through helping Tim Josling

with some of the calculations for the application of his ground-breaking work on the measurement of agricultural protection using Producer Subsidy Equivalents – fundamental work which underpinned the agricultural negotiations in the GATT Uruguay Round of trade talks (1986 to 1994). As a result I landed up replicating these exercises biennially for the FAO before they were taken up by the OECD⁷, and in editing the annual FAO 'Commodity Review and Outlook' volume.

Although Berisford was known as an international commodity trader for coffee, cocoa and sugar, it also had substantial food merchanting operations. These included the distribution of over a third of UK sugar consumption and the operation of six slaughter houses in England and Ulster which led to my writing the slaughtering industry's case for help to modernise. We succeeded in getting a £20 million grant aid scheme from the Treasury in 1980. Modernisation was seen as getting rid of small local abattoirs and creating a more concentrated industry with larger individual plants able to fulfil a range of functions, including having on site cutting rooms. Now the pendulum appears to have swung back somewhat, with the demand for provenance with meat from local abattoirs.

Also in 1980 the focus of my working life changed with Berisford's decision to launch a bid for the British Sugar Corporation (BSC) as a means of underpinning Berisford's share price with physical assets (a strategy followed by other international trading houses with equally mixed results). The bid for BSC turned into one of the most bitterly-fought stock market takeover battles of the decade. It led to a crash course in competition policy as the Government believed the ownership of BSC was of such significance that it had to be referred to the MMC⁸ for, as it turned-out, three separate enquiries, two of which were nine months long.

Berisford successfully acquired British Sugar

in 1982 after a slightly more than two year battle, but then had to fend off bids from Tate & Lyle and Ferruzzi to buy it in 1996. Following the MMC's rejection of both bids, in a ten-minute meeting Mrs Thatcher forced Ferruzzi to dispose of its Berisford shares. It was not until 1991, however, that British Sugar's ownership was finally settled. Berisford was forced to sell as it had been bankrupted by New York property deals. Once again Tate & Lyle bid, but was again turned down by the MMC, leaving the route clear for ABF¹⁰ to buy British Sugar.

As, by the mid-1980s, Berisford was having financial issues, I had taken the opportunity in 1987 to transfer to British Sugar, representing a financially more secure home, and became their first ever Director of Corporate Affairs. Compared with corporate affairs now, with the emphasis on environmental and social governance issues and the interaction with NGOs, the world was simpler then, with most of my time spent dealing with European and international trade issues and working with the relevant trade associations.

In European terms I spent a lot of time at the European Federation of Sugar Manufacturers as the principal sugar lobby group recognised by the European Commission. We saw our job as being to ensure the CAP Sugar Regime was maintained for as long as possible against a background of reforms for other commodities. We were so successful that the Sugar Regime was the last of the old-style CAP commodity support arrangements to be reformed, starting in 1996 but not finishing until 2017. It meant British Sugar could use the profits it was able to generate, being more efficient than the European average, to continue turning itself into the modern processor it is today.

In international terms, I chaired the Food and Drink Federation's GATT Working Party that defended the British food industry's interests as a whole during the Uruguay Round, which was the only GATT round of international trade negotiations to fully

tackle agricultural support. Following this, for the European food industry, I spent years talking about and, indeed, attending some WTO Ministerial meetings where further agricultural liberalisation negotiations were proving controversial in the abortive Doha Round (2001-2011)¹¹. In particular I would pick-out the the fifth WTO ministerial meeting in Cancun in September 2003, where a Korean farmer protesting at agricultural trade liberalisation committed suicide on the security fence and Pascal Lamy, then European Commissioner for trade, suggested that the newly formed G21 alliance of developing countries in the WTO, led by Brazil, China and India, would not last (a classic misjudgement). Again I remember vividly the third WTO ministerial meeting at Seattle in 1999, which was meant to have launched what became the Doha Round, but couldn't as it had to be suspended due to the massed ranks of civil society protestors who took over the city (known as 'the battle of Seattle'). It was here I had to be escorted to safety by the FBI through clouds of tear gas as the protesters dominated the streets, cutting off the hotels and the conference centre, before the National Guard moved-in.

While all this was going-on in terms of policy, British Sugar was starting on an expansion path. This began with Portugal in the early 1980s after the move away from

Thursday, 2 December, 1999, 23:46 GMT

Eyewitness: The Battle of Seattle



A city under civil emergency

the quasi-communist policies following the military coup (the Carnation Revolution) in 1974. Here our aim, in which we succeeded, was to get far enough along with a project to build a new sugar factory that Portugal would be able to negotiate for a sugar production quota as part of its terms for EEC entry in 1986.

Next came the decision to invest in the Polish sugar industry. We were the first Western food company to invest in Poland, buying our first two factories before the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and the move away from communism in 1990. It was a deal only made possible because the chairman of Berisford spoke the same regional variant of Yiddish as the chairman of Rolimpex (the Polish state trading organisation for sugar) which meant they could talk without the Polish security services blocking what was afoot. Conditions were so primitive that we had to physically fly out cash to pay our Polish employees' wages as their banking system could not handle international bank transfers. At that time there was only one Western-standard hotel in Warsaw, no traffic on the streets and literally nothing in the shops.

The difficulties with buying beet sugar factories in Poland can be illustrated by the example of one factory. It turned out not only to be the sole employer for the surrounding village, but also to be the landlord for all the workers' flats in the village and to host the village pig rearing enterprise. Ultimately British Sugar was able to buy ten factories which were rationalised down to one that produced more than the original ten.

A lot of time was spent helping the Polish government devise its own sugar regime (which went through 30 drafts as the process was intensely political) and being involved in the rationalisation of the industry as the State was persuaded to privatise many of the factories, although only after more political battles.

Then British Sugar turned to China, buying stakes in two Chinese cane sugar mills in 1995 as the Chinese government relaxed the restrictions on foreign investors and started the liberalisation of its economy, allowing a greater role for market forces rather than the previous rigid disciplines of the centrally planned economy. Again a key role for us was in helping the Chinese government devise policies for the sugar industry to help its modernisation and to encourage investment. In this context, the Chinese government soon realised the discrepancy between the West's espousal of general market liberalisation and its agricultural support policies involving significant protection (exemplified by the EU and the USA). Given the distortions to international sugar markets following from government support policies round the world, the discussions with the Chinese government had to ensure a sufficient level of protection so its sugar industry could modernise and develop, as it would no longer be controlled and funded by the government. Ultimately, British Sugar owned both cane and beet factories in China, although physical conditions were challenging trying to grow and then process frozen beet in the extreme climate of *Heilongjiang* (NE China), despite help from American sugar beet processors in North Dakota's Red River Valley where physical conditions are similar.

As a result of the learning experience with sugar cane in China, British Sugar was encouraged to move into Africa a decade later in 2006. Here ABF bought a controlling stake in Illovo Sugar, giving British Sugar cane sugar operations in six countries in southern Africa. Due to the political sensitivities involved, ABF did not complete its takeover of Illovo until a decade later in 2016. Given the intrinsic competitiveness of African sugar production, the issues here were more operational, concerned with, for example, improving the use of irrigation water and cane varieties, getting cut cane to the mills quickly to minimise sucrose loss, the development of co-products

(particularly the use of spent cane – bagasse – as renewable fuel and for electricity co-generation) and more modern methods of marketing, rather than with government policies as such. Nevertheless there are political issues such as South Africa's sugar tax and the operation of its minimum import price system. The big political challenge, however, was the reform of the EU's Sugar Regime which made the EU domestic price unattractive for most ACP/EBA¹³ preferential sugar exports following the EU's denunciation of the ACP Sugar Protocol in 2009¹⁴ and the abolition of EU sugar production quotas in 2017.

Since the Brexit vote in 2016 I have returned to the world of policy. Working for ABF (now on a part-time basis) has involved considering the implications of Britain having its own national agricultural and trade policies for the first time since 1972. We can already see some of the traditional themes of British government thinking re-emerging with the de-emphasising of traditional agricultural support, agricultural trade liberalisation in the new Australian and New Zealand Free Trade Agreements and sympathy for the siren call of 'cheap' food. But the context is different from pre-EEC membership, as the emphasis now is on the environment and climate change with issues of food security rising up the agenda.

In finishing I can only echo the thoughts of many others in recognising the debt of gratitude I owe to Wye and deplore its cynical asset stripping by Imperial College. This has weakened agricultural education in Britain and indeed, I would venture to suggest, in the world.

1 The changes in terminology are distracting. Britain joined the European Economic Community (the EEC or, more colloquially, the Common Market) on 1 January 1973, although it did not apply the CAP until 1 February as the entry negotiations had over-run. In 1993, following the Maastricht

Treaty, the EEC became the European Community (the EC) which, in turn, became the European Union (the EU) in 2009 following the Lisbon Treaty.

- 2 GATT – The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, created in 1947.
- 3 WTO – World Trade Organization, created in 1994 and incorporating the GATT.
- 4 MAFF – Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Restructured in 2001 as the Department for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA).
- 5 Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Italy, the Netherlands and West Germany (pre-German unification in 1990).
- 6 Obituary in the 2021 Wye Agricola Club Journal.
- 7 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.
- 8 Monopolies and Mergers Commission, now subsumed within the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA).
- 9 The British Sugar Corporation (BSC) changed its name to British Sugar in May 1982.
- 10 Associated British Foods, plc.
- 11 Despite the evidence to the contrary, many developing countries still claim the Doha Round is not dead.
- 12 Source: BBC News Online, accessed 10 January 2023
- 13 Ex-European colonies grouped as the 'African, Caribbean and Pacific' countries from 1975 and, from 1991, the 'Everything but Arms' grouping covering other developing countries.
- 14 Which guaranteed at least the EU raw sugar Intervention Price for EU imports of ACP preferential sugar.

Life after Wye

Judith Weatherill (1969-72) and contemporaries had a planned reunion thwarted by coronavirus, but finally convened in 2022 to mark half a century since graduation.

Three years ago in Oxford, and later on in this very journal, a group of my fellow 1972 graduates and I said we would meet again the following year. Unfortunately Covid happened, and so like many other people with plans, we didn't manage it. But in 2022, fifty years after we all graduated from Wye, we met up again.

Sadly, in the meantime we lost both Vickie (Wheeler) and Sheila (Masterman, nee Clarke) which still seems unimaginable, and so we are now just four, but hugely grateful that we had such a lovely time three years ago, always remembering all our friends no longer with us.

I have now sold our farm and moved near Aylesbury, close to our daughter and her family. It's sad to have left farming behind, but I am lucky to live in such a lovely place surrounded by lots of farmland. All the sights, sounds and smells without the responsibility, though still missed!

Lu (Baker) and David have now realised their dream and moved to a village, with a lovely home, land and buildings for horses, hobbies and extensive gardens in construction. As we live close to each other, we were joint hosts for the couple of days back in the summer. Ann (Thomas) travelled from Somerset (unfortunately Peter was not well enough) and was met in London by Jan (Farmer) and Paul, for the journey to Lu and David's. Much delicious food, drink, chat and reminiscing was the order of the day, and I daresay as we get older will feature more prominently! However, we did enjoy looking round their gardens, studio and horses. Even Indie, my young German Shepherd, was invited and had a whale of a time trying to play chase with Lu and David's very tolerant collie Sunny, as well as diving in and out of one of



Judith Weatherill and Wye contemporaries at their summer 2022 reunion

their ponds! Apparently the flowering water lily recovered, or so I was told the next day!

The following morning we were at my place for a hearty brunch, a walk in the countryside (Paul was very happy to be left watching the cricket!) and then it was time to say goodbye again after a photo shoot in the garden. Left to right in the photo: Lu, me (Judith), Jan, Ann.

Obviously we are even more determined to repeat our gathering as soon as we can next year. Meanwhile, greetings to all our friends from Wye who we don't manage to see.

Life after Wye

Penny Churchill (Wye 1959-62) details her exploits in activities as diverse as agricultural journalism, market research and shepherding...

Dentists, in my experience, are dapper, taciturn people. Not so my new dentist – ‘call me Steve’ – in Cardiff. A large, ebullient, jovial man who at my first appointment asked me what I did. When I replied ‘agricultural journalist’, he roared with laughter. He’d have had apoplexy if he’d known the whole story!

My entry into the world of work was not auspicious. Having graduated, just, with my agriculture degree, I found a job in the labs of Job’s Dairy. As farmers are paid on the butterfat content of their milk, my work was primarily to use the Gerber test to assess this. My mentor taught me, and I followed suit, step by step. I watched her, she watched me, but no matter how carefully I worked, my results were always different from hers by exactly the same percentage. We decided to call it a day! In any case, I was on track to marry fellow graduate Martin Roberts in the near future.

He too had an uncertain start to his career which took an unexpected turn when a friend suggested he topped up the coffers in between jobs by doing supply teaching at the local secondary school – at that time a degree qualified you to teach anything! He did this with the odd portfolio of scripture, maths and ballroom dancing – all those Saturday dances at Wye came into their own. And oddly he had found his metier – he just loved it and never looked back.

So I too followed this route as it fitted in well around family and moves in pursuit of the breadwinner’s promotions. However, there was no continuity, and when the children were reasonably independent, I decided to create a job that would go with me wherever we moved. There were two pointers to direct me. I met a Hampshire shepherd

when we were based there, and went every year to be a lambing shepherd. This was the best holiday (no domestic responsibilities) with pay there ever could be. I worked 12 hour shifts noon – midnight and particularly loved the part after dark when I would listen for the little tinny cry of a new born lamb and bring it (or more usually them) and the mother to the safety of the lamb pens. Also sheep can’t count, and a ewe may be quite happy with the first lamb and ignore the second which is then vulnerable to be pinched by a ewe about to lamb who thinks she’ll take a short cut. Of course, when her own lamb arrives she’ll reject the imposter. There was so much satisfaction in keeping the flock in order.

The second thing was that I had started writing countryside articles for local newspapers and ‘freebies’ – so journalism fitted the bill. On the strength of the writing I was doing I was able to join the Guild of Agricultural Journalists which brought me into contact with editors and my very first commissioned article. I was proud to be granted a press pass to the Royal Show and be given a brief to write a piece on a new type of spray nozzle for the magazine ‘What’s New in Farming’, for whom I subsequently wrote regularly. I also found a niche with Sheep Farmer magazine. This all kept me busy for many years, and I enjoyed myself travelling widely in pursuit of topics and interviews.

As I built up my portfolio it became evident that I needed black-and-white photos to illustrate my work. Thus I took an evening class, purloined a downstairs loo and set up my own darkroom. I loved this, and even more the art of photography, which in those days was a cumbersome process.

An offshoot of this was that I took up colour photography to sublimate my desire to paint. At that time I used a tripod for my camera and could take up to half an hour to select my scene before snapping the shot. When the pictures were developed I framed them (another evening class) and took them to craft fairs to sell.

But I also needed a foot in the agricultural world which I got by working as an agricultural market researcher and as the organiser for a small farm training group sponsored by the Agricultural Training Board, which then provided a wide range of training for farmers. My first experience of its benefits was when I went on a lambing course to support my work in Hampshire. Then back home in Sussex I found the organiser's job.

I had other interests too. A friend introduced me to brass rubbing, and we then had the idea of taking tourists to churches to introduce them to the art. This was not particularly successful but gave us the idea of putting together a mobile brass rubbing centre. Thus we went to schools, Young Wives, Women's Institutes and suchlike, giving a talk and then teaching the attendees how to make their own replica rubbing. Another idea that arose from this was to put together a route around places of interest with a cassette to provide a commentary as the route proceeded. Somehow this didn't work!

In amongst this, I retained an interest in

sheep, and with friends I enjoyed a small flock of Lleyens, a prolific Welsh lowland sheep, whose numbers were declining. There's something quite special about lambing your own sheep! I was so lucky to have the freedom to experiment in so many ways and enough of my trials worked out to keep me solvent!

Then there came retirement to a Cotswold village. The community was one of those rare ones with the full complement of facilities: church, pub, shop, school and village hall. Here I where I discovered the enjoyment of being involved in community activities, gradually finding myself secretary of this, supporter of that and with a very full diary.

So life after Wye has been interesting, fulfilling, but not typical!



Wye College Agricola Club

Do you know any Wye College graduates who aren't Agricola Club members?

If they would like to sign up, maintain and make contact with fellow Wye graduates, receive the annual Journal and attend the Annual Dinner, please contact the Agricola Club secretary, James Trounce: secretary@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk

Life after Wye

Andrew Patterson (1967-70) recounts his pre- and post-Wye working adventures.

I was brought up on the estate of a large mental hospital to the north of London where my father was the medical superintendent. This very Edwardian title reflected the timing of the construction and the establishment of a hospital for which the architect's brief indicated that they would make their reputation on this commission and that he should be thinking in terms of a balance of 10 patients per acre. Napsbury hospital was originally designed on the Scottish style of wards and villas dotted around the estate with a capacity initially for 11,152 patients. It was opened in 1905, and my father was appointed in 1947.

The hospital was set within a large estate which consisted of parkland designed by William Golding, the landscape architect at Kew. It was surrounded by agricultural and horticultural land and orchards which supplied the hospital and sold the surplus, and also provided employment for those patients attracted to the idea. An arrangement was made with the Midland Railway Company to provide a station on the company's line. This provided easy access to the relatives of patients for whom north London was their catchment. In addition, a branch line was constructed directly to the heart of the main hospital complex, with sidings near the boiler house for bringing in coal for the power station which was still in use as I grew up. This highly sustainable establishment rather flew in the face of the idea of the brutal image of what were still called lunatic asylums when I was at school.

We lived in a house within the estate, and as a child I used to sit on the garden fence in the summer fascinated by the binders and threshing machine in operation in the adjacent field. It is amazing to reflect that within my own lifetime we have moved

from that sort of technology to combine harvesters with satellite navigation mapping yields across the field.

From this background, and with four members of my family already doctors, it is perhaps not surprising that this was initially my career choice. However, working one summer holiday with agricultural contractors I realised that agriculture offered something of much greater interest to me than medicine. Not being familiar with agricultural education, my father went to see the director of Oaklands agricultural college in St Albans to seek his advice. He turned out to be an ex-Wye student, and was quite clear that Wye was the only target not only for its academic qualities, but because of the vigorous network of old students around the world, and their delight in their connections. How right he was.

Having secured a place for myself to study livestock production, I spent my practical year in west Wales on a dairy farm, not far from where I was to later return – one of those curious circles in life. Initially, I had no idea what I wanted to do after college, but in the final year a number of us discussed the idea of setting off east in a Volkswagen Kombi on a much less focused journey than had been undertaken by a number of groups in earlier years. In the end it was just Tim Day (1967-1970) and I who agreed to go.

We duly set out in December 1970 in a Kombi christened Theocrata after the college tortoise mascot – the vehicle having only a slightly higher coasting speed than its namesake. We spent nine months on the road together, heading to India and then back to Africa by sea. After a wonderful three months in East Africa we travelled south. Tim found employment in Salisbury, Rhodesia, whilst I continued south to Johannesburg. Whilst in South Africa my uncle offered me the



Andrew Patterson in India in 1971 in India with Theocrata, the campervan named after the College tortoise

tenancy of a 100-acre farm that had been farmed by the family since the time of my great grandfather in West Wales. This rather upset my plans, but I felt it was too good an opportunity to miss, so we came to an agreement that I would take up the offer in two years' time.

Having worked for nine months in South Africa to raise the funds for the next stage of my journey, I travelled on to Australia, where I worked on a dairy farm, before visiting New Zealand and travelling back through south-east Asia, Russia and then home to the UK by January 1973 – but that's another story. I returned to the UK with literally one new penny in my pocket - which I still have.

The farm to which I returned was on the edge of Fishguard in West Wales, and consisted of 90 acres of average quality land, and ten of rough grazing, all of it undermanaged for some time. My father offered me a small loan, and I took up the tenancy in March, just as we entered the Common Market. Faced with

a farm I didn't know and fast-growing grass, I decided to leave the areas I could for hay, and to buy a few steers to graze the rougher areas, whilst I worked out my options.

There followed what in hindsight were rather poor assessments. I was convinced that milk quotas would come in, and without fully understanding the way these worked decided not to go in for dairy, which in any case would require some capital investment. I therefore initially bought some store cattle. Unfortunately, the Heath government was rather more conciliatory in its negotiations to get into the Common Market than today's politicians have been in getting out. Heath decided he didn't like the European agricultural price support mechanisms, so wouldn't adopt them, but to demonstrate good faith we would drop our own. The collapse of the beef and other markets were an inevitable consequence of this.

By the autumn, beef prices had begun to tumble, so I decided that since I had the hay, I



Andrew joined the crew of Fishguard Lifeboat, here on exercise Fishguard Harbour, and he and his wife bought the white house in the background

might as well hang onto the cattle I had until the spring, when prices would surely begin to rise again. Bad mistake. The irony was that if I had started to farm at that time, I could have stocked the farm with young calves for free, because they were being given away in the market. It is intriguing that, when one starts exploring one's early career, the details which emerge come as rather a shock. For example, the bank rate at that time was 17%!

I probably persevered for longer than was warranted, but early on I had joined the crew of Fishguard lifeboat, which was a culture that I really enjoyed, as was that of Welsh club rugby. The latter was highlighted by a match against London Welsh to open our new club house. They fielded five internationals, of whom two were British Lions. We lost 8-5, but it must be admitted that they were on a very boozy tour!

As I was contemplating the fact that I was in effect working for Barclays Bank rather than myself, and wondering what to do next, I saw an advertisement for curator of the agricultural collection at the Science Museum

in London. Since I had spent much of my childhood in this place, this was too good an opportunity to pass by. Also, whilst working on the farm I had recognised quite what a divide in understanding existed between those farming and those removed from it. Perhaps naively, I thought the Science Museum would provide a medium to address this.

The Gallery for which I had responsibility had been opened in the 1950s, and little had changed since then. Nevertheless, it had in its time been state of the art, demonstrating in one way and another the development of agricultural technology from the Neolithic to the present day with some beautiful dioramas and models, some made by the manufacturers for the 1851 great exhibition. The focus was very much on the mechanical technology associated with agriculture, and therefore included objects such as Bell's reaper, Ferguson's prototype for the 'Grey Fergie', and Ivel's tractor of 1903. The curatorial post had been created because the Science Museum had also just acquired a redundant RAF airfield with six hangars

at Wroughton, near Swindon, for its large object collections, namely Commercial Air Transport, Road Transport, Space Science and Agriculture. I was allocated one hangar and told it fill it!

I had a wonderful time wandering around the UK following up adverts in the *Farmers Weekly*. Amongst other things, I managed to acquire one of the first bulk milk tanks in the UK, installed on a farm in Dumfries, and two pre-war combine harvesters of which only 120 were in the country by 1939, plus a corn drier from the Hampshire estate of Rowland Dudley, who, in the 1930s, had been an early advocate of farm mechanisation. Interestingly, such was the resistance to dried corn he was unable to sell his own for two years!

I also acquired a mini threshing machine which had been used by the Welsh Plant Breeding Station during their breeding of the S19 strain of perennial rye grass, which became such an important seed stock. By chance, looking for an early motorised combine harvester, I came across a tractor-towed Allis Chalmers which had been used by a farmer who was harvesting the first batches of the seed stock. It turned out that he had also been at Wye, but unfortunately I cannot remember his name.

During my first year, the director of the Science Museum, Dame Margaret Weston, decided that we should be letting local people know what the Museum was doing at Wroughton, and to this end I was told to organise an open weekend that first September. The approach was to be low key and with minimum expenditure, and therefore relied on volunteer input, both from local people, and staff from South Kensington. We succeeded in attracting over 15,000 people, made a profit on the event, and secured permission for a repeat the following year. That further success led me to be appointed to manage the site, charged with continuing my role with the agricultural collection, but also improving on and increasing public access to the site. Being resident on the site, I was

also present for the delivery of many of the new items, including a Trident airliner flown in directly from Heathrow, a V2 rocket, and Fowler steam engines for my own collection – a real boys-own existence!

During my period at the Science Museum I managed to establish many good contacts within the industry, not least with the Royal Agricultural Society of England. There was much trilateral discussion between the RASE, the Reading Museum of English Rural Life and ourselves about establishing a National Museum of Agriculture based in Stoneleigh. Sadly, this never came to fruition, as the RASE initiative ran into its own sand. Unfortunately, I also failed to raise sponsorship interest in upgrading the displays within the South Kensington galleries, the subject of agriculture not being attractive enough for sponsors.

I was somewhat surprised when the director of the Science Museum asked me to go to a conference on historic farm buildings, but it led to a 20-year engagement of great interest. The Historic Farm Buildings Group, founded at that conference in 1984, which never achieved a membership much greater than 250, focused initially on the survey of threatened buildings to create a record of such important features within our landscape, and to record the surprising amount of agricultural history within their fabric. The group gradually evolved and became more focused on conservation, and I chaired it during this transition.

Whilst we had organised a number of successful annual conferences for the membership, sometime in the early 1990s members of the group became particularly concerned about the physical deterioration of farm buildings, many still in agricultural use, and we began to put together a conference focusing on those who might have a responsibility for these assets. It was hard work, not least because English Heritage told us it was not a subject for them, since the Countryside Commission dealt with it, whilst the Commission indicated that such buildings were outside of their remit,

because English Heritage had responsibility for the built environment. However, we did eventually put a conference together with the chairmen of English Heritage and of the Countryside Commission, together with the director general of the Country Landowners Association, and the president of the National Farmers Union. The fact we were oversubscribed surprised the officer in charge of the MAFF department that dealt with the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, and the timing was just right. After much further lobbying we managed to secure grant aid for farm building restoration within the scheme for a figure in excess of English Heritage's annual grant budget. Sadly, this initiative fell foul of later changes in the Stewardship Scheme.

For personal reasons I left the museum in 1986 and became the keeper at the Yorkshire Farming Museum near York, as well as having responsibility for the Folk Life Museum in Hawes, Wensleydale. The role in both cases was largely the management of the day to day activities at both sites, as well as the beginnings of the computer cataloguing of collections.

The Yorkshire Agricultural Society marked the 150th anniversary of its establishment in 1987, and I was asked to produce an exhibition for the annual show which later became a travelling exhibition. In 1989 the centenary of the museum's association was to be held in York, and I was asked at very short notice to produce a special exhibition at the Yorkshire Museum in York. It had to be up and running by the time of the museum's association conference in something like six months' time and was to be opened by the Duchess of York. The theme of the Treasures of Yorkshire and Humberside was chosen, and I had a wonderful couple of weeks going around the museums, art galleries and stately homes, seeking out appropriate items for display, before settling down to the work of drafting the texts and working with the designers of the exhibition.

At about the time I was wrapping up on

dismantling the York Museum exhibition, I was approached about a regeneration project in St. Helens. The post I was offered was as the project director of a public/private sector consortium dedicated to the regeneration of large areas of dereliction from the nineteenth century industries in the town.

Being a project director for a consortium of this nature is a curious role, acting as a facilitator between the partners, banging on doors as necessary, sourcing funding, and making use of the resources of the various partners. The role therefore had no staff to directly manage, nor funds to manage other than that raised by bids to potential agencies – a task in itself passed onto the dedicated staff within the local authority. It was what I continued to do in different guises for the rest of my working life.

My specific responsibility was to conserve the Cone Building, an 1880s glass structure housing the remains of a glass furnace sitting on a site of about a third of an acre on the side of the Sankey canal just off the centre of the town. The aim was to create a visitor centre highlighting the extensive glass industry in St Helen's. The site was made available to the project by Pilkington Glass, who also wished to build a new hotel on adjacent land.

The glass furnace turned out to be one of those pivotal buildings in the transition between craft glass working in small furnaces to large scale tank furnaces of revolutionary design. However, in the construction of the building and its great labyrinth of six foot brick gas tunnels and flues, the builders had back filled the site with arsenic waste and had also ignored the fact there were two redundant mine shafts, one directly under the Cone building, within the quarter acre site. Over five years, with the partner resources and input, the project raised some £3m to address the structural problems and undertake a detailed archaeological investigation of the building and the layers of tunnels beneath it. Using this information I led a contract for the clean-up of the site, and restore the Cone building to put it into a

condition on which a modern museum could be built to compliment it.

The project was very far removed from agriculture, but I found it really challenging and a wonderful project with really dedicated people involved. Having managed to save the building and remove the inherent condition below the site, I felt it was time to move on, not least because I had been weekend commuting over much of this time, since my partner and I had bought a house in London, and she had taken a job at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The site and museum was later opened by the Duke of Edinburgh, and I was invited back and asked to greet him at the restored Cone building as the ex-director – much to his bemusement.

Keeping an eye out for opportunities, I spotted and applied for the job of project director for one of the community forests initiated as part of an England-wide project in 1990 under the auspices of the Department of the Environment, the Countryside Commission and the Forestry Commission, which established the Community Forest Programme. This consisted of 12 forests to be established on the urban fringe of the main English conurbation, generally within the greenbelt, often in poor management, and each with a very low proportion of woodland cover, but with huge development pressure. The programme began with the production of a plan for development, based on a detailed land use and planning assessment and with extensive consultation before each plan was passed by the respective local authorities to become supplementary planning guidance. A project director was appointed to each, tasked with appointing a team to take the plan forward, fund raising to meet these targets, and extensive public engagement to ensure local ownership of individual schemes, I was appointed as the project director of Watling Chase Community Forest, covering some 72 square miles of south Hertfordshire and the northern urban fringes of the London Borough of Barnet. The plan was managed by a steering group of all of the local authorities

covering the area. I enjoyed five wonderful years during which the team achieved significant acres of planting, increasing the woodland cover towards the 10% target cover. The area covered three major mental hospitals built in the 1900s, of which one was curiously the one in which I had grown up, and all of which had become redundant, thereafter being targeted for development, and seen by us for their potential for parkland as a vehicle for the integration of the existing populations and the new arrivals.

Just as I was realising that my time was running out for me in the Community Forest, because of frictions within the partnership, I noticed a very strange advertisement for a project director with English Heritage. The advert referred to the wish to restore the Chatterley Whitfield colliery site in Stoke on Trent, which at that time was a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and to use it as a site to explore the potential for renewable energy. The link being made by the national organisation preserving England's heritage, and the potential for this site to use renewable energy, intrigued me, and I successfully applied for the job, thereby moving from land-based activities to construction, engineering and the built environment.

We succeeded in raising more than £14m for the project, but the need to stabilise and secure a coal tip, and enhance the landscape of the area, attracted those managing economic development budgets more than it did built environment conservation. Although we raised several million to restore some of the buildings for office use, we failed at the time for much of the rest of the site. However, subsequent site investigation and exploration of the very deep coal shafts seem to indicate a potential for the site to become one of the country's largest geothermal plants.

During a lull in these activities, English Heritage was offered the chance to acquire Ditherington Flax Mill, in Shrewsbury. Built in 1797, this was the world's first iron frame building, and as such the ancestor of a construction method that has made possible

the skyscraper and the development of the modern city landscape. This was obviously a very important building of interest for English Heritage, but it was also identified as a 'Building at Risk' and had significant structural issues. I volunteered to manage the purchase of the site, and the take forward the development of the project.

Structural surveys, emergency repairs and fundraising occupied a number of years, and we initially succeeded in raising £6m to restore peripheral buildings of the same era and infrastructure, with the Main Mill providing a venue for public access and exhibitions. By the time this opened, the project team had already developing a major Heritage Lottery Fund bid to restore the Main Mill but I realised that the completion of this final stage was well down the line, and it was probably time to retire, which I did in 2016. About six months later I was delighted to hear that the project had secured £20m from the HLF. A massive building restoration

project for museum use on the ground floor, and offices above, was completed in 2022. The restoration has been of superb quality, with the museum opening in September. Shropshire is now justifiably proud to possess not only the first iron bridge, but also the direct ancestor of the skyscraper – both built in the 1700s.

So, in retirement I seem to have gone full circle, returning to the area in which I did my practical year and enjoying again the wonderful landscapes of north Pembrokeshire. I am also finding the time to enjoy the fact that both the Science Museum and Ditherington Flax Mill had teams who worked together successfully and in such harmony for over ten years, and still regularly meet together to share their company. And of course, to these two must be added the very strong incentive to spend time together for those that shared their college life together at Wye, an instinct shared by so many who spent their time there over the years.



Ditherington Flax Mill following completion of the first phase of its restoration

Life after Wye

Fifty years on from her graduation, Ella Starling (Wye 1967-71) takes a moment to reflect on her life's happenings since then.

I have always thought, after reading the Agricola Club journal, that all the life histories recorded there are so much more interesting and challenging than my own. Now I am in my seventies and listen continually about how women demand equal rights and special day to day treatment. I realise I never really took this into consideration and just got on with life being determined to follow whatever path I chose and adapting, for the most part, quite happily to whatever life threw at me. I began to think that some of your readers might actually be interested in the life path of a female graduate in the sixties with a general agricultural degree and may even find it helpful when discussing life options with grand-daughters.

I arrived at Wye from a County Durham farming background, with a strong Geordie accent and a geographically limited agricultural knowledge, but enough to get by without a practical year at that time. The Geordie accent mysteriously disappeared by the first Christmas, mainly I suppose as I had to make myself understood. I remember being taught to pronounce butter in Geordie, without the 'tt', by my farming cousins.

I had the privilege of a four year connection with Wye, as exams always put my brain into panic mode and I failed the second year. Never once did I think I would quit, and after eventually graduating I realised I needed to expand my qualifications, enrolling in a nine month course for a diploma in Women's Executive skills, for postgraduates at North London Polytechnic. This proved to be a very advantageous move and set me on track for some very good job offers.

I spent the next year with Bayer at its Dartford experimental farm. While there



Ella Starling with the Wye College ladies hockey team in 1971

I became really ill for a week after being given a job which involved weighing organophosphorus granules in the lab, without protective clothing or mask. I think I was lucky to recover from this experience and it shaped my future thinking regarding the use of chemicals in farming. It alarms me when I witness careless use.

When I finished I put a small advert in the Farmers Weekly, listing my qualifications and saying I was looking for a 'big job'. There was no shortage of offers, all of which would have been interesting in different ways. In the end I chose being assistant to a rural chartered surveyor in Bedfordshire helping with his farming clients.

I met my future husband in Bedfordshire and we ended up moving to the edge of Manchester so he could get a better engineering job. I again got a similar post with one of the directors of ICI at their Central Toxicology Laboratories. This was yet another interesting and informative position, providing a view of the chemical experimental world from the inside.

We decided we were geographical poorly placed from the point of view of both our families and moved to Lincolnshire. Again I was looking for work and again I had two job offers, one for Nickerson's Seeds and one for West Cumberland Farmers as a farming representative at their Lincolnshire branch. They had come into to Lincolnshire to buy grain and then decided to expand their presence by opening a general goods branch. They trained me in crop inspecting and eventually I left to start a family of two boys. I devoted my time solely to them for the first dozen years of their lives and then did a part time membership recruiting job for FWAG.

When my children needed a little less attention I decided to change directions a little and did a garden design course at Riseholme College, making use of my interest in art and garden/wild plants.

This continued until we agreed that my husband of twenty years would return to his native Norfolk and I would remain with my now teenage boys in Lincolnshire. I needed a much more reliable income to be able to provide them with a home. Then my youngest son James died tragically just before his 21st birthday, a loss which grows deeper as time goes on.

In search of something to help me cope with this tragedy I saw an advert for taxi drivers in the window of a Lincoln taxi company, County Cars, and decided to apply. You can imagine my relief when on the first afternoon my boss asked me if I knew where Clock House Farm was. An isolated farm house with a clock placed high on its front wall, I have always imagined it had been put there for the benefit of a previous occupant so he could see when it was teatime when working in the fields. Can anyone confirm this?

After 12 months of taxi driving I used my mortgage free house and bought County Cars in partnership with an Irishman who had business experience in Germany and wanted to have a new challenge. This ran

successfully for fifteen years giving us a glimpse of all the societal situations which fill the headlines and documentaries.

Just before we closed the door on County Cars for the last time my son George Starling, who founded and developed Starling Agriculture Ltd while still really young with just a little money saved up in the bank, asked if I would like to fill my spare time now I was retired. I became an active company secretary instead of just being in a position recorded at Companies House. I hope to continue as long as my brain is still sparking on four cylinders and he is happy with my performance. George trades agricultural machinery and advertises widely. If you ever see someone in your family holding the Farmers Weekly upside down they are looking at one of his adverts. He has developed a reputation for his unconventional advertising style and deals with people from all over the world. You may have even been in the yard. Recently we have had quite a few visits from Chinese dealers and machines have to be cleaned to very high standards before they are allowed to be exported. Learning Chinese is not my next challenge although it is very artistic.

I hope you will all forgive me for saying I am very proud of my son, who started at 16 years old, worked very long hours with access to a small yard, no land but an overriding interest in agriculture and ambition. He now has a successful agricultural business and enough land to give him an interest in life when he eventually retires.

I think the time I had at Wye helped me to support and encourage him during the years, and for that I have to thank Wye College.

Life after Wye

Randal Charlton (Wye 1959-62) started his post-Wye life as an agricultural journalist, but later found himself far from Fleet Street.

I wish that modern medical expertise had been available when I left Wye College in the summer of 1962. If current attitudes to mental health had been around, I am sure I would have been diagnosed with a serious malady following the news that I had been granted a degree; maybe post-traumatic stress disorder, or at the very least a bad case of attention deficit disorder. And maybe I would have had some medically-based career advice.

Actually, my life after Wye started quite well. I convinced the editor of *Farmers Weekly* that I would try anything twice and within two weeks of leaving college was sitting in front of a typewriter in the Fleet

"Within two weeks of leaving college I was sitting in front of a typewriter in the Fleet Street office of *Farmers Weekly*"

Street office of the famous magazine. For the next few years, I enjoyed reporting on the farming news and agricultural technology of the day and actually accumulated a couple of awards, but my itchy feet lead me to join *Farming Express*, which promptly closed. That led to an enforced education on the challenging life of a freelance journalist, before I was rescued by the Milk Marketing Board who asked me to produce a new newspaper called *Better Breeding*. A year or two later I was back at *Farmers Weekly* as Business Editor, a job I coveted.

However it was perhaps predictable that after a couple of years, I decided it was time I switched from writing about agriculture to getting involved in actually helping to feed the hungry masses, and, with a couple of friends we set up Universal Livestock Services to take British farming expertise to the third world.

In the deserts of north Africa and the Middle East, I learned lessons that were not taught at Wye. In the sheep market of Aleppo, Syria, for example, I was nearly electrocuted as I attempted to introduce mechanical sheep shearing equipment. Apparently, a number of hand shearers thought their jobs would be jeopardised by faster mechanical shearing.

On another occasion I arrived in Saudi Arabia on a CL130 plane full of English Jersey cows, unloaded them, then seemed likely to stay with them for ever because, although I had obtained permission to bring the cows to a remote area of the country, I had forgotten about my own visa. It's

a very long story, but in the end they let me out and I had dinner with the King of Saudi Arabia and the Lord Mayor of London! In truth there was drama and financial and political challenges including terrorism and/or war waiting for me almost everywhere – in Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Egypt, Algeria and other emerging nations. After several years of helping to make the desert blossom and an enforced medical rest, I looked west to the enticing, perhaps calmer, agricultural scene in the United States.

Here, bad timing may have been partly responsible for a rapid series of career experiences. Once more the beginning seemed promising. A year with a small American agricultural company led to my appointment as CEO of University Genetics, a Nasdaq listed public company focused on animal and plant breeding. Then before I could be accused of being solely responsible

**“I wrote a book, ran a café,
worked in a flower, shop,
managed a cattle ranch...”**

for ruining the company, the big stock market crash of October 1987 led to the banks and investors withdrawing support.

I wrote a book, ran a café, worked in a flower shop, managed a cattle ranch, then set up a company to cash in on the trend towards healthy eating by importing double muscled super lean beef cattle from Belgium. This enterprise foundered when a major hamburger company withdrew support. They became convinced that their burgers needed more, not less fat, to keep them intact as their poorly trained staff flipped them carelessly.

Finally, I ended up in Detroit, a city that was as desperate as I was for a sliver of success. The single industry in the city, the manufacture of motor cars, had collapsed, and with it thousands of jobs were being

lost. In Detroit I was able to put my long list of business mistakes to good use by helping Wayne State University establish a business incubator unit housing over 250 start-ups in a massive disused factory that once manufactured Corvette cars. Bizarrely, I had ended up as an educator, a role that gave me enormous satisfaction.

Now retired and back in the UK, I have written a book called *The Wicked Pilgrim* and invested in a company called Headtorch. They are leaders in providing mental health services to businesses to deal with the ever-changing challenges and stresses of the 21st century. If Headtorch had existed back in 1962, I might have had a more conventional career life after Wye. But then, on mature reflection, maybe I would not have had so much fun.



Wye College Agricola Club Annual Dinner

Saturday, September 2nd 2023

**Royal Agricultural University,
Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 6JS**

We hope to welcome a good turnout of members to keep the flag flying for Wye. Everyone who went to Wye is welcome along with your partners. This year in particular we would like to welcome people who graduated in any year ending in a '3' i.e. 1963, 1973, 1983, 1993, 2003. So please encourage your contemporaries to come and get a table together. If you started at Wye in any of these years you might like to celebrate the anniversary of your arrival. Some accommodation is available at the College on a first come, first served basis.

Please see page 136 for more details.

Life after Wye

Andy Lane (1975-78) recounts crossing paths with Wye staff and alumni during his career.

I recently 'retired' and am now an Emeritus Professor of Environmental Systems at The Open University (which means I can do a few things I want to do without wider responsibilities). Between graduating from Wye in 1978 with a 2:1 in my BSc in Plant Sciences and now, Wye – or more correctly folk from Wye – have played a significant and ongoing part in my professional life even though I have not kept in touch with my contemporaries. And that professional life has still involved farming and rural matters to some extent although more of it broadened out to wider environmental matters.

By graduation, I had already been accepted to do a PhD at Imperial College's Field Station at Silwood Park nr Ascot (thus started a love-hate relationship with Imperial due to Imperial's later role in the demise of Wye College). My thesis dealt with pest control decision-making on oilseed rape and marked a shift for me away from the science of pest management to the everyday practice of pest management by farmers and advisors, a trend that continued throughout my research career (more on that later).

Silwood Park gave me my first (time-shifted) link back to Wye. I met my first wife there, and although she was not a Wye alumni, she was working as a research technician for a certain Jeff Waage, who many years later was provost of Wye (2001-04) when it was part of Imperial College.

After getting my PhD, following a short stint with the-then Nature Conservancy Council I became a research fellow and then

lecturer at the Open University (OU) which specialises in open and distance learning, and here I stayed for the rest of my working life. It is through a number of open and distance teaching projects that I have been most in touch with Wye staff and alumni.

One of my first jobs at the OU was to develop some externally-funded study packs on pest and disease management, firstly for oilseed rape and then winter cereals, including teaching texts and video cassettes. The latter involved BBC staff at their OU production centre as at the time the BBC partnership directly supported teaching. Later on, the partnership co-produced general programmes that indirectly supported teaching and contributed to the

OU's mission to provide educational opportunities for all. These study packs did not sell well, with farmers being a hard market to reach educationally, but were part of a wider trend at that time to provide open learning opportunities for agriculture. Indeed, colleagues at the OU produced a short course on health and productivity in dairy cattle with help from

the then Agricultural Training Board and the Royal Veterinary College. Some of this open learning work involved Jeremy Groome (1962-65), thus providing another link back to Wye. I even helped run the dairy cattle course, but it did not last very long as this all happened at the same time milk quotas were introduced and student numbers, which were good to start with, dropped off as farm finances suffered (I even co-authored a paper on these experiences¹). Even so it was taken by several hundred people.

“Between graduating from Wye in 1978 in Plant Sciences and now, folk from Wye have played a significant and ongoing part in my professional life.”

At the same time as working on these packs, I contributed to a regular OU course on food production systems that for part of its life had John McInerny (1957-60) as its external examiner. Such courses have several hundred students per presentation and thus thousands in their lifetime. After that my OU course involvement was more focused on environmental management and the use of system thinking to address complex environmental issues. And part of that work was supported by Michelle Gander (1990-93) who acted as a course manager, making sure that academics like me did everything we were supposed to do to make the course run well for students.

My forays into open learning for agricultural and rural matters did not end with these projects, as with OU colleagues I set up and ran another teaching project on practical conservation for land managers. This was funded by several organisations, including and involving extensive liaison and collaboration with first the Nature Conservancy Council and then one of its successor organisations, English Nature. The project developed six study packs covering site assessment and management planning and five different habitats (woodlands; water and wetlands; grasslands heaths and moors; boundary habitats; and urban habitats). Each study pack comprised a co-published book, video cassette and booklet on relevant legislations and regulations. Over 12 years from 1988 there were over 5,000 sales of the co published books by Hodder and Stoughton and over 3,700 sales of the packs by the University. The materials were bought and used by over 50 further and higher education institutions either as the basis of complete courses or as set books. And the Wye connection? Any course or study pack developed at the OU has to have an external assessor to check that it is suitable for presentation, and in the case of the practical conservation study packs it was Bryn Green, a staff member from 1974 onwards.

I cannot remember if it was through working

with Bryn or by some other route that I was approached by folk from Wye in 1991/2 to help out with the expansion of their new distance teaching masters programme. More properly this was known as the Wye College External Programme, and it was established in 1988 under Ian Carruthers and Henry Bernstein (who was previously at the OU working on a Third World Studies course). While the focus up to that point had been on a business and management programme there was a proposal to launch an environmental management programme. I provided guidance to prospective authors on writing distance teaching materials based on my OU experiences as well as critically reading what they wrote over the following two years for four of the modules that were to be used in the masters programme. There were many authors of these modules amongst Wye staff. Two were still there from my time – Stuart McRae and Paul Burnham – while others came later: Clive Potter, Julie Richardson, Mike Redclift, Graham Woodgate, Jonathan Mitchley, Hadrian Cook, Adrian Wood and Alan Pitkethly. Due to this connection, I also accompanied the then Vice Chancellor of the OU, Sir John Daniels, on an official visit to Wye to discuss mutual interests in distance teaching, although nothing more became of it.

Sadly, that was my last main contact with Wye folk, although I did meet Jeff Waage, Clive Potter and Mike Winter (1974-77) at meetings and conferences over the years as well as one or two people who worked on Wye's External Programme both before and at the time it became the Centre for Development, Environment and Policy of SOAS. One of these was Paul Smith, who worked at both the OU and then Wye. Another was Jon Gregson, who I recently worked with on an environmental science distance teaching project in Myanmar, which was unfortunately cut short by the coup in February 2021.

My agriculturally-related research (my research portfolio covered other

environmental topics including education for sustainable development) did not have any connections with people from Wye that I am aware. I have supervised a number of research students in UK and Ireland covering topics such as 'farmers' attitudes towards information systems and their subsequent behaviour in crop protection', 'farmers' actions and attitudes with respect to agricultural pollution', 'participative approaches to hedgerow management', 'learning how to inform extension practice related to mandatory agri-environmental policy', and 'from knowledge to invention: exploring user innovation in agriculture'. In addition, I was involved in several UK and EC grant-funded research projects such as 'farmers' understandings of genetically modified crops within local communities', 'attitudes to the use of organic waste resources to land', and 'agricultural knowledge: linking farmers, advisors and researchers to boost innovation'. The latter was interesting in that it also involved me in producing a free online course on 'creating innovative agricultural advisory services through a living lab'² that is an evolution of the study packs/short courses I worked on at the start of my career at the OU.

That feels a lifetime's work on its own, but was not all I did, as for a period I was an associate dean then dean of the then Faculty of Technology at the OU, was the founding director of the OU's free leaning platforms OpenLearn³ and OpenLearn

Create (on which the Living Labs course sits) and was involved in several international open and distance education projects. But throughout all this time my formative years at Wye plus the many ongoing projects and contacts with some of its staff and alumni have played a large part in all that I have done since then (I just wish I could say the same about Imperial College, but I still feel they treated Wye very badly by closing it down even if Wye was going through a bad patch at the time. I am sure other options were available.)

And finally, very recently, one of my contemporaries, Richard Dove (1975-78) moved into the next village to where I now live, just proving that connections to Wye are various and long-lasting.

- 1 Lane, A.B., Morris, R.M., and Thompson, S. (1988) Open learning down on the farm, *Open Learning*, 3(1): 29-34, ISSN 0268-0513
- 2 <https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/course/view.php?id=6378>
- 3 <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/>



Wye College Agricola Club

Do you know any Wye College graduates who aren't Agricola Club members?

If they would like to sign up, maintain and make contact with fellow Wye graduates, receive the annual Journal and attend the Annual Dinner, please contact the Agricola Club secretary, James Trounce: secretary@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk

Life after Wye

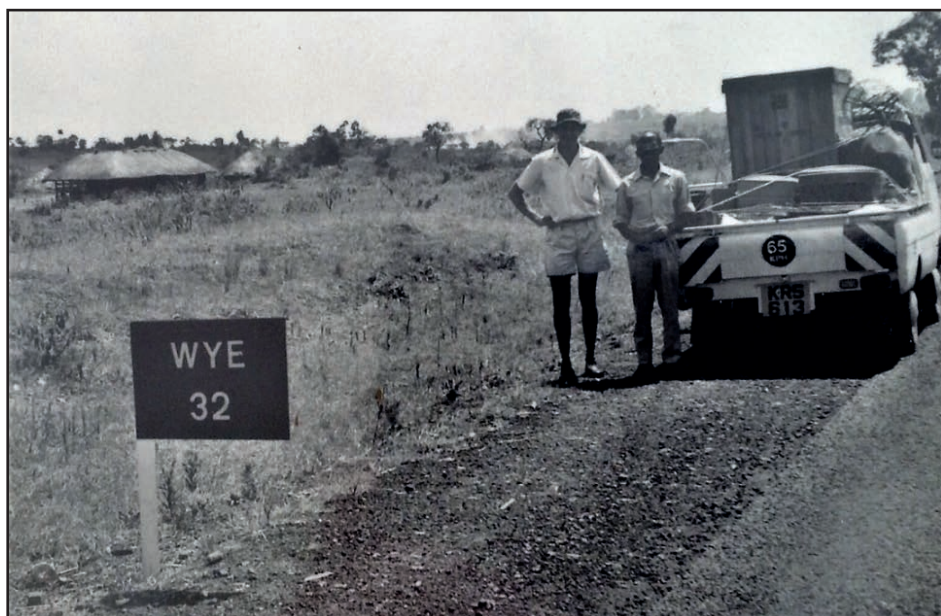
Paul Latham (Wye 1956-59) traces his post-Wye path across Africa.

Looking back 64 years to my time at Wye I'm just grateful that I was able to study there for the Agric. (General) degree. I admit I am not the brightest so had to put in a lot of determined hard work. I think the examiners awarded me the degree out of pity rather than ability! Other than my year's practical on a dairy farm in Cheshire I had had no farming experience when I came to Wye so had a lot to learn.

One of the first things I did on arrival was join the Christian Union. During my year's practical I had become a member of the Salvation Army in Crewe. Stephen Carr, who was at that time with the Church Missionary Society, came to speak at one of the Christian Union meetings and told us of the work he and his wife Anne were doing with farmers in Sudan. I was very interested

in what he said, and it just seemed to click with what I felt I should do when I left Wye.

So, on leaving I first trained as a Salvation Army officer, then went to run a youth club in Nottingham. After a year there I took a Post Graduate Certificate in Education, which I failed, got married to Ena, a wonderful red headed Scottish girl from Perth, and promptly sailed to Capetown! That meant two weeks on the Stirling Castle and a two-day train journey to what was then Salisbury in Southern Rhodesia. Our first home was an old cottage on the Howard Institute compound, about 25 miles from Harare, where I was given the temporary job, while a staff member was on holiday, of teaching English to teachers in training. It was embarrassing to find that



On the road to Kigumba in Uganda with a sunflower oil press.

the students knew far more than me about the finer points of English grammar.

We unpacked and I carefully laid out all my notes taken during lectures at Wye on the cement floor of the spare room in our new home. Over the next few days, we became aware of a continuous crunching noise which we couldn't understand. After several days I happened to lift a file off the top of one of the piles to find the contents had been completely eaten away just leaving the outer cover. Our first experience of termites! So much for all those carefully kept notes!

In 1963 the Salvation Army moved us to Kenya to run a brand-new training centre for farmers near Thika. It was exactly the sort of work I felt I should be doing. Men and women came to the centre for a week's training in growing both subsistence and cash crops (coffee, pineapples and passion fruit) and in livestock (dairy cattle, goats for meat and poultry). The Dept. of Agriculture seconded three experienced staff to do most of the teaching, as I, of course, knew much less about farming in Africa than the farmers that came for the course! Some of the farmers came from new settlement schemes on ex European farms in Murang'a and Machakos Districts in the Central province. Remember this was soon after the country gained independence. Many came from areas where the Mau Mau had been strong, yet we never felt uncomfortable or threatened in any way. After the course the instructors and I would visit farmers on their own land to see how they were progressing. These visits were very special and were made together with local agricultural dept. staff. Often there would be demonstrations on cattle spraying or planting passion fruit to which surrounding farmers would be invited.

At the centre at Thika we tried out a variety of crops and found several that did well. Cape gooseberries, passion fruit, pineapples and oyster nuts (*Telfairea pedata*) all produced good crops. We were able to

export cape gooseberries and pineapples to Germany at a good price which went towards the running costs of the centre as well as demonstrating crops farmers could try out on their farms. Oyster nuts needed a substantial trellis to grow on but produced delicious nuts. They are a traditional African crop which sadly only a few people grow now, though I did find farmers in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania growing them quite successfully. There was considerable interest in beekeeping when a few top bar hives were installed at the centre. African bees may be aggressive for good reason, but they are remarkably free of pests and diseases and produce very good honey.

On one occasion we had a surprise and very welcome visit from Professor Louis Wain. He was a man I had felt very much in awe of at Wye and it was good to be able to show him round.

After about 10 years at the centre Ena and I moved into Nairobi, and I was seconded to the Kenya government to work on village polytechnics (referred to in Andrew Betts' article in the previous Journal). My job was to assist polytechnics throughout the country to run training course in various farming enterprises, particularly vegetable growing and beekeeping. As the salary I now earned was rather more than my allowance from the Salvation Army, I suggested they might like to use the excess to get some flying instruction at Wilson airport, near Nairobi. This would save a good deal of travel time and expense when visiting polytechnics in far flung places. I remember when I first went solo my instructor told me "We don't mind if you don't come back but we certainly don't want to lose the plane". After getting my pilot's licence a friend lent me a Cessna 182 for the princely sum of £4.50 an hour and I was able not only to get to some remote places in Kenya but also into Burundi and Tanzania. I had some great and sometimes hair-raising trips in that machine, some that used to give me nightmares!



Stuck on the road to a project in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Ena and I left Kenya in 1978 and later moved to run an agroforestry and beekeeping programme in the lower Congo, also with the Salvation Army, eventually retiring in 1996 to live in Perthshire near Ena's sister and her family. I have made numerous visits and kept in contact with various agricultural programmes in the Congo since then. These have resulted in publications on bee forage, useful plants and edible caterpillars in the Bas-Congo province. I also took up drystone dyking for farmers around where we live (see separate article) and found it a

fascinating occupation and a great way to meet people around us. It has enabled me to earn money for some of the programmes I work with in Africa.

I look back on my three years at Wye with great fondness, for friends made, for the atmosphere of the place, the quads and that old dark library, and for the surrounding beauty of the Kent countryside. But above all I am thankful for the vision it gave me for working with farmers and young folk in Africa for the past 50 years.

Life after Wye

Geoff Dodgson (1970-73) reflects on the links between his twin career paths since graduation – in farming and the Christian faith.



It is the season of school nativity plays, and I listen to the strains of 'Away in a manger' sung by some angelic voices and some rather discordant reedy ones.

Mary and Joseph stand over a wooden crib, made by some handyman dad, with the baby laying in straw, purloined from one of the parish's farmers.

As I listen, my mind drifts forward a couple of millennia from this replica of Bethlehem and wonder where the new parents from Nazareth would lay their new-born child today?

It's years since I saw a wooden feed trough of any sort in use. Surely today that 'crib' would be stainless or galvanised steel and the Holy Mother would struggle to get the

baby in there due to all the hi-tech stuff used to monitor each beast as it ate its carefully calculated and pre-programmed ration.

And what about the shepherds coming visiting? Would that happen today? What about biosecurity and how would all these folks in the shed not contravene the regulations of one of the many traceability and assurance schemes that cause so much pressure to today's livestock farmers?

Wearing a number of hats, I have been very privileged to see some of the amazing innovation that has been implemented in farming over recent years. Milking robots that report gigabytes of data from every quarter of every cow at every milking. Calf

pens with artificial intelligence that can detect illness or stress up to three days before the most experienced stockman.

In our arable fields, meanwhile, robotic tractors are now working alone commercially and video tech ensures only ripe strawberries are picked and only weeds hoed in fields.

The change that has happened in my lifetime is amazing. But at what cost? Especially in human terms.

I began in farming in my early teens, working alongside gangs of men (yes it was a man's world back then) who recalled their early days with horses and milking pails. That the 'good old days' are behind us is good in many ways. But the camaraderie of those work gangs, which was very special, has also become a thing of the past.

The modern tractor cab with a myriad of screens atop a machine that steers itself straighter than champion ploughman is a very comfy, but a very lonely work place. The efficiency achieved from automation is what has kept food affordable for the nation, but I believe that there is a human cost.

I applaud our farming media who have taken mental health as a serious issue, who have worked hard to convince people to be more open about their feelings. Having had one farmer suicide in my own family, I recognise the lasting scar that such actions leave on those who remain behind.

The rural church is playing its part, particularly with the national network of agricultural chaplains who are to be found at marts up and down the land; and who also regularly visit farms and packhouses. I am proud of the cooperation that exists between the Agricultural Chaplains Association and the Livestock Auctioneers Association to ensure there is a listening ear to hear – in complete confidence – the fears, concerns, and occasional joys, of farming folk.

Chaplains are drawn from faith organisations, but they are not there to try

to convert people into regular attendance. They are trained to listen; to listen carefully and hear matters in complete confidence. They may not have magic wands to solve every problem, but there is much to be said for the old adage of 'a problem shared, is a problem halved'. Also they are usually well networked to the relative charities and organisations providing help in times of need.

Regardless of how up to date our nativity plays are, the rural church of every denomination, continues to thrive. It is not unusual for the country parson to have 5-10% of his parish in church – a far higher proportion than most urban places of worship enjoy.

Enjoy each Christmas season with its carol services, nativity plays and Christingles. And remember, the news of the birth of a Messiah was not announced from a palace. It was first shared with shepherds tending their flocks – ordinary country folk just like readers of *Farmers Guardian* – where this article was first published – and of *Wye*, the Journal of the Wye College Agricola Club.

Revd Geoff Dodgson, FRAgS, is chaplain to the British Guild of Agricultural Journalists, a member of the national steering group for the Agricultural Chaplains Association, and a curate in the Papworth Team Ministry in Cambridgeshire, which serves 15 rural parishes. This article was first published in Farmers Guardian on December 21, 2021, and is reprinted with the magazine's kind permission.

Life after Wye

Moira Morley (nee Warland, Wye 1960-64) looks back at how Wye took her from the city to the country.

Sitting in a warm kitchen on a blustery day on the north Norfolk coast, I am mardling (*Google it if you're not from East Anglia! – Ed*) with a local farmer and thinking how lucky I am. We are going through the rituals involved with fixing his annual grazing rent on the marshes at the bottom of the road. This sounds pretty 'agricultural' but I have followed an unusual career path for an Agricola Club member.

I came up to Wye in October 1960, after farm practice in the Vale of Mersington in Berwickshire (the Tweed Valley), which was a baptism of fire for a London girl. However, this one persevered, entirely in the dairy, with a wonderful, prize-winning herd of Ayrshire cows, hence a love of cattle ever since. Those were the days when women were confined to the dairy on this particular farm (a situation I meekly accepted).

Coming up to Wye for the Honours Agriculture degree was an amazing experience which so bowled me over that I failed the first year (geology and the other physical sciences let me down) but for some reason I was allowed to repeat the year, on campus, which was not a given for everyone. Thereafter, I struggled on and ended with a 2.2, which meant I could not go into cattle research as had been my intention at the beginning. And after three long vacations in research institutes, I realized that this was not my forte, being neither single-minded, focused nor determined!

So what to do? Jeanne Ingram (Soil Sciences) rang me during the summer of 1964, after I'd graduated, to tell me that a vacancy had come up in the local Ashford School for Girls for a teacher of biology and zoology. With no other job prospect, I decided to pursue this, the experience serving me in good stead for subsequent periods of



Discussing management with the voluntary wardens at Barton Broad

unemployment. However, teaching was not what I wanted to do and it was with some relief that a job came up in the Pig Industry Development Authority as an Assistant Economist (this subsequently became the Meat and Livestock Commission, an irony as I am now virtually vegetarian...).

January 1968 saw me boarding a plane for a posting on Lake Geneva, at the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, a turning point in my career progression! Wye's Environmental Sciences degree course had not yet been developed, or I doubt even thought about, but Ecology had been introduced into the Botany syllabus during my time at Wye, through the advent of the late Dr Max Hooper, and had sparked my determination to become involved in nature conservation. So what tremendous luck: the Secretary General at the time I had made a tentative



With Trust Sponsors at a reception at Whiteslea Lodge, Hickling Broad

enquiry about a job in this organisation was an agriculturist from Malaya (Dr Joe Berwick) who was intrigued by my CV that included being bilingual in French, thanks to my education at the French Lycee in London. My role culminated in becoming Executive Officer of the Species Survival Commission, responsible for encouraging and co-ordinating the work of scientists throughout the world working on globally endangered species such as polar bears, wolves, marine turtles, crocodiles, primates, rhinos et al, as well as supporting the work on Red Data Books for birds and for plants (the latter co-ordinated by the late Hugh Syngé, (Wye 1970-73?) who was of course great fun to work with). I was immensely fortunate to have met hundreds of fascinating people and to have travelled around the world during my six years in Switzerland.

In late 1972, my father was dying and I became desperately homesick so I gave in my notice. A rather lean period followed, having

rashly left IUCN without job prospects back home (at least at the time, I thought there were but they came to nothing!). Good old teaching came to the rescue once again (back at my old school, the Lycee in south Kensington), complemented by writing and some extra mural work (as Adult Education was called in those days) at the Universities of London and Southampton.

Then someone mentioned the M.Sc. course in nature conservation at UCL. This intrigued me as I knew a few people who had been through it and thought very highly of it. And those were halcyon days (mid 70s) when even career changes in higher education could be paid for. This was through the Training Opportunities Scheme or TOPS, so full time for a year I attended the Goodge Street laboratories of the UCL Botany Department, and there caught up with Dr Max Hooper! What a terrific year it proved to be – full time and full on! Field work all over the British Isles and Spain, where we

drew up a management plan for the Asturias National Park; intense ecology theory, land management and politics, statistics and on and on, culminating in a full blown thesis, with Max as my supervisor. My subject was island biogeography theory as illustrated by relict chalk grassland sites in southern England – it sounds dry put like that, but was a fascinating subject.

On the strength of this M.Sc. and I guess previous work, I finally landed the job of my dreams – Director of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, the oldest and most prestigious of the country's wildlife trusts, founded in 1926. I was responsible for running the organisation with, at that time, 6,500 acres in 40 nature reserves, 25 full time staff plus part timers, seasonal staff and over 800 volunteers. Fund raising and financial management were major parts of the job, as well as human resource management, but to me the best part of the role was the purchasing of land and tenancy negotiations, the former providing enough adrenalin for any junkie! How close to the wire could we get before we signed the purchase agreement? We always began with nothing and we knew we would probably have to complete contracts before we were sure of raising the full purchase price! A real act of faith.

Once again I was blessed with good timing. The European Union's Land Fund came on stream (set up through the Habitat Directive and the Birds Directive) and we were amongst the first conservation organisations to benefit from funding from this source. Subsequently, Lottery Funding also came on stream.

“Farm practice in the Vale of Mersington in Berwickshire (the Tweed Valley) was a baptism of fire for a London girl”

During this period I met and married my husband, who worked for English Nature. On retirement, around 1992, we set up a European consultancy to assist emerging conservation organisations access funding and support. Some of these were from the 'new' eastern and central

European nations which needed hands on help in approaching the European Union. This was a fascinating period to be involved in these countries.

So this was a slightly different career path from the straight agronomy route that was perhaps the norm for a Wye graduate with a degree in Agriculture, but nonetheless an immensely satisfying one! I am hugely grateful for my Wye experience, including all the tutors I had and friends I made, without whom I would not have had the wonderful life I have had.



Wye College Agricola Club

Do you know any Wye College graduates who aren't Agricola Club members?

If they would like to sign up, maintain and make contact with fellow Wye graduates, receive the annual Journal and attend the Annual Dinner, please contact the Agricola Club secretary, James Trounce: secretary@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk

Life after Wye

Norman Rawlings (1965-68) outlines the path that took him to Wye, and the one he has followed since graduation.

My pre-Wye year was spent in south-west Wales on a dairy farm, where the work was hard and the days long, but the scenery was spectacular, with green rolling hills and sparkling streams. I learned so much with the wonderful farm family that hosted me.

In 1965 I travelled to Wye to study for my undergraduate degree in agriculture, and enjoyed excellent basic and applied teaching in a small college set in a quiet village and beautiful countryside. It was a time of many great experiences: new friends, getting dunked in cold water the first night in college, bonfires on the hill above the crown, formal dinners, living on the top floor of the Kings Head my last two years and, of course, being fed at the Wye café. Dr George Pegg, my student adviser, had recently spent time on sabbatical at the University of Wisconsin and he encouraged me to do graduate work in the USA.

In the fall of 1968, I travelled to Michigan State University to pursue a master's degree in the Department of Dairy Science in the College of Agriculture, leaving my fiancé, Jean, at home in the UK. At that time, it seemed I was almost the only English student in the graduate student dormitory, and my accent was a novelty to my American colleagues! There was more course work and my first experience of multiple-choice exam questions. My introduction to research was exciting and I wrote my first thesis. All in all, an amazing learning experience at MSU with my supervisor, Dr Harold Hafs. Midway through my master's program I returned to England for a couple of months to get married, bringing my new wife, Jean, back to Michigan. After completion of our time at MSU we returned to England flying first class due to a ticket mix-up; we had no complaints!

The next three years were spent in the veterinary faculty of the University of Liverpool out on the Wirral in west Cheshire, working on a PhD program. More amazing countryside and new and exciting research opportunities followed with Professor RJ Fitzpatrick and Dr Bob Ward, coupled with fascinating studies on parturition in sheep and goats. During this time Jean worked in Liverpool at a group of hospitals in her profession as a speech therapist. Our travels did not end at Liverpool, though: with PhD in hand, we jetted off to Clemson University in South Carolina where I completed a two-year post-doctoral fellowship with Dr Don Henricks and his colleagues in the College of Agriculture, my primary assignment being studies of induced calving.

When we got to Clemson, we thought we were moving into a furnished home, but upon opening the door we didn't see a single stick of furniture! However, even with little money we soon assembled an eclectic mix of used, borrowed and new furnishings! Despite this complication we were as happy as clams and our first son was born in South Carolina. The state was beautiful and we lived in a park like area, enjoying the warm weather that could sometimes be broken by rain so hard you couldn't see the other side of the road!

Two years passed quickly, and in 1975 we drove all the way up to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada for my first job – assistant professor in veterinary physiological sciences at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM), University of Saskatchewan. It was a privilege and blessing to be able to teach physiology and endocrinology to veterinary and animal science undergraduate and graduate students. I was also able to

develop a well-funded research program and supervise over 40 masters and PhD students to completion of their degrees. With my students we published over 150 peer-reviewed research based scientific papers. Being involved with administration at all levels of our university was also a great experience. Over my 35 years at the WCVI I progressed to full professor and over the last eight years served as associate dean for research and graduate studies. A fulfilling and enjoyable career.

Temperatures in Saskatoon can range from minus 35 degrees centigrade in winter to plus 35 in the summer, but we have the greatest number of sunlight hours in North America. Over the years we have travelled into many areas of Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific shores, across what is a massive country of outstanding grandeur and scenery. With its huge lakes, boreal forest and wildlife, we love to spend time in Prince Albert National Park in our own province. We often drive out to the

Canadian Rockies (just a seven-hour drive away) and Vancouver Island (a mere 18-hour drive, including a ferry ride). Our three younger children were all born in Saskatoon, and we have eight grandchildren.

In 2010 I retired (or 'refired') from the WCVI and we were able to focus more on our local church and writing. In 2016 we became ordained volunteer assistant pastors. Since retirement we have published two books: 'On the Way: Basic Christian Training' (www.westbowpress.com; 2014) and 'The Life Changing Light Of God's Word: A 366 Day Devotional' (www.christianfaithpublishing.com; 2022). We give God all the glory and thanks for our amazing lives so far and the best is yet to come! Where will it be next?



Wye College Agricola Club Annual Dinner

Saturday, September 2nd 2023

**Royal Agricultural University,
Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 6JS**

We hope to welcome a good turnout of members to keep the flag flying for Wye. Everyone who went to Wye is welcome along with your partners. This year in particular we would like to welcome people who graduated in any year ending in a '3' i.e. 1963, 1973, 1983, 1993, 2003. So please encourage your contemporaries to come and get a table together. If you started at Wye in any of these years you might like to celebrate the anniversary of your arrival. Some accommodation is available at the College on a first come, first served basis.

Please see page 136 for more details.

Life after Wye

Chris Baines (Wye 1966-69) recalls how his time at Wye studying horticulture led to him becoming a published author with a book that has been continuously in print for almost 40 years – and is now available in a freshly designed and expanded edition.

I grew up in Sheffield, with parents who were passionate ramblers and gardeners. My earliest memories are of being carried shoulder-high through the heather moorland of the Peak District, or the streamside woodland of the Rivelin Valley. My dad was a schoolteacher of the “nature table” variety, and my mum had the greenest of green fingers. By the age of twelve I was growing alpine rockery plants for sale at the garden gate. Hardly surprising, then, that I left school with an ambition to study horticulture and then to teach rural studies.

My time at Wye was wonderful in every respect – except the horticulture. I loved the soft southern landscape, revelled in the social life and the student politics, but was shocked to find that horticultural (and agricultural) education in the 1960s focussed almost entirely on learning how to kill things. Although Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* was already beginning to stir consciences internationally, at Wye there was more excitement about the emergence of new poisonous chemicals and bigger machines. Any idea that wildlife could be anything other than a pest, a disease or a weed was pretty well-hidden, to say the least.

It took several years for me to realise that horticulture could mean working with nature, rather than against it. I worked in garden design and contracting at a time when evergreen groundcover was all the craze. The magic of the changing seasons was being suppressed, and as I moved into larger housing developments their landscapes varied very little from January to July. I worked in the deserts of the Middle East, and although I



enjoyed discovering the ecological intrigues of wild and arid landscapes, and the ability of native plant life to adapt and prosper, my task was generally to suppress the desert ecosystem, add irrigation and conjure up a Mediterranean pastiche. All this was challenging, even exciting for a young hortic, but it felt increasingly inappropriate.

Throughout that time I gardened personally, the way my mum and dad had gardened, always looking forward to the subtle changing seasons, and gaining as much pleasure from the birdsong and the butterflies as the flowers and the fruit. By the mid-70s I was

teaching part-time postgraduate landscape students, and it was some of them who pricked my environmental conscience. They were members of Friends of the Earth, community activists, and keen to share their concerns about the indiscriminate use of pesticides and herbicides. Organic gardening was in its infancy, but there was increasing scientific evidence of the link between agrochemicals and the loss of wildlife – the very thing that Rachel Carson had predicted. The Soil Association and the Henry Double Day Research Association (now Garden Organic) were attracting attention, research and popular membership. The two TV Davids – Attenborough and Bellamy – were fuelling the public's love of wildlife through their documentaries. The time seemed right for a gentle gardening revolution.

My environmental work with community groups gave me an opportunity to host a small strand of items on daytime TV. Birmingham's BBC studios at Pebble Mill provided me with a modest patch of ground where I could begin to encourage viewers to grow wildflowers, put up nest boxes, feed the garden birds, and generally give a nudge to nature. I shared the weekly gardening slot on Pebble Mill at One with two well-established heavyweights – Peter Seabrook and Alan Titchmarsh – and although they were bemused by this long haired and bearded wild man, in 1979 Peter invited me to design one of two garden makeovers for BBC Gardeners' World, on a new-build housing estate in Peterborough. This was almost 20 years ahead of Mr T's highly successful 'Groundforce', and I chose to create something I called a Rich Habitat Garden. The very traditional Peter Seabrook was genuinely horrified, but the viewing public loved it. I produced a simple set of wildlife gardening guidelines and thousands of Gardeners' World viewers requested copies. Decades later, when the long-running series celebrated its 50th birthday, a clip from that programme was included as a British gardening landmark.

1985 was a major turning point for me and for

wildlife gardening. I had persuaded the BBC's continuing education unit – a backwater of the corporation with no money, no profile, but thankfully with very little scrutiny, that I could transform my bland new suburban garden in the Midlands into a wildlife wonderland within a twelve-month cycle. The commitment to a year of occasional filming, based entirely on my optimism and persuasiveness, was a huge act of faith, but by Spring 1985 the film was "in the can". I had originally wanted to call the programme "Great Tits and Bumblebees", but at the eleventh hour the BBC mandarins spotted the inuendo, and it was broadcast under the slightly less risqué title "Bluetits and Bumblebees".

In the same year I succeeded in being allocated a garden design plot at Chelsea Flower Show. I had been visiting since my Wye student days, and in the early 70s I had even designed a Bonsai display in the main marquee, so I guess I was already on the approved RHS exhibitor list. The small corner of the Chelsea playing field earmarked for me was a very blank canvas with two sides for public viewing. I inherited a football pitch white line where the corner flag would normally stand, and a young horse chestnut tree that needed to be accommodated. I had no sponsorship and grew most of the plants myself, since nursery-grown wildflowers were simply unavailable commercially in 1985. I traded weed-free plugs of turf with the surrounding garden designers, to give my own lawn a healthy population of daisies. Daisies at Chelsea? They thought I was mad.

The set-up week for the flower show is frantic, but I had lots of generous encouragement and support. The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers turned up to dig my wildlife pond. I salvaged flowering foxgloves from David Austin Roses, and nicotiana bedding plants from Birmingham city council. In both cases the plants had been rejected because "something had nibbled the leaves." What could be more perfect for a wildlife garden. I had a special delivery of professionally grown lawn weeds courtesy of the Oxford

Weed Research Organisation, and I even had a seal of approval from a pair of blue tits that moved into my single nest box and were busy nest building when the viewing public arrived.

The judging day is nerve-wracking, and I heard years later from the National Trust's John Sales, a member of the panel, that they really didn't know what to make of my contribution. It was so different from anything else at Chelsea. John graciously admitted that they completely failed to recognise the lasting influence this very first Chelsea wildlife garden would have. The panel kindly awarded the garden a Silver-Flora medal – effectively an honourable mention. Much more significant was the medal itself. The RHS was clearly so confused by the juxtaposition of the words wildlife, and garden, that their inscription reads "To J C Baines for a WILDFIRE garden." Priceless! I treasure the error!

My book 'How to Make a Wildlife Garden' was published in Chelsea week and launched on my cowslip and daisy lawn. I was greeted by the press as Chelsea 85's "enfant terrible" – a bit rich at almost 40, but it provided welcome publicity at the time, and the book shot straight into the non-fiction top ten best sellers. I even managed to create a wildlife garden window display for Harrods – surely a first! The original publisher was Elm Tree. Its founder Kyle Cathie was almost as new to the field as I was. She was thrilled and took me for a posh lunch in Covent Garden to celebrate – something that has never happened to me since!

The book has been continuously in print for almost 40 years, and now a freshly designed and expanded edition is being published as an RHS gardening classic. That is quite a journey for the book itself, but it has been quite a journey for the Royal Horticultural Society, for gardening and for gardeners too. The new edition has given me the opportunity to review some of that journey. There have been wildlife winners and losers over the decades. Goldfinches that were rural rarities in the 1980s are now feeding in charms of twenty or thirty on garden feeders. By contrast migrant

insectivores such as the spotted flycatcher have suffered a catastrophic decline in gardens and throughout the countryside. Rachel Carson was not wrong!

The book has also given me a chance to write about the far wider potential for habitat enhancement and nature recovery across the British landscape and in shallow coastal waters. In 1985 the final chapter – over the garden wall – encouraged readers to take an interest in the immediate neighbourhood as the wildlife generator for their "garden glade in the urban forest". A couple of years later my book and TV series *The Wild Side of Town* reinforced that message. Now, in the face of climate change and continuing wildlife loss, at last the need for landscape restoration, habitat creation and nature recovery is being recognised for the whole landscape. The need for a bold and sustainable change of direction was confirmed by the United Nations in the 2022 COP 15 commitment to managing 30% of the Earth's surface (land and sea) with biodiversity as a priority. The UK conservation charities are all pursuing joined-up landscape strategies. The RSPB's *Futurescapes* programme, the Wildlife Trusts' *Living Landscapes*, the National Trust's *Riverlands* and others are all committed to restoring broad landscape integrity and applying ecological understanding to the task of bringing back our lost wildlife. Wildlife gardening on a very large scale.

Hardly a week goes by without someone greeting me with a well-worn copy of that 1985 first edition, a memory of their viewing of Bluetits and Bumblebees or an anecdote about the pleasure their family has gained from the wildlife on their doorstep. The young gardeners that were inspired by my Chelsea garden and the first edition of the book are now old-stagers. What I hope is that the latest expanded edition will help to encourage a whole new generation to see gardening as a way of celebrating the seasons, enjoying wildlife on the doorstep and campaigning for long-lasting nature recovery.

Life before Wye

Stephen Moss (Wye 1969-72) recalls the joys of livestock farming in Somerset during the late 1960s, and reflects on how the experience – and a Wye College degree – set him up for a career...in weed research

Before studying for my BSc degree in agriculture at Wye, I spent a year from 1968-69 on a farm in Somerset, my diary and report from which, running to well over 100 pages, was handed over for posterity to the Wye Heritage Centre on 30 November last year (see photo). It had languished, neglected and unread, in my attic for decades, only surfacing when moving house, or during even rarer 'attic sort-outs'. I only recently read it from cover to cover again and was impressed by the amount of detail I dutifully recorded. I was evidently not the only one impressed, as it was graded 'A' in each of the five categories when submitted at the start of my course at Wye. And of course, I like to think that those were the days when an 'A' actually meant something....

The farm was Elborough Farm, Locking, near Weston-Super-Mare, and comprised 450 acres (those were the units then) with fields ranging from poorly drained flat clay lowland 15 feet above sea level to rough limestone hill grazing on Bleadon Hill at over 300 feet. It was a fairly typical mixed farm of the time, with a 100-cow dairy herd, both intensive (yarded barley-fed) and extensive (grazed) beef enterprises, a mixed sheep flock of about 100 ewes and 50 acres of barley and some kale. Calves were reared both as replacements for the dairy herd and for the beef enterprise. Both silage and hay were made and fields comprised both permanent pasture and short-term sown leys. The farmed area had once been five separate smaller farms with the land about half owned by the farmer, Mr Alan Stephens, with the other half consisting of rented fields.



Francis Huntingdon receives the practical year farm report from Stephen Moss (1969-72) on 30 November 2022 at the Wye Heritage Centre in the Latin School.

A staff complement of five (farmer plus four workers) on 450 acres sounds excessive now, although quite a lot of contract work was done – mainly ploughing, haymaking and manure spreading. Not coming from a farming background (both my parents were teachers), I recognise now that the range of enterprises meant it was a good farm on which to gain experience. Not everything was done to the best standard at the time, but it was instructive to see Mr Stephens adopting more progressive techniques to try to improve the financial performance of the farm. Milk yields averaged a modest 850 gallons per cow but the plan was to move to a pure Friesian herd by phasing out the older dairy Shorthorns and replacing these with Friesian heifers. Also planned was a more structured paddock grazing system and using wilted grass for silage making to replace the direct cutting system used

Assessment of Farm Reports

Name of student *Stephen Hogg*

Experience in (county or country) *Somerset*

Duration of experience *1 1/2 years*

Score (A, B, C, or D) *A*

1. Description of farm situation *A*

2. Technical information *A*

3. Evidence that the student has benefitted *A*

4. Presentation *A*

5. Overall assessment *A*

your own way to day duties. If you are working establishment or research station you should note growing plants, propagation and controls in use.

Evidence that it is a 'good un'!

during my practical year. One innovation I noted was the idea of applying fertiliser immediately *prior* to grazing fields, rather than after. Is this standard practice now, I wonder? The inefficient 8-stall/6-unit abreast milking parlour was converted into a 14/7 unit towards the end of my year. Sadly, the bulk milk tank only arrived after I had left, so I had a full year's experience of laboriously moving 10-gallon milk churns to and from the main road for collection. I became quite expert at moving full churns by tilting and rolling them, and although I don't recall ever spilling one, there were a few near misses!

My report and diary, all hand-written of course, includes maps of all fields, plans of buildings, diagrams of equipment, numerous photos, detailed graphs of milk production and tables of all calving and AI records. I note cryptic comments on the milk yield graphs alongside dips in output, such as 'not fed enough silage', 'rejection of grass', 'disturbed after PD' etc. Although

not recorded in my report, the numbers of the 'parlour kickers' are ingrained in my memory - the heifers 91 and 93 especially. But old number 76 cow was the worst as she lulled you into a false sense of security by behaving impeccably for days on end before lashing out particularly viciously when you turned your back. It was with some pleasure I saw her carted off to the knackers!

The physicality of the work is all too evident from the report. These were the days of fertiliser in 1 cwt bags, all lifted solo into the fertilizer spreader, small (but heavy) bales of hay that had to be heaved with a pitchfork when stacking trailers and no forklift to help with any unloading jobs. God, I was fit by the end of the year!

One aspect I had forgotten, until I re-read my report, was the number of animals that died during my practical year. I hasten to say that I am confident none of these deaths could be directly attributed to my actions, although maybe it was fortunate that my subsequent research career was in the arable sector. Over 20 calves died and it took a long time to determine that *Salmonella* was to blame. I note one cryptic entry in my diary: '11 Dec 1968: As a last resort, the sick calf was given a local Somerset remedy of cider + salt + glucose + bicarbonate of soda. However, after this drench had been given the calf died.' Sadly, no magic cure there. I also soon learnt that many sheep have a death wish and recall pulling drowned corpses of several ewes and a ram out of ditches. That's farming, as they say. At least the local hunt kennels benefited.

So, what will become of my comprehensive and detailed report of a year spent on a Somerset mixed farm in the late 1960s? Probably nothing, but maybe, just maybe, it will emulate a diary written originally a hundred years previously, namely 'A Victorian Farmer's Diary: William Hodkin's Diary 1864-66: Life in and Around Beeley on the Chatsworth Estate'. It was published in 2003 by Derbyshire County Council, is still obtainable and is an interesting read.

Postscript: I do think my career as an applied weed research scientist benefited greatly from the invaluable 'hands on' experience gained during my practical year and vacation farm work, as well as the degree course at Wye. I have written in a previous *Agricola Club Journal* article (*XIX*, 2020-21, pages 132-136) about the catastrophic loss of independent applied agricultural research capacity since the 1980s. It is of concern that some 'world-renowned agricultural research institutions' now have so few scientific staff with any formal agricultural qualifications or direct experience. I cannot help but reflect that this may explain why an increasing number of research papers in prestigious journals are naïve and of little or no practical relevance. It may also help

explain why average wheat yields increased by 59% during the 20 years from the late '70s (1975-1980 mean = 4.63 t/ha) to the late '90s (1995-2000 mean = 7.37 t/ha) but, in the subsequent 20 years, increased by a mere 2% to 7.53 t/ha (2015-2020 mean). One might well ask when the recent advances in rapid plant breeding techniques, so often promoted by such institutions, will actually deliver increased yields on farm, rather than simply deliver yet more research papers. Or as Stephen Carr, Sussex farmer and long-time contributor to the farming press, put it: 'Every year, new cereal varieties are launched in a fanfare of publicity, but every year yields remain stubbornly the same.' Why?



Plan of the farm

Life before Wye

Andrew Blake (1964-67) recalls some of his least-favourite farm tasks in his pre-Wye years.

In my mid-teens during school holidays I sometimes worked in a builders' merchant's yard where much lorry loading and unloading was done by hand. One of the nastiest jobs involved carrying hundredweight paper sacks of cement, delivered still almost too hot to touch, on my back and into store. Little did I realise what awaited me in my chosen agricultural career.

Leaving aside the mental angst of the then comparatively straightforward paperwork of my farm management days, it is the practical tasks that bring back the most unwelcome memories. One of the first came during my pre-college practical year. Assigned to the grain store, I was given the job of bagging dried grain into 1.5cwt sacks, hauling them onto an electric sack lift and then back-packing them onto a stack two- and sometimes three-high, depending on how pushed we were for temporary storage.

The weight was just about tolerable, but the constant itching from barley awns poking through the hessian barely so. And it didn't help knowing that the whole exercise would have to be repeated when we transferred the sacks by trailer to their final resting place, which included hard-to-reach obsolete calf pens and other small buildings. Similar sheds were often used in summer to store small bales of hay and straw. The challenge of cramming the last ones into the eaves when the fresh air supply had been almost blocked off and the heat from the roof had become intense certainly made me question the decision of my wisdom to go farming.

Outside, things were often little better. One

summer's day, the temperature soared while I was hand-stacking hay bales into eights in a field far away from the farm buildings. I'd emptied my water bottle within the first hour or so of an all-afternoon stint and there were no other supplies. I soon reached the point where I could think of nothing but ice-cold drinks, and would readily have given my week's wages (about £4, and remember this was in the 1960s) for a can of coke.

At the other extreme I have equally disagreeable memories. Before college I used to relief milk twice a week. But having softened my dry-skinned hands on the

cows' udders, I then had to centure forth to cut kale for them – a job that, despite gloves and lashings of creamy unguents, left my fingers with a mass of cracks.

The farmer's intentions had been to forage-harvest the crop, but unfortunately it grew too lush and lodged.

It was a young colleague and I who then got the task of cutting it by hand, laying it in rows and then loading it, again by hand, onto a trailer. And because this was during the severe winter of 1963-64, most of the crop was buried in at least a foot of snow, so we had to find it first!

After graduating from Wye, struggling to wrestle grubbed hop plants from frozen land was another unhappy memory, and the cause of yet more chapped hands. So too was trying to thaw iced-up water supplies to our sheep after the shepherd had cleverly routed all the unlagged alkathene pipes in the air above the lambing pens.

“After graduating from Wye, struggling to wrestle grubbed hop plants from frozen land was another unhappy memory...”

The relentless physical effort needed to keep an old-fashioned potato riddle supplied using a hand fork, and to ensure the hop-picking machine conveyor remained full, will long be remembered. And it is hard to forget the many 'happy' days spent mucking out calf pens, cleaning grain elevator pits, sweeping silo walls, and emptying the slurry lagoon, all of which in those days required at least an element of 'hands-on' work with materials most people would run a mile to avoid. Another non-favourite was winding out the weekly accumulations of droppings from the battery hen houses. Nine times out of ten the backing paper would tear prematurely, leading to some inevitable muck-dosing.

But the job I'd least like to return to involved hops yet again. The picking machine stood over a pit, much like those found in garages but only about three feet deep. During the three-week harvest, this pit filled up with all sorts of things apart from bits of hop plants from the gardens, so by the time picking was over it contained a seething mass of rotting vegetation and insects, mainly aphids and ladybird larvae, but also flies and bluebottles attracted by the heat and smell. Clearing it all out was a foul, slow job that involved filling buckets by hand and passing them up to colleagues through

the few odd gaps between the machinery above. It was impossible to stand upright, and kneeling risked getting covered in the ooze seeping from the stinking mass. With hindsight I suppose it would have been sensible to have cleared the pit occasionally during picking or maybe even to have installed a removal conveyor. But hop-picking was probably hectic enough already, and the cost of a conveyor hardly justified.

I've had my share of difficult calvings and lambings, as well as disbuddings, castrations, taggings, dosings and foot trimmings. But I'm conscious that few of the mini-horrors I've recounted involve animals. I'm sure there are plenty of livestock farmers with tales of tasks they'd prefer to forget – but for me it has to be the hops!

This article was first published by Farmers Weekly in August 2007. It is printed here with their kind permission.

“I’m sure there are plenty of livestock farmers with tales of tasks they’d prefer to forget – but for me it has to be the hops!”



Wye College Agricola Club

Do you know any Wye College graduates who aren't Agricola Club members?

If they would like to sign up, maintain and make contact with fellow Wye graduates, receive the annual Journal and attend the Annual Dinner, please contact the Agricola Club secretary, James Trounce: secretary@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk

Levelling Up – and Down – at Wye

Michael Payne (1978-81) details the history of a crossing that everyone familiar with Wye will have made.

For anyone visiting Wye College from the north-west before 1846 the main obstacle was the Great Stour. This had been bridged in stone in the seventeenth century, in turn replacing a bridge of wooden construction. In 1881 its stone parapet was apparently removed on one side and a Victorian iron roadway constructed to reinforce the original stone structure. More recently this was restored this century.

The first plan for a station near Wye was when, in 1812, John Rennie the elder proposed building a canal to connect the River Medway in Kent with the River Rother in East Sussex, with a tramway connecting Wye to the canal. This idea was eventually abandoned in favour of through railways and the line from Ashford to Canterbury was approved by Parliament in

1844.

This railway itself was designed by Joseph Cubitt and constructed by Messrs. Miller & Blackie of Liverpool. The station was opened, along with the rest of the line from Ashford to Canterbury West, by the South Eastern Railway on 6 February 1846. A train with eighteen carriages pulled by the locomotives Mars & Orion drove through Kent having left London at ten o'clock that morning.

The Tudor-style station at Wye was constructed in red brick with stone window dressings. It was built on the Ashford-bound platform next to a level crossing with the main road, which avoided the cost of constructing a bridge or tunnel. Parliament even approved a fine of five pounds for the directors of the



company if road traffic was kept waiting for more than five minutes at the level crossing at Wye! A level crossing was also used on the grounds that Parliament believed trains would not be frequent!

As the platform was short, third-class passengers had to dismount onto a box. Students returning to the College from the station were told to progress quietly not to disturb the residents in Bridge Street!

A crane for goods traffic was installed in 1852 and the station began serving local gravel goods traffic in 1919. Freight facilities, however, were closed on 10 June 1963. The platforms themselves were connected by a concrete footbridge in 1960. This was replaced with a forty-one-foot steel footbridge in 2015.

On the opposite side of the level crossing a separate station was apparently opened in March 1882 to serve the racecourse. This was closed in May 1974 after the last horse racing meeting and subsequently demolished. On racedays there was a stall by the gatehouse cottage which sold jellied eels and whelks to the racegoers.

So it was that in 1846 this new obstacle, a level crossing, was placed in the way of the intrepid visitor to Wye. For countless students and staff alike, the timing of the closure of these level crossing gates meant delays in both reaching the College and exiting Wye itself via the main thoroughfare to Ashford and beyond. Apart from safety the gates did serve another practical purpose, namely speedier access to Wye College and the village from Canterbury, London and in turn the rest of the country by train.

The advantage of this access by train would have of course been greater in the past, particularly in the nineteenth century. As time has gone by this benefit has arguably been outweighed by the disbenefit to the approaching motorist, particularly as the individual freedom to roam increased with the advent of greater car ownership by both residents and students alike.

The crossing gates were manually operated from a locking frame set to the southern end

of the western platform, so there was a well-choreographed pattern whereby the crossing gate keeper (usually but not always a man) would cross the line before unlocking the gates and opening them one at a time to the approaching trains.

As trains do not all travel at the same speed, depending on whether they are stopping or not, and if they are timetabled to approach from either direction at different times, this could amount to considerable time delay before reopening the gates to traffic. It appeared that there were certain times of the hour and certain times of the day when you simply knew you would be delayed reaching your destination to or from Wye!

But alas, after one hundred and seventy-six years of inconvenience to anyone other than a train traveler, it was decided that 2022 was the year that the friendly face of the level crossing keeper at Wye would be consigned to the history books (or at least the chance of a mention in the hallowed pages of *The Journal*)! For all the recent strikes by members of the railway trade unions regarding pay and working practices, the union representing crossing keepers appears to have been remarkably quiet. Surely there were still more crossing keepers left than there are firemen in ASLEF!

Hence the concrete pillars supporting their greater red spotted gates are no more. In their place, two full sets of half barriers which, like their red flashing lights, are now remotely controlled. The upshot of all this expenditure, apart from an apparent reduction in staffing at Wye Station, which is seen as safer by those in the know, is that instead of being held up at the level crossing gates, visitors by road to and from Wye will now only have to wait for trains so long as the barriers are down. Whether this investment is seen as levelling up the south with the north rather than the other way round I'll leave others to decide. Either way, whilst waiting for the barriers to reopen please remember to switch off your engine for the benefit of others living nearby or also in the queue!

The story of Wye College Maize Unit

Graham Milbourn (Staff 1961-77), who lectured in crop production at Wye, recounts the research carried out at the college into maize as a viable grain crop during the early days of its commercial cultivation in the UK.



In the 1950s and 60s, the production of maize as a grain crop spread rapidly through northern France, helped by the development of earlier varieties. At that time, UK cereals, particularly in the south and east of England, were suffering yield limitations due to an absence of break crops, and grain maize offered features to potentially fill the gap.

On the plus side, maize, being a different species, is resistant to many fungal diseases that occur in wheat, especially take-all and eyespot. Its labour peaks at sowing and harvest are later and the increasing scourge of blackgrass could be suppressed by maize herbicide and the shading of the crop.

What was less known were the agronomy requirements and the likely yield levels at our latitude. Then there was a need to address the challenges of harvesting and drying the grain (which could be 35% moisture) and to assess the economic position. Wye was the obvious place to carry out trials.

After a couple of crops had been grown on the College farm, there was sufficient interest the potential of maize that funding

was awarded in 1969 by the Home-Grown Cereals Authority to set up Wye College Maize Unit. This was led by me, supported by two agronomists, Dr Michael Carr and Dr Gordon Tiley, who had both worked in East Africa. We were later joined by Dr Victor Breeze.

Additional members of the College staff also contributed to the project from their own disciplines. They included Bob Bell, Malcolm Wilkes and Ivan Warboys from the mechanization side, J. Donald Sykes and Paul Hill from economics, and farm management staff including Francis Huntington, farm manager, who provided facilities on the College Farm for experiments, machinery demonstrations and open days, and was also chairman of Canterbury Maize Growers Ltd.

Quite soon, about 120 farmers from across southern and eastern England had formed into local groups (such as Canterbury Maize Growers) so they could co-operate in harvesting the crop and in using large driers.



Agronomy

Field trials were carried out on 11 sites in farmers' crops from Lincolnshire to Dorset over the six years from 1969 to 1975, allowing data on yield levels, optimum plant population, fertiliser levels and more to be obtained. To keep the farmers up to date they were sent regular newsletters with results and also three editions of a Maize Grower's Handbook were produced. Some results were also published in scientific journals, and presented at a maize symposium in Iowa, USA. The important effects were shown of early soil temperatures – in addition to the air temperature – on the growth of the apical meristem, with benefits that continue until maturity. Factors affecting early soil temperature were shelter from wind, aspect of the field, and colour and lightness of the soil.

Mechanisation

One of the disadvantages of combining maize is the cost of a cob-picking attachment

for the combine. The Mechanisation Department at Wye designed a simple 'Wye Maize Header' in the farm workshop, which could be produced at a tenth of the cost of a manufactured header, giving the farmer independence when harvesting. Simple row dividers were fitted to the cutting table, with a slower rotating reel to sweep the crop onto the cutting table. Trials were also carried out to assess the capacity and performance of different types of farm driers for wet maize.

We also received very generous support from manufacturers. RHM Agriculture donated a three row cob picking attachment from the continent, and Harvestore erected an ensilage tower at Silks Farm.

This conserved wet ground ear maize, an alternative preservation method, and it was used in beef feeding trials by Dr R C Campling in the Animal Production Dept. Also on loan were a cob picking attachment from Claas, a cob sheller from Ransomes and equipment from BP Chemicals to assess



an alternative preservation method for the wet grain using propionic acid.

Economics

Surveys with farmers were carried out from 1969 -1973. The average dry grain yield in the grower groups was 4.0t/ha, with a gross margin of £66/ha. This compared with the gross margin for barley on these farms of £101/ha at the time. In the favourable year of 1973 the average grain yield was 5.4 t/ha, which produced a gross margin above that for barley.

Conclusion

Funding for the Maize Unit came to an end in 1976, but the staff all moved on to new challenges. Michael Carr moved to Silsoe College, and later became Professor of Water Management, while Gordon Tiley became an agronomy adviser at the West of Scotland College of Agriculture, and Victor Breeze went to Long Ashton Research Station. Francis Huntington later became farm director at Dartington Hall, Devon, while I moved to the School of Agriculture at Edinburgh University to the Chair in Crop Production.

To mark the end of the Maize Unit, a two-day symposium was organised at Withersdane, entitled 'Maize in a Temperate Climate'. It was contributed to, and well attended by, agriculturalists from across Europe and even from Canada.

So why was it grain maize did not take off? Variability in yields affected by unreliable weather was one issue, while others included the need for the requisite drying facilities and harvesting machinery. However, the overriding factor was the arrival of oilseed rape as an alternative break. It soon became a main arable crop in the UK, with high returns and relatively low levels of risk. Today, around 400,000ha of OSR are grown here annually.

While maize grown for grain may not have taken off here, though, maize for ensilage for livestock feed expanded rapidly, and the



agronomy findings from the Maize Unit had useful applications as the crop became a successful and important UK ruminant feed – another lasting legacy of work done at Wye.

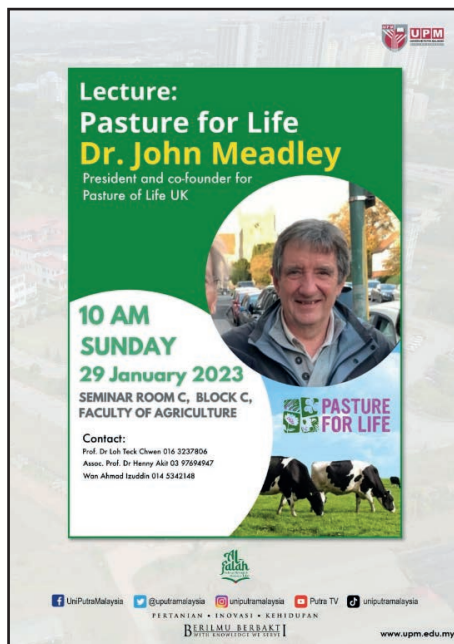
To Malaysia – and beyond

John Meadley (Wye 1965-68) tells of a trip taken earlier this year to some familiar territory.

In January this year I found myself in Penang, Malaysia, with my wife Fiona and my son Tom. I had not been there since well before lockdown, and we were visiting Fiona's Mum and extended family for Chinese New Year – or Lunar New Year – the year of the Rabbit. I soon learnt that celebrating Chinese New Year with members of the Chinese diaspora is a wonderful but exhausting experience involving lots of reunions, food and fireworks. For family reasons I took a detour to Laos and was delighted to catch up with Mike Boddington (staff 1967-72). We had not met since 2010, at a ceremony where he was awarded the MBE for services to disabled people in south-east Asia.

On our way home from Penang we stayed for a few days in Kuala Lumpur to meet more extended family and for me to catch up with Syed Jalaludin. We did our postgraduate studies together at Wye in the 1960s and we both lodged in the Old Vic. On returning to Malaysia, after completing his postgraduate studies on Energy Metabolism in Poultry, Syed joined the staff of the Faculty of Agriculture, Universiti Malaya and later Universiti Putra Malaysia (Agricultural University) – becoming its Vice-Chancellor in 1994 (until 2001). He has since been awarded seven Honorary Doctorate Degrees (in the UK, Japan, Thailand [2] and Malaysia [3]). His formal title (Tan Sri) is the equivalent of 'Lord' in the UK. He has been the chair of two banks and of the Halal Commission and continues to sit on several boards. Despite these elevated responsibilities he remains intensely human and with a strong sense of humour – and when we meet it as if we are ambling over to the Old Vic to cook a meal together.

On this occasion, Syed phoned to suggest



that we meet for coffee on the Sunday morning together with a few Wye alumni – to which I readily agreed. Three days before the proposed informal gathering I received a copy of this flyer, announcing that I would be giving a lecture at 10 on the Sunday morning at the Faculty of Agriculture!

Apart from my photo, the flyer has three other links to Wye. The first is the sight of the Church of St Gregory and St Martin in the background of the photo. The second is part of the face of the person standing next to me – Dr Graham Milbourn (Wye staff 1971-77) who supervised my PhD. The photo (originally of Graham, his wife Louise and me) was taken in October 2021 when we were up in Wye for the Agricola Club



dinner and which I had sent at the time to Syed. The third link is the first of the listed contacts. Professor Teck Chwen Loh, who is now the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, did his PhD in animal nutrition at Wye (1994-7) under the supervision of the late Dr Ian Lean. The plot thickens because his wife Professor Hooi Ling Foo, who is a Professor of the Department of Bioprocess Technology, Faculty of Biotechnology and Biomolecular Sciences at the university, also did her PhD at Wye (1995-8) in plant biochemistry under the supervision of Dr John Rossiter. They came to Wye the year after they got married and did their doctoral studies together.

Sunday in Kuala Lumpur duly arrived and some 30-plus people turned up – a blend of academics, students and farmers – to hear me give a talk with the title 'Farming from the Soil Up – the return of the golden hoof'. It was a talk I had given the previous March at Greenmount College of Agriculture near Belfast, at a conference on soil health where (to my surprise) the then Secretary of State for the Environment (George Eustice) was in the audience.

This focus on the grazing ruminant animal reflects my involvement with the Pasture for Life movement. In 2009, having spent

more than four decades engaged with rural communities in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean – many of whom were materially poor (although culturally and spiritually rich) – I felt increasingly uneasy about the feeding of large amounts of grain and pulses to animals, particularly to ruminant animals for whom it is not their natural diet. Towards the end of that year I met a couple of British farmers who were raising their ruminant animals wholly on pasture and we decided to do something about it. Fourteen of us came together in early January 2010 in Cheltenham Quaker Meeting House and decided to define what we meant by wholly pasture-fed (which became the standards), to ensure the integrity of the term (which became the certification mark), to share the journey with others who believe in farming as if in a conversation with nature and, finally, to not be judgemental. The latter proved to be an important decision in growing the movement, with a focus simply on showing that there is another way.

Perhaps not surprisingly there was a negative reaction from several quarters to a closed-loop system of farming that does not require many of the traditional inputs and which – in the view of some – 'muddled the market'. A turning point was the publication in 2016 of 'Pasture for Life: it can be done'. This contained vignettes of farmers successfully raising their ruminant animals wholly on pasture, their stories supplemented by economic data generated and benchmarked independently by AHDB and which demonstrated the viability of the approach.

The Pasture for Life movement (www.pastureforlife.org) welcomes everyone who is interested in the restorative power of grazing animals on pasture, and at the time of writing has around nine hundred members (mainly farmers but also vets, academics, butchers and restaurateurs – including Agricola Club members and hopefully more in the future) spread across the UK and into Ireland, with 12 part-time facilitators supporting regional groups. Many of the



How does Pasture for Life benefit nature?

Well-managed grazing animals sustain ecosystems in which birds and mammals, plants, insects and other organisms thrive. Life is nurtured in pasture, trees, hedges and in the living soil beneath.

Our biodiversity case studies tell the story of over 25 of our farmers who raise their cattle and sheep wholly on pasture. Each case study is different, whether in terms of geology or climate, altitude or natural vegetation, size or topography, and they span the whole of the British Isles from Cornwall to Orkney and from Wales to Northern Ireland.

This is farming with nature, economically viable, producing nutrient-dense food. Through our biodiversity case studies, we highlight the vital role that grazing animals play in supporting nature and in its recovery.

pastureforlife.org/biodiversity 

alongside developing interest in the final product. With wool the infrastructure, although aggregated, does exist and that has allowed brands like Peregrine to work with certified Pasture for Life wool with the aim of transitioning their entire production to such certified wool over the space of five years.

Believing that farming is not just about land and crops and animals but extends into community and culture, nearly ten years ago I approached the Stroud-based poet Adam Horovitz to see if he would be willing to spend some time on our pastoral farms and write about what he found. Not least his being a vegetarian, it took some time for this to become a reality, but in due course he stayed in each of the four seasons on several pastoral

farmers are young and there is a strong gender balance. A research group (comprising academics and farmers) meets fortnightly and engages with the agricultural research community both in the UK and across Europe. Certification has moved beyond meat and milk to include skins and wool. Given the gradual disappearance of local and small-scale slaughter and processing capacity in the UK, the focus of efforts in the leather space is on infrastructure,

farms across England and Wales. From this emerged *THE SOIL NEVER SLEEPS*, a book of poetry in which resonates the voices of these farmers, their animals and land. Being descriptive and non-confrontational the book has opened the door to dialogues with ministers and policy makers and I presented a copy (signed by the author) to Syed at the end of my talk.

Sadly, not least thanks to the FAO's report 'Livestock: the long shadow', the cow has

become the unwarranted poster-child both of media articles seeking someone or something to blame for our changing climate and of research papers by largely Western academics looking in isolation at single issues in what is a complex topic. For those of us who have spent our lives working in rural Africa and Asia, where the ruminant animal is vital to the livelihoods of rural people, or who have seen the remarkable capacity of grazing ruminants to rebuild the life of the soil, this denigration is depressing. Without the participation of the cow, Sikkim in Himalayan India could not have become the first state in the world, in 2016, to be acknowledged as wholly organic. In Andhra Pradesh, with a farmed area equal to that of England, the cow is central to the state's wholesale conversion to what it calls 'natural farming'. Here in UK, one of the of the steps we have taken in Pasture for Life is to encourage our members to produce case studies of the biodiversity on their farms – which has resulted in some inspiring stories of biodiversity of flora and fauna both above and below ground, reflected in this flyer.

My PhD at Wye focused on crop physiology (aka the social life of plants). Given the choice by Graham Milbourn between peas and maize, I chose peas – mainly because it had a much shorter growing season (and more time for music and other extramural interests) but probably also because during my last undergraduate student vacation I had spent a couple of months driving a lorry in the Lincolnshire pea harvest! After four years of teaching crop production at the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland I drifted away from the world of teaching to working with (mainly rural) entrepreneurs in Africa and Asia – sometimes in areas of conflict – who were concerned with farming and food as well as with health, clean water provision and sanitation. Perhaps reflecting my relatively recent involvement with pastoral farmers, it is only during the last ten years or so that I have come to fully appreciate the fundamental importance both of a healthy,

living soil – which provides 95% of what we eat and without which mankind would perish – and of the vital role that the grazing ruminant can play in both restoring and sustaining it. With that in mind it is perhaps appropriate that I end with the title poem from 'The Soil Never Sleeps':

The Soil Never Sleeps

The soil never sleeps.

*In its voids, gas and waters gather,
waiting for thirsty roots to crawl
down motorway tunnels dug by worms.*

For the spade. The plough.

The massage-press of hooves.

*For the rain to run through its seams
and seeds to push up to the light.*

The soil never sleeps.

It banks lives

*in its soufflé stomach,
connects them to everything.*

*Even the dirt beneath fingernails,
the dirt caught in a mole's coat, sings
with a million microbes to the gram
of connections, growth.*

The soil never sleeps.

Never slips into ideology or nostalgia.

*It is place and purpose,
the perfection of decay.*

*A story that shifts
from mouth to mouth.*

A crucible for rebirth.

A rooftop on another world.

Adam Horovitz

The Terracotta Panels of the Wye College Biological Sciences Building and Russell Laboratories

Biologist and art historian Margaret Bray, who worked at Wye College from 1991 to 1993, and has lived in Wye for over 30 years, delves into the story behind the panels with which anyone who knows or recalls the Olantigh Road view of the College biological sciences buildings may be familiar.



The former Wye College Biological Sciences building in Olantigh Road opened in 1964, and to enhance the building the frontage was embellished with terracotta panels illustrating the research and study work of the College. The panels were made by students of the Royal Academy of Arts, London under the direction of the sculptor Arnold Machin (1911-1999).¹ They also

made the panels that decorate the Russell Laboratories that were opened in 1968.

Wye College Biological Sciences building designed by architect TW Harrison and built in 1964. The main frontage is embellished with five terracotta panels, with three further panels on the end building (not included in photograph). The panels were designed by students of the Royal Academy of Arts, under

the direction of Arnold Machin. The theme of the decoration on the Biological Sciences building covers several subjects including animal sciences, the growing of hops, and study of nature. Each panel generally shows a pair of complementary subjects carved on two and sometimes three or four squares of terracotta inset in the wall flush with the red brick.

Hop bines, cricket and spider, Biological Sciences building Moving to the right the next panel depicts a cockerel and unhatched chick. Ripened wheat is used to frame the birds. In the top left corner, a harvest mouse nibbles at the wheat ears. In the bottom right a rat scurries through the roots and looks up as if about to prey on the egg with the unhatched chick.

Cockerel and unhatched chick, Biological Sciences building A wide central panel depicts Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Eve is sitting under an apple tree and Adam is sitting under a cherry tree. In the upper centre of the scene is an owl, presumably to symbolise wisdom and learning.

Adam and Eve, Biological Sciences building To the right of the Adam and Eve scene is a panel with a new-born lamb leaping into life and a skull of one of its elders in circular frames surrounded by plants, some of which could be representing clover.

Sheep, Biological Sciences building Further along Olantigh Road opposite Wye School is the building that was the Russell Laboratories that dates from 1968. The frontage of the building is decorated with four terracotta panels that illustrate plant science and horticultural research and study performed here. Moving from the left to right, the first panel illustrates the development of form and structure of plants, and how this occurs in repeated patterns and interwoven spirals. To represent this phenomenon, central to the panel is what looks like a brassica, perhaps broccoli or cauliflower, and sculptured in the lower corners of the panel are geometric spiral shapes.

The first panel (left front of Biological Sciences building) depicts hop growing, a major success story of Wye College. The delicately carved leaves and cones (flowers) of the hops create a frame around what may be alluding to study of invertebrates that may coexist with the hops and other plants, with on the left a cricket, and on the right a spider.





Plant shape and form, Russell Laboratories

The second panel from the left represents the study of photoperiodism (the way an animal or plant responds to a change in the length of day and night). The panel is divided so one side shows the earth at night in the glow of the moon, and the other side shows the earth during daylight hours in bright sunshine.

Photoperiodism (response of an animal or plant to changes in length of night and day), Russell Laboratories.

Monitoring the weather and climate is fundamental to the study of plant life and the third panel on the Russell Laboratories features equipment used in a weather station. On the left is a rain gauge, on the right a thermometer, in the middle an anemometer that measures wind speed and direction, and below the anemometer a sunshine recorder is portrayed.



Weather station, Russell Laboratories

The last panel on the Russell Laboratories (right-hand end of building) probably represents the study of flowering plants, illustrated as a chrysanthemum and a daisy-like plant, perhaps an Aster. The plants have been sculptured to show the whole growing plant in flower including the roots visible under the soil. This idea may have been taken from plant drawings seen in traditional handbooks of flora illustration. As with previous panels, the artists have added little touches of interest like the snail moving across the soil, and butterflies feeding on nectar.





Flowering plants, Russell Laboratories

At the studios of the Royal Academy, the designs would have been first developed as drawings, then sculptured in soft clay using a method called Bas-relief ('low relief'). Bas-relief is an ancient technique in which the elements of the design are sculptured so they are just slightly proud of the background, yet the design is skilfully executed so there is light and shade to create a three-dimensional effect, such that the final work takes on the feel and look of a painting. After the design had been sculptured in the clay it would have been fired in a kiln at high temperature.

Arnold Machin, who mentored and supervised the students who made the panels, was a renowned artist and sculptor. Machin honed his skills in his hometown of Stoke-on-Trent, working in the potteries of Minton and Wedgwood, and went on to study at the Royal College of Art, followed by being elected an Academician of the Royal Academy of Arts in 1956 and Master of Sculpture in 1959.² While at Wedgwood Machin designed several bas-relief pieces. However, he is probably best known for his designs of the images of Queen Elizabeth II

on our decimal coinage and postage stamps, and these images too started out as designs in bas-relief sculpture.

In 1964, the same year the construction of the Wye College Biological Sciences Building commenced, Machin was invited to design an image of Queen Elizabeth II for the new decimal coinage. From photographic images

“The terracotta panels illustrate the research and study work of the College”

and drawings of the Queen, Machin sculptured a bas-relief portrait in plaster, which was then developed into the template for the engraving on the obverse side of the coins.

Due to Machin's success in creating the image for the decimal coinage, in 1966 he was invited to submit designs for a new Definitive Stamp (a stamp that consists solely of the monarch's head. These were the first- and second-class stamps in use until very recently. The cover of the October edition of our parish magazine displays a photograph of our late Queen Elizabeth II that was taken in 1966 by John Hedgecoe (1932-2010).³ Machin used this photograph in the work for his Definitive Stamp design created in plaster bas-relief, as done similarly for the coin design. The bas-relief portrait of the Queen was then photographed to create the master image

from which the printed image for the stamp was created. Interestingly, Machin used a Victorian camera to photograph his sculpture in sepia because he believed this would be the best way to emphasize the three-dimensional effect of the bas-relief in the master photograph.

Students who gained places at the Royal Academy were often trained artists who had already attended art school and had won places at the Academy because they were exceptionally gifted. Attending the Royal Academy meant they received classes from the 'Masters'. Arnold Machin, who was considered an expert in his field and thus had become both an Academician and Master of Sculpture, taught his students sculpture and carving, but also drawing as the basis of observation, and as a prerequisite to sculpture. Machin instructed several students who showed talent for drawing and sculpturing animals. He arranged for them to visit the Royal Mews to draw the horses stabled there, and to the Royal Veterinary College where they could study the anatomy of a whole array of living animals as well as preserved specimens, and encouraged visits to London Zoo. The students who were involved with making the Wye College terracotta panels would have likely visited the farms, gardens, greenhouses and laboratories of Wye College and made drawings and photographs. Back in the studio the drawings and photographs would have been used to develop the designs for panels.

Machin encouraged not just academic study but also practical application of methods being learnt. In the Royal Academy Keeper's Report of 1966, it states "...It was Mr Machin's proud and justifiable boast..... that his students when they left made their living by sculpture.with the academic grounding on which he [Machin] so courageously insisted, a young sculptor who was not too proud to do work, for instance at the Mint or on terra-cotta panels for an agricultural college or fulfil in some other way the space between works of art and

works of use, could lead a creative life"⁴

The reference here to an agricultural college must be Wye College and the making of the terracotta panels.

In Machin's autobiography the students Machin describes as particularly talented were at the Academy during the period the panels were made, and they all went on to become recognised sculptors⁵.

We can only guess that the artwork we see in the terracotta panels is some of theirs. No signatures are visible on the front of the panels, although it is possible signatures may be on the rear. Whichever artists were involved, the panels provide us with an important visual history of some of the science that was performed at Wye College. The panels also show us how illustration, in this case made as sculpture, is used to portray something for us all to view and enjoy.

- 1 Stewart Richards, **Wye College and Its World** (Wye College Press, 1994), p.191
- 2 Arnold Machin, **Machin Artist of an Icon: The Memoirs of Arnold Machin RA** (Kirstead, Frontier Publishing, 2002), pp.115-119
- 3 **Parish Magazine: Wye, Brook, Hinxhill and Boughton Aluph**, October 2022, Cover, pp.1 and 2.
- 4 **Keeper's Report: Schools** (London, Royal Academy of Arts, 1966), pp.31-32.
- 5 **Machin, Artist of an Icon**, pp.118-119 signatures are visible on the front of the panels, although it is possible signatures may be on the rear. Whichever artists were involved, the panels provide us with an important visual history of some of the science that was performed at Wye College. The panels also show us how illustration, in this case made as sculpture, is used to portray something for us all to view and enjoy.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to fellow Wye residents and former members of Wye College who have helped in the collection of information for this project, in particular John Mansfield, and Ian and Jo Brown, and my husband Richard Griffiths. Thank you also to the librarians and archivists at the Royal Academy of Arts.

The Wye College terracotta panels continue to fascinate me, and it continues to be an ongoing project of mine to learn more about them. I hope the information shared in this article provides more insight into these inspiring works of art. Above all, please go and view the panels, and I welcome any insights from fellow Wye residents and former members of the College. My email address is magsmary760@gmail.com.

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Wye College Agricola Club Annual Dinner

Saturday, September 2nd 2023

Royal Agricultural University,

Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 6JS

We hope to welcome a good turnout of members to keep the flag flying for Wye. Everyone who went to Wye is welcome along with your partners. This year in particular we would like to welcome people who graduated in any year ending in a '3' i.e. 1963, 1973, 1983, 1993, 2003. So please encourage your contemporaries to come and get a table together. If you started at Wye in any of these years you might like to celebrate the anniversary of your arrival. Some accommodation is available at the College on a first come, first served basis.

Please see page 136 for more details.

Memories of Wye

Murray Mylechreest (Wye 1955-58) recalls his time as a Wye undergrad, including social events, friends, sports and a visit to Marden Fruit Show. It proved good grounding for his own move into a career in education.

From the warm welcome to the making of new friends, the excellent teaching and the opportunity to try new sports, my time at Wye College during the 1950s brings back many happy memories.

I was recommended to apply to Wye College by a tutor at Clare College, Cambridge, who knew Dunstan Skilbeck, College Principal at the time. The four A-levels, including physics, that I had attained, helped meet the science entry requirements, and meant I took geology instead of physics in my first year. Its field work in particular meant it was a subject I really enjoyed. Each student had a personal tutor in addition to being assigned to a subject tutor each term, and it so happened mine had also been at Altrincham Grammar School, as I had. At the end of each term the personal tutor arranged a meeting with Dunstan Skilbeck to review our academic progress.

New experiences were plentiful. One particular memory I have is of a trip with my economics tutor to Marden Fruit Show, where despite all the apples I was introduced to gin and tonic as we sat down to have a chat! The visit taught me a lot about how business is done.

Among my new friends was Julian Nicholson, who later was best man at my wedding. He later sadly died prematurely when he was working. Another friend was Sydney Moutia of Mauritius, who also later came to our wedding. Each term there was a social event at the women's hall of residence, Withersdane Hall, so we were able to enjoy the company of a cross-section of the student community. I was also able to arrange a party at Withersdane Hall to

celebrate my 21st birthday over sherry.

I played rugby and participated in athletics, where I became captain of one team. We went out with the beagles when we could not play rugby because of the weather. Some of us went down to watch the horse racing as there was a course at Wye in those days.

Towards the end of our final year I met Professor Holmes to consider my career in horticulture. He suggested research, but I wanted to enter teaching. He advised me to look into a career in a college of horticulture, but I wanted I wanted to take up secondary school teaching, and so I went to the Institute of Education in London, where I met my wife Denise. Upon graduating from the Institute, I was appointed to Hatfield School, Hertfordshire, which had a strong technical slant. Later, I moved to Worcester College of Education, which is now the University of Worcester. With the college at one point developing a degree course with Pershore College of Horticulture, there is a nice link with my first post-school education at Wye...

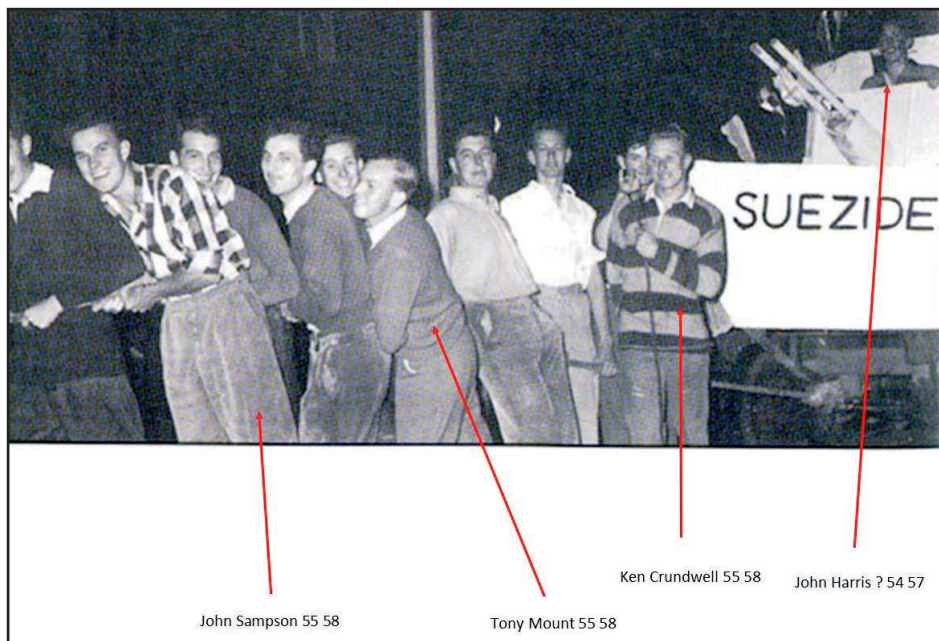
Putting occasions to pictures and names to faces

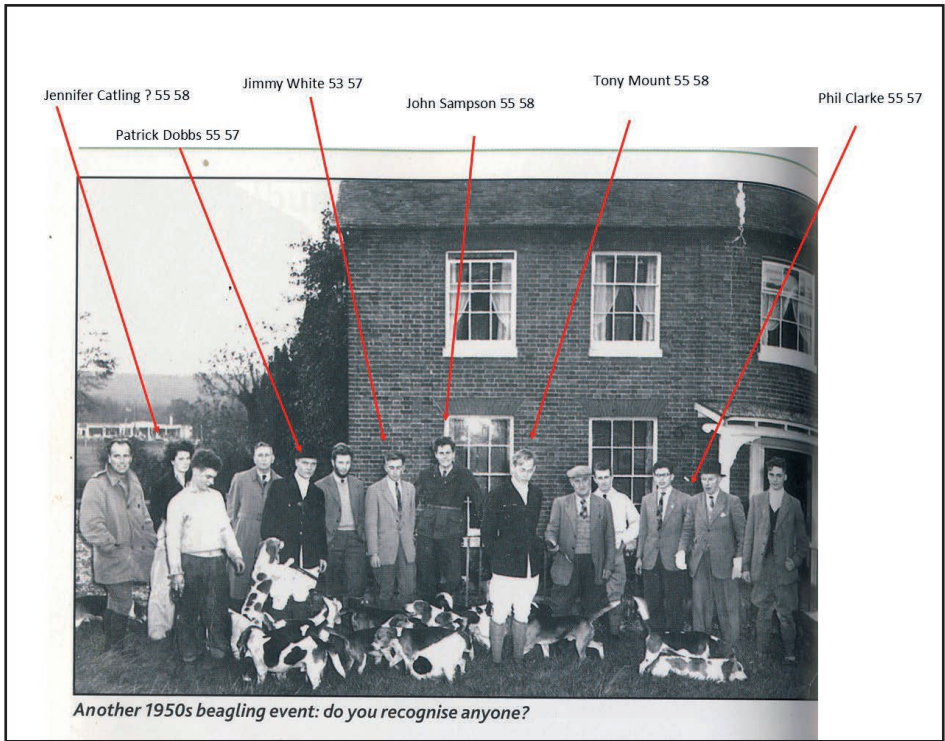
Frank Thompson (Wye 1954-57) provides his recollections of the stories behind some photographs of Wye College happenings during the mid-1950s.

Here are my answers to the photo quiz in last year's Journal. What's the prize?! Old photographs are great reminders of our time at Wye – people, places, events, activities. My own collection consists of prints that had been taken and developed by students and displayed for sale on the notice board outside the student dark room for others to buy. Tim Threadgold, who had a camera, kindly lent me his photos to scan and add to my collection and make it less egocentric. I would be pleased to make copies of any other photos of the 1954 -7 vintage that people have. Perhaps an accessible archive

exists already. It was good to meet up at the 2022 Hog Roast with John Cole, Tim Threadgold and other 1950s students, plus of course the younger vintages.

Anyway, this first picture shows the front of the 1955 float for the Wye Carnival procession. It was named 'Send a Gunboat', a hot topic due to the political tension resulting from the nationalization of the Suez Canal. Traditionally second year student entered a float which third year students tried to wreck while the first and second year defended it. The float haulers shown are first year students include J



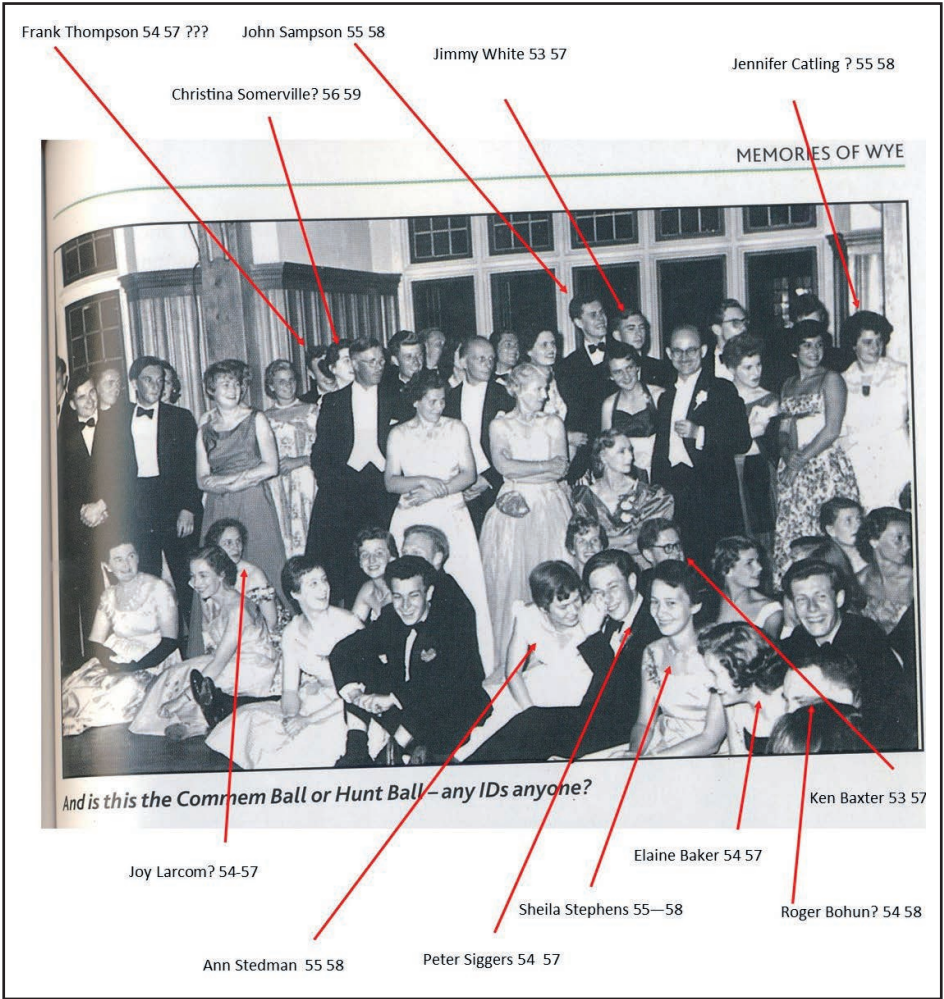


Block stalwarts John Sampson and Tony Mount who subsequently together with Noddy Needham joined the J Block second year 'Ford Walkers' in their first and only public performance of their 'Spring Fertility Wrongs' in front of College. The crew member on the gun boat bridge is probably John Harris. He was certainly on the float armed with a stirrup pump to squirt dilute silage molasses onto attackers. John had been partly responsible for making the float on a borrowed farm trailer. I seem to remember that another crewman was a Sudanese student.

Prin had banned the student float in my first year, 1954, due to the chaos caused by the inter-year rivalry during Wye Carnival float procession in 1953. In protest the second-year students in gowns entered the Wye Carnival float procession carrying a coffin with a banner proclaiming the 'Death of

the Student Spirit'. The rest of us stood in our gowns silently lining the road outside College. The next year Prin relented, we were allowed to enter a float provided no attempt to wreck the float took place before it was on the forecourt in front of the porter's lodge. Despite obeying the rules some windows were broken from the hail of semi rotten fruit thrown at and from the float. While Keith Jones suffered concussion climbing out of a J Block window to join in the attack on the float.

For 1956 the rules of engagement were changed yet again with no attacks on the float until it was on College's private road leading from Olantigh Road to the Horticulture Department gates. The third year would win if they stopped the float reaching the gates. In true military fashion Ian Stratford and Roger Bohun, both ex National Servicemen, held a third year student O group meeting –



(Situation, Mission, Execution) in the lecture theatre. An earlier meeting of second Year students had been secretly tape recorded by Ken Baxter and Mike Cooper to get information about their plans. Our strategy was to build a token barrier in front of the gates manned by a small masking force. Our main force would be hidden behind the squash courts opposite the entrance road and attack the float from the rear as it went uphill towards the barrier. The plan

nearly resulted in even greater carnage than the previous year. It was dark and just as we started our charge to cross Olantigh Road a car came rapidly down the road from Wye. Luckily, we all managed to stop in time as a very startled driver drove past. The attack then continued according to plan. The slightly risqué float of a Withersdane bedroom containing two female (Sue Gwyn and Margaret Medd) and two male students entitled 'Night Work at Withersdane'

Cynthia Wright 53 57 Keith Jones 53 57 Tim Threadgold 54 57
 Phil Clarke 55 57 Brian Lovelidge 53 56 Peter Dukes 54
 Jennifer Catling ? 55 58



Wye Sports in the 1950s: but who is the long jumper, captured in full flight?

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was successfully attacked from the rear. I remember climbing onto the float, tripping up and ending on the 'bedroom floor' up on top of one of its occupants. Whether the float had reached the gate before its destruction is still a matter of debate. We then all went to the Carnival Dance in the village hall to check out the new Withersdane students.

The sequel to our Gunboat float was that, in the summer vac, Ian Stratford was mobilised by the Royal Signals in preparation for the invasion of Suez. Ian persuaded the army that he wasn't fit enough and was invalided out. On 5th November 1956 while we watched the firework display on the Crown

Sports' Day 1956: is the jumper Charlie Fox?

the first British paratroops dropped into Suez at the start of the invasion. As Ian later said he managed to avoid being part of that fiasco.

This one looks to me like a hunt meeting in 1956-7. I'm sure that you've had lots of inputs from the beaglers. I only went beagling once when rugger was cancelled as the pitch was waterlogged. I remember we set out from Charing in pouring rain following the hunt up onto the Downs. We followed the hunt through the rain and mist largely by the baying of the hounds and



John Sampson – again!

10.27 Prince Philip admiring the College beagles in 1958. Behind him is Robin Mackenzie.

Prin

Christina Somerville

Robin Mackenzie

the sounds of the hunting horn. Eventually a long blast on the hunting horn was interpreted by my guide/tutor that we had had a kill. This allowed us to descend soaked through to Charing for high tea at the local pub. An interesting day largely thanks to the company of my mentor and guide.

The next time I went hunting was by Lake Chad in northeast Nigeria. I had been running a course for zonal forest officers on arid zone afforestation. I'd spent the previous summer teaching final year Agric students at Sokoto University in northwest

Nigeria and visit the established shelterbelts in both Sokoto and Kano states. I had also travelled across. On my return from touring Borno State with two forest officers looking at tree nurseries, planting schemes and existing woodland and shelterbelts, I joined two wardens of the Borno conservation staff going to relocate a herd of elephants. Desperate village head men had visited the department in Maiduguri begging for help as a large herd of elephants was destroying the villagers' crops and the villages were being deserted. The aim was to induce the



herd to move on by shooting one of the young bull lieutenants, the matriarchal herd leader. In theory the tusks were kept by the government and the carcass sold to traders who smoked the meat for sale. We drove to Baga village (destroyed by Boko Haram in 2013) and while looking for our canoe we were picked up by some Nigerian soldiers who were patrolling the area hunting for Chad rebels. We were told that 'No white man is allowed on Lake Chad' and all escorted under guard to their commanding officer. The wardens explained to the CO what we were doing and that I was an elephant expert. This was news to me, but kept him happy! He ordered a Nigerian soldier, complete with his Russian assault rifle, to protect us from any rebels and we continued our canoe hunt. In the event we couldn't find our canoe or elephant herd. This rather relieved me as I had learnt on

the way there that we would have to wade up to my waist in Bilharzia-infested Lake Chad to find the herd. The hunt had been rather less successful than my beagling 25 years before, but much hotter and drier. Later I did manage to at least see some elephants on a cross country no-passport trip to a conservation area in neighbouring Cameroon. On departing for the UK I was presented by the Chief Conservator of Forests with a pair of government tusks probably as 'Dash'. As far I know they are still at Kano with British Council waiting to be collected.

This photo is of the survivors at the 1957 Commem Ball. Afterwards I remember crawling away to bed in K block to collapse onto my bed before the early start of our Agric tour to Scotland. I didn't see myself in the photo until John Sampson told me at the Hog Roast that I was in it. Herewith

my subsequent attempt at finding myself in the picture. My partner I remember was Christina Somerville (1956–9). In 2021 we visited Ripon and had tea with Christina and her husband Simon, a retired Canon, at their home near the cathedral. Some years ago, Simon had conducted a memorial service for Jules Buchanan (1954–7) and Christina had been bridesmaid at his wedding in the early sixties to Sheila Stephens (1955–8).

Perhaps our visit to Ripon was the result of the bonfire picture on page 197 of the 2020-21 Journal.

The photo poses the question of what most of the dancers were looking at on the right. Was it Noddy Needham in his tiger skin?

Is this a look alike? According to the Wye Journal XIX p224, HRH did not go to the bonfire but went home instead!



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Please see page 136 for more details.

What was happening here then?

Bob Baxter (1956-59) has an idea or two about what may have been happening in a photo that featured on page 234 the last edition of Wye...



In the mid-1950s an autumn carnival was arranged every year by the good people of Wye. Part of this was a procession of trailer- or truck-mounted 'floats' displaying the work and activities of various shops, clubs, pubs and organisations in the town, and it was customary for the College to be invited to provide a float. This invitation was gladly taken up, and it was traditional that the second year students constructed

the display – the second year courses were considered to be lighter than those of other years: neither Part One nor Finals loomed, so the students had the time to spare to build carnival displays – and for that matter produce the Second Year Revue!

The students would choose a topical theme for their masterpiece. After the end of the procession the tractor towing the trailer on which the structure was mounted would be uncoupled. The trailer was then hauled by hand through the imposing gates off Olantigh Road and back into the Hop Department, where the display had been made. I believe that the picture in question was taken at this final stage of the float's journey. It was very probably in 1956: that summer President Nasser of Egypt nationalised the Suez Canal, and the British and French had sent in a military force to reverse this move. This proved unwise, and the expedition was aborted. Politically it was a mad decision, doomed to failure. Hence the

sign on the rather military-looking float 'SUEZIDE!'

This was not the last act of the evening, however. By tradition, some time before the date of the carnival, an ancient-looking sheet of paper would appear on the noticeboard in the corridor outside the junior common rooms. On it was written, in a medieval hand, a declaration that unfortunately, and despite its elaborate beauty, the float could



not be allowed back into its base. It was signed on behalf of the third and first years – and it was a challenge that could not be ignored!

On the night, and shortly after that photo was taken – I speak as a lowly first year who was actually there – a huge brawl broke out, with the second year troops determined to protect the float's elaborate construction and drag it into safety, and the third and first year forces equally insistent on downing the haulers and pulling the display to pieces. Overripe fruit and manure were thrown and hoses played freezing water, as the simple pleasures of the 1950s were acted out under a refreshing drizzle. It was all good-natured jollity. I myself was distinctly worried at one point when I was pinned to the ground by some ruffian, with a wheel of the trailer advancing toward my skull!

The following year, 1957, was the time of the Asian 'flu pandemic and also early Russian space flights. Consequently, the theme that year was HOW THE ASIAN FLU. I include a couple of photoshops of the 'rocket'. This was constructed by a team of second year students led by Peter England (standing at the right of the line of four lab-coated 'space scientists'). Sadly I was struck down by the virus, and, like many others, was confined to my room and missed the construction phase – and the big fight!

Although some of the faces in the photographs are recognisable, I fear the passage of time has meant that the corresponding names elude me. Perhaps other old fogeys could help with identification?

The Jim Brewster Laboratory at Warwick University

Mike Jackson and Patrick Haworth (both Wye 1963-1966) report on the opening of an impressive research and study facility opened recently and named after a Wye contemporary, Jim Brewster.

Many students and staff from the early 1960s will remember, fondly no doubt, the disarmingly informal but academically inclined persona of Jim Brewster (Wye 1963-66), whose distinctive sauntering gait and fondness for sports jackets partnered a serious and able mind that could be relied on to amuse, inform or debate matters of moment in equal measure. Not surprisingly therefore, Jim was in the first select cohort of Agricultural Science (Hons) undergraduates who, in 1964, migrated across to a new course specialising in plant science.

The move was just right for Jim and one that led him to post-graduate research at The University of Oxford under Peter Nye, FRS, and then to a career as a research scientist at the Agricultural Research Council's National Vegetable Research Station, Wellesbourne, Warwickshire (later part of Warwick University). At both Oxford and Wellesbourne, Jim studied the onion family and became recognised internationally for this aspect of his research. It generated over 20 peer-reviewed research papers, numerous book chapters and, most notably perhaps, his seminal and beautifully illustrated book *Onions and other Vegetable Alliums*. However, prior to his death in 2015, Jim and his wife Marnie arranged for much of his estate to be bequeathed to the University of Warwick in support of research into horticultural crop improvement. The legacy is shared between the Jim Brewster Scholarships, which will run in perpetuity at the School of Life Sciences, and the setting-up of a new research facility

named The Jim Brewster Laboratory.

Alongside the Brewster legacy to Warwick University's School of Life Sciences, there lies a second from The Elizabeth Creak Charitable Trust. Collectively, these two donations underpinned the creation of The Elizabeth Creak Horticultural Technology Centre (ECHTC) with The Jim Brewster Laboratory central to the ECHTC's goal of horticultural crop improvement. The £1.5 million ECHTC complex was officially opened on 10th November 2022 and attended by Neill Enstock, Patrick Haworth and Mike Jackson (1963-66) at the invitation of Marnie (see photograph). The Laboratory will use cutting edge techniques such as gene-editing to address disease resistance, improve crop yield, enhance adaptability to climate change and improve the nutritional value in horticultural plants. Professor Murray Grant, the inaugural appointment to the Elizabeth Creak Chair in Food Security, says of The Jim Brewster Lab: *"The Lab creates a state-of-the-art controlled environment plant growth complex. This allows crop plants to be regenerated via tissue culture and then, utilising these high tech advanced growth facilities, the subsequent hardening, phenotyping and selection of elite lines which can then be taken through to seed harvesting. It's a facility that could not have been established without the collective generosity of Jim and Marnie and the Elizabeth Creak Trustees. Our focus is to improve UK horticultural crops, initially leafy brassica, lettuce, carrots and tomato but incorporating onion and basil as we move forward."*

It is a highly fitting and wholly appropriate co-incidence that Murray Grant also has a strong connection with Wye. He was lecturer in plant disease resistance at the Plant Science Department for eight years, until leaving in September 2006, a consequence of the Imperial College takeover and its desire to run down Wye College. He commented *"I have fond memories of the 8 years I spent at Wye, not least the Beagle Club!"*

We cannot end without returning to the Jim Brewster Scholarships. Jim recognised the pivotal role research students play in university science and wanted a substantial part of his legacy to support them directly. This takes the form of an annual grant to help fund expenses such as travel to conferences. Nick Khut, who studied causes of yield variation of salad onions, was the first recipient in 2019. The second award went to Guyu Hao, who we met at the

opening. It was a pleasure to hear at first-hand about her notable discovery that the fungus *Trametes versicolor* growing on waste biomass readily secretes fatty acids. This finding holds potential for environmentally responsible commercial production of useful oils without the need for costly extraction. Such oils could include those rich in omega-3 fatty acids, the main ingredient of fish oil. We also met this year's recipient, Huigdong Liu, who showed us some of the gene-edited carrot plants he is growing in the Jim Brewster Lab. Huigdong's aim is to raise yields by editing key genes in the flowering pathway to alter flowering time and prevent unwanted bolting. Clearly, with the creation of the Jim Brewster Laboratory and the Scholarships, Jim's bequest has been put to very good use by the University of Warwick. Long may it continue to do so.



Wye College Agricola Club

Do you know any Wye College graduates who aren't Agricola Club members?

If they would like to sign up, maintain and make contact with fellow Wye graduates, receive the annual Journal and attend the Annual Dinner, please contact the Agricola Club secretary, James Trounce: secretary@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk

Another day, another penguin in the Antarctic

Sarah Atter (Wye 1978-91) says she has been fortunate to travel extensively since graduating, but few places have left an impression on her quite like the Antarctic.



Throughout my childhood and as I was growing up through my teens, my parents took me and my siblings on holiday abroad every year and I developed a wander-lust that has stayed with me ever since. After leaving Wye in 1981, I have travelled a lot of the world, with most of my best experiences being in the wild landscapes, rather than the cities. Come 2022, I still had the urge to travel, but to help ease my conscience at a time when global travel seemed more and more frowned upon, I made sure I travelled with a leading Canadian eco-sustainable tourism company, led by people knowledgeable of environmental pressures

and fully committed to funding projects for the protection of the environment and indigenous people/cultures world-wide. That was how I found myself on a small ship (just over one hundred passengers, mostly from Canada and the UK) sailing from Ushuaia in Patagonia and heading for the Antarctic in December last year.

The expedition team was made up of naturalists, ecologists, geologists, ornithologists and one ex-member of the British Antarctic Survey (called "Scobie"). The team was led by Dr Jonathan Green, a world expert on Whale Sharks, based in the

Galapagos Islands (you may have seen his project featured on Blue Planet II).

We sailed from Ushuaia through the Beagle Channel and into the Drake Passage in the evening of Friday 2nd December. The Drake Passage separates the tip of South America and the Antarctic and is renowned as being the roughest stretch of water in the world, with very high winds and strong currents as the water is squeezed between the two land masses. To underscore this, before we left Ushuaia, we saw a ship that had just arrived back in the harbour, having been hit by a huge rogue wave (you may have seen this in the news) and unfortunately one person onboard had lost their life. So, we were expecting to go up and down a bit (!) and I had my sea sickness pills handy. But as luck would have it, as we got ready to leave, the weather started to calm between two areas of storm systems and aside from our first night, the seas remained unusually gentle for the entire two-week duration of our voyage. We were indeed, exceptionally fortunate.

The sun doesn't sink below the horizon in the summer, so there was just a soft light as I looked out the porthole around midnight. Whilst we were at sea, the expedition team gave us expert talks on such things as the Antarctic birds and other wildlife we expected to see, the geology, impact of climate change and life with the British Antarctic Survey. As well as these educational sessions, we were instructed on our own safety procedures (three minutes in the Antarctic water and you would be gone) and the importance of the strict bio-security measures we were to follow to protect the wildlife and pristine environment. In short, the entire Antarctic ecosystem depends on the ice, from the microscopic phytoplankton growing on, in and under the ice that feed the krill, that in turn feed the whales, seals, fish, penguins and other birds. If the ice continued to recede, not only would this be catastrophic for the wildlife, but for us too. With 70% of the world's fresh water frozen in the Antarctic ice sheet, if this were

to melt, global sea levels would rise perhaps by 3-4 metres and coastlines world-wide inundated.

A quick two-day crossing of the Drake brought us to the South Shetland Islands, just off the Antarctic Peninsula. On the way we had passed through the Antarctic Convergence, where the relatively warm sub-Antarctic water meets the much colder Antarctic water; we were now into the Antarctic proper. The first Wandering Albatross had been spotted at 7:53am on our first morning at sea, along with Giant Petrels and other birds. The next day, under a cloudless blue sky, we saw our first Gentoo penguins "porpoising" across the water (we were going to see a lot of Gentoos) and then a pod of humpback whales appeared across our bows. The first glimpse we had of them were sprays of water droplets in the distance, as the whales surfaced and forced air out through their blow-holes. Getting closer, we heard the whoosh as they blew. Then several breached right out of the water in front of us - it was magical.

By midday, we had reached the South Shetland Islands about 75 miles from the Antarctic Peninsula and the temperature had dropped to 1 degree Celsius (remember, this is the Antarctic summer; in winter it gets **much** colder). The scout boats went out at 1:15pm to check the landing site on Barrientos Island and by 1:40pm we were called down to put on our polar gear and get ready to be taken ashore by Zodiac dingy. Some thirty or so passengers had booked kayaking trips, so each day they put on survival suits and paddled their way along the shore and through the sea ice.

The rest of us were in the landing party. Before going ashore our kit was scrubbed clean and disinfected (and again on our return). We could take no organics ashore (so no food). Once ashore, we were not allowed to sit down (in case of transference of anything from our clothes), nor could we go for a wee anywhere (for that, we would have to return to the ship). We

followed marked tracks laid out by the scouts, from which we could not stray. Although Barrientos island and our next landing site, Cecelia Island, were rocky with not too much snow, it became increasingly important as we travelled further south to stick to these marked tracks, as these had been checked for crevasses and ensured we didn't sink down too much in the deep snow (I only had to be pulled out twice!). Above all, the wildlife had priority and we were to remain at specified minimum distances (5m for a penguin, 15m for a seal....), moving back if necessary if one came our way and doing nothing to upset their natural behaviour. We saw colonies of Gentoo and Chinstrap penguins sitting on their nests made of pebbles, along with Weddell seals, a Leopard seal and nesting Giant Petrels. The Gentoo were constantly eying up their neighbours' nests for good pebbles, which they would steal and take to their own nests – it was a real merry-go-round of pebbles.

It was striking how unafraid and trusting all the penguins and seals were of our group; they just ignored us and got on with their normal activities – in the case of penguins, nest building and sitting on some early eggs and in the case of seals, just lying out on the beach to rest.

The daily routine from then on was to sail overnight and make two landings a day. That night we sailed on through the Bransfield Strait to Useful Island (where the whalers went to spot whales), then on through the Gerlache Strait and Neumeyer Channel to Damoy Point on the Antarctic Peninsula. At 6:45am in the Gerlache Strait we saw a group of Orca, some with calves and we had the rare opportunity to see a mother and calf come right past the ship. The Humpbacks seemed the most curious though, one coming to the side of the ship, raising its head out of the water and peering at us. At Damoy point there was a well



preserved, but now disused, British Antarctic Survey hut, where Scobie used to work. He said he used to fly his single prop plane in and land on the ice behind the hut.

The mornings seemed to be the best time to see whales – Humpbacks bubble feeding, Orca and Minke. The temperature was dropping as we moved south, going down to minus 2 degrees Celsius as we approached the Yalour Islands, where we started to encounter a lot of “brash” (broken) ice and large icebergs. The Yalour Islands are home to the small Adelie penguins, who have the quaint habit of tobogganing down the snowy slopes on their stomachs, from their nests on the upper ridges to the sea. After feeding, they trudged all the way back up again. The Adelies are in decline, as a consequence of the receding ice, that allows the Gentoos and Chinstraps to encroach further and further south into the breeding areas that only the Adelies have reached in the past.

On a neighbouring island was the Faraday station, where (along with scientists at the Halley station) the hole in the ozone layer over the Antarctic was first discovered. In the 90’s the British weren’t using the station anymore, so they sold it to Ukraine for £1 rather than have to demolish it and take it away. Buildings are not allowed in the Antarctic if they are not being actively used.

We sailed on down to Petermann Island, part of the Wilhelm Archipelago, just south of the Lemaire Channel and Adie Cove. The Cove is 25 km long and often ice-filled. It was named after Susan Adie, an environmentalist, who would join our ship the following week. The cove was still largely uncharted, so the scout boats took sonar with them to check the channel for big rocks. We managed to land on Peterman Island, but it turned out impossible to get through the ice into Adie Cove.

Nevertheless, walking up through the snow to the top of Petermann Island gave us beautiful views, with lots of ice bergs and brash ice around, the inevitable Gentoos,

nesting Kelp gulls, Weddell and Crabeater seals. Despite their names, Kelp Gulls do not eat kelp and Crabeater Seals do not eat crabs! This was our furthest point south, at just beyond 65 degrees latitude. On a sad note, there was a memorial cross near our landing point for three British scientists, who had travelled over from the Faraday base years before, to climb Mount Scott across the bay. In the winter the bay was frozen over, so they left a note in a nearby refuge hut to say they planned to walk over the ice to the mountain. They were never heard of again. It was assumed they fell through the ice.

The next day we visited Wienke Island, in the Palmer Archipelago and saw some beautiful Antarctic Blue-eyed Shags. The Shags were sitting on tall nests made of seaweed, built in amongst all the penguins nests and were named after the bright blue markings around their eyes. Then we called into the Penguin Post Office at the historic World War II Port Lockroy station. This is the world’s most southerly operational post office (700 miles from Argentina and Chile), being managed by four young women volunteers (a prestigious job, over 10,000 applications annually for the four places). Along with looking after the museum and Post Office, they carried out penguin counts during the five summer months. It was here that I got my “Antarctica” stamp in my passport.

The coldest day was Friday 9 December, when the temperature dropped to minus 5 degrees, but it felt much colder in the bitter wind. (It was minus 5 degrees as well in England at the time!). The light was eerily grey, as we crept through masses of brash ice and very large ice bergs into an amphitheatre of glaciers at Neko Harbour, Andvord Bay. The scout boats went out at 8:30, but found the landing point was ice-filled and we were unable to get in. But that was the opportunity for about fifty of our passengers who had decided to do the “Polar plunge” – jumping into the sea with just their swimsuits on and a harness, so the

ship's crew could immediately pull them back on board. I'm afraid I chickened out and decided that staying warm and dry was preferable to an Antarctic cold-water shock. It was time to head north and homewards, back to the South Shetland Islands and Ushuaia. As we sailed north, the large ice bergs disappeared and we were out in the open sea and sad to see them go. But we had two final landings in the South Shetlands to make – on Deception Island and Snow Island. Deception island is an active volcano, in the form of a caldera. The last major eruption was in 1968. Our Captain took the ship into the caldera itself where it was sheltered and we went ashore onto the black volcanic sands (the rock is called "Tuff") and trekked up to a side crater. In the past, the whaling ships would find refuge there. Then, to our delight, on neighbouring Snow Island we found elephant seal pups. They would have been born in September/October and left on the beach by their mothers after about three to five weeks, as they then returned to the sea to hunt. The "weaners" huddled closely together whilst they waited for their

mothers' return. They loved to cuddle and we were warned that if we sat down (which we were not allowed to do) they would come and flop on top of us. There were some large bulls lying on the beach as well, undergoing their moult and getting into loud fights and shows of strength.

One final treat lay in store. With the unusually calm seas continuing to speed our passage back across the Drake, we had time to divert and round Cape Horn, sailing into the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Chile and back into the Atlantic. The Captain sounded the ship's horn as we officially became "Hornets"

It was the most extraordinary experience in the most wonderful setting. Some of my best moments were simply standing still, with the bitterly cold air nipping at my face, taking in the snow-covered mountains and glaciers, with only the peaceful sounds of chattering penguins, the exhalations of whales, the barking of seals and the crunch of ice, as our ship made its way steadfastly through the freezing Antarctic waters.



Wye College Agricola Club

Do you know any Wye College graduates who aren't Agricola Club members?

If they would like to sign up, maintain and make contact with fellow Wye graduates, receive the annual Journal and attend the Annual Dinner, please contact the Agricola Club secretary, James Trounce: secretary@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk

Letters to the editor

Michael Boddington (staff, 1967-) pens a note on the different outlooks of Malthus and Boserup.

Dear Martin,

I am not sure whether to commiserate with you or congratulate you. Certainly, I am most grateful to you for taking on the onerous responsibility of the journal editorship. I look forward so much to seeing it every year.

First I should tell you that I was delighted to have Wye alumnus Dr John Meadley come to call on 13th January. John and I started our agricultural degrees at Newcastle in 1961 and I was very happy to find him doing his PhD at Wye when I joined the staff there in 1967. Our careers mirrored one another over the years and we often met up somewhere or other in the world. This is the second time that he has called on me in Lao PDR, the last time being 2010. His nephew lives about 500m from my house. (*See elsewhere in this Journal for an article by John Meadley – Ed*)

Somewhat more than a year ago, I wrote to Jane Reynolds to discuss a possible article on land use – a subject that was central to Wye in my days there, and in which I was deeply involved.

The theme is that, back at the close of the 18th century, when global population was a mere one billion, Thomas Malthus created a long-lasting ripple with the revelation that the growth in population is geometric whilst that in agricultural output is arithmetic. That didn't stack up in terms of a plan for the future.

As a student of agriculture during the late 1950s/early 1960s, along with my fellow students, we were continually informed that we had a sacred duty: to find a way to handle the Malthus conundrum. By now, the world population had grown to 3 billion! Britain was especially struck by this problem, having twice entered a World War

unable to feed even a half of our population and placing ourselves in great jeopardy of being starved to death by the U-boats.

Then, in 1965, along came a Danish agricultural economist called Esther Boserup, and her book *The Conditions of Agricultural Growth*. Her thesis was the complete opposite of Malthus': (paraphrase) population grows to meet the food available.

So much of the work at Wye was Malthus-based. We were striving to produce the output required by the peoples of the world, and especially of Britain. In my department (Agricultural Economics and then Countryside Planning) we were much taken with the competition between urbanisation and agriculture. During my time there, under the marvellous leadership of Professor Gerald Wibberley, the awareness grew that our rural land must meet requirements for others of mankind's demands – and those of the natural world. Wib, as he was affectionately known, regarded farmers as the enemy. He and the NFU were not best friends!

As a student at Newcastle, Boserup's book was set as required reading. I struggled with its 121 pages. Recently, I decided to reread it. Wow! It was alive with meaning. I could suddenly appreciate the messages she was promoting. My career experience – which had taken me through Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and SE Asia – now largely behind me, showed me the way in which men went from hunter-gatherers, through swidden farmers, all the way to intensive cultivators aided by irrigation and the use of modern inputs such as mechanisation, fertilisers, pesticides and improved seeds. Indeed, I can see all the stages of which she spoke, right here in Lao PDR. Of course she was right! How else could we have arrived

on the threshold of 8 billion?

But, in the last year, the picture has become more murky. All of a sudden, farmers in some countries are being prevented from using those inputs – especially fertilisers. The green agenda, which has been knocking feebly on the door for the last four decades, has suddenly come hurtling in. That and other constraints are putting in doubt our ability to continue to satisfy the global food demands. Food prices have sky-rocketed in many countries. Are we in another transitional stage? If so, to where?

When I wrote to Jane a year ago, these very recent issues were not in evidence – or were lurking on that back burner. It seemed that the matters I set out could be quite simply dealt with in a short piece, but I was under considerable pressure then and I did not have time to prepare it within the deadline. During the course of 2022, I came back to it and set to work to re-address the project. But I got mired down with the appearance of these new tests to the industry.

Were Wye College, that wonderful educational and thinking establishment, still operating vibrantly, I could set a challenge – for the different departments to address themselves to these matters. Such is not available.

How about setting out the nature of the conundrum in the next issue of the journal and asking alumni to write in with their best shot? *(I hope that's what I have done here by publishing this letter! Ed)*

Was Malthus right? Or Boserup? Are there new constraints that neither of them recognised? Should we be seeking to reduce the human population of the planet? If so, how might that be done?

Gosh! That might be a cat-among-the-pigeons exercise!

Best wishes,

Michael Boddington

Peter Hunton acknowledges the error of his ways in not joining the Agricola Club upon leaving Wye 57 years ago.

Dear Martin,
I am ashamed to say that when I left Wye College in December 1966, I failed to join the Agricola Club! My excuse was that I was emigrating to Canada (I'm still here) and would be unlikely to avail myself of the Club's facilities.

However, now long retired, I have recently published my memoir, entitled '*Chickens, Turkeys, Eggs and Other Fowl Business*' and I think it would be of interest to those survivors whose attendance at Wye coincided with mine. Of course, others might also find it of interest. I was in the first group to study for the M.Sc. in Poultry Science from 1958 to 1960, and I then joined the College until 1966. My supervisors were Eric Maddison for my M.Sc. and the first 2 years on staff and for my Ph.D., received in 1967, William

Holmes. I taught Poultry Management for six years and Animal Genetics for four, after Maddison left to join industry.

The time spent at Wye was hugely influential on my subsequent career, and I am extremely grateful for the time spent there. I hope it will be possible for current members to be made aware of the book. It is available from Amazon (search for Hunton+poultry) and other book sellers. Two of the early readers told me they could not put it down!

Sincerely,

Peter Hunton

Wye College Regeneration Group CIC

Administration Address:

1 Upper Bridge Street

Wye

Ashford

Kent TN25 5AF

24 January 2023

Dear Alumni Supporters

On behalf of the "village elders" and Wye alumni who fought so hard to try and save the historic core of Wye College, I am writing to thank you. Sadly, despite our great efforts over three years, it now seems very likely that we were unsuccessful, and we have decided to close the Wye College Regeneration Group (WyeCRAG)

Personally, I find it astonishing that such an important and historic group of buildings - Grade 1 listed, on the site of a Scheduled Ancient Monument, in a statutory Conservation Area, within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and with such a unique ancient and modern cultural significance - should have been so very badly let down. Imperial College drove the first nail into the coffin, but the UK Government agency Historic England failed to provide adequate protection, and when Ashford Borough Council chose to let the Latin School go, and not to defend the buildings at the Public Inquiry, our hopes were dashed. Anyone who wishes to dip into the four-day Inquiry proceedings can still refer to our web site at www.wyecrag.org.

At the time of writing, the most historic part of Wye College still remains largely intact, and the owner/developers Telereal Trillium are progressing only slowly. Wye Building Preservation Trust CIO will keep a close eye on the Grade I buildings, liaising with regulators to ensure that the important archaeological features are not adversely affected by construction works. The charity Wye Heritage seems to remain confident

that the promise of space facilities elsewhere in the College for exhibitions and College archives, will be honoured, and no doubt any progress will be reported regularly to their supporters. <https://www.wyeheritage.org.uk/>

Given the present state of the economy, the development industry, the conservation agencies and local authority planning control, it seems likely that the future of the college campus and its historic buildings will continue to be uncertain for the foreseeable future. I am sure you share my sadness, tinged with anger and frustration. Nevertheless, I hope you will feel that, between us, WyeCRAG and its supporters did all we could.

Whatever the eventual outcome, (and while there's life there's hope) nothing can erase the happy shared memories of a very special place.

Many thanks for all the generous support.

Chris Baines (Wye horticulture 66 – 69)

On behalf of the board of WyeCRAG

The 2022 Agricola Hog Roast gathering

Jane Reynolds recorded the goings-on at last summer's Agricola Club hog roast get-together, held on Saturday 3rd July 2022 at Roves Farm, Swindon

As we pitched up in our campervan at Roves Farm on the afternoon of Friday, 2nd July we were greeted by an overcast day with gentle drizzle. We were joined by **Ali Gunner (nee Wright 73-76)** and later by Rupert, well-buttoned up against the elements. Rupert and Jo and their farm staff had already done a sterling job of preparing the cattle barn for us in that at least it was clear and the concrete was clean! So we all pitched in to put up bunting, lay out tables and chairs which had already sourced for us, while Rupert and his team created the serving tables from pieces of plywood on top of big bales.

Thankfully it was dry overnight, and the next day dawned with the promised sunshine lasting throughout. **Rastus (Andrew Jeffries, 74-77)** appeared with buckets of organic salad dishes all grown and prepared on his farm, while **Steve & Gail Taylor (73-76 & 74-77)** came with trays of strawberries from their farm in Essex and a team of early guests appeared from thin air to help hull them. **Malcolm & Liz Hughes (74-77)** brought all the booze which they had organised from Majestic whilst **Kathleen & Angus Wielkopolski (74-77 & 72-75)**, who at the last minute were unable to attend, donated home-produced goats' cheese. Jo produced lots of bowls, utensils and urns for us and also organised the fairly hefty Bookers order of all the necessary extra bits such as rolls, butter, mayonnaise, coffee, cream etc...



Our hosts Rupert (73-76) & Jo Burr

As well as Rupert and Jo, who did so much behind the scenes, our thanks must go to **Ali Wright (73-76)** who handled all the attendee responses and **John Magnay (74-77)** who really set the whole weekend in motion and printed out all the name labels.

The hog, which had been quietly cooking elsewhere, then appeared, and we were all set to go!

Approximately 190 Agricolae and their partners came. The barn was filled with the hubbub of voices finding old friends and reminiscing about the great times we all had at Wye. Little food was left over and the drinks flowed. I like to think it was a memorable day, enjoyed by all as the following photos will show. Some of us even managed to continue the party well into the evening with a meal at a local hotel where many were staying.

We are particularly indebted to Rupert and Jo – a big thank you from us all.

Wye Rustics' Cricket Tour 2022

Dickon Turner provides his yearly summary of the summer antics and achievements of the Wye graduates and guest superstars who make up the Wye Rustics, the origin of which is uncertain, but whose annual tour has been a fixture since the 1950s.

Kilmington, Sunday 3rd July 2022

The long hot summer of '22, and the dedication of the local groundsman, produced a belter of a wicket at Kilmington. The vintage Rustic openers, Charlie Squire and Richard Pool, gleefully tucked into the banquet of runs on offer. Pool's savage onslaught on one junior bowler yielded a barrage of boundaries and the immediate revoking of his DBS certificate. In the opening stand of 134 (in just 17 overs), the long levers of Pool smashed a magnificent 94 (from just 45 deliveries) before he swung across the line once too often and was adjudged LBW.

Playing second fiddle is not a phrase often

associated with the gregarious Squire, but with the departure of Pool, he took on the mantle of chief assailant, causing further damage to the figures of the Kilmington bowlers, as well as the panels of the new Kilmington sightscreen. His imperious 101 (retired) came from a comparatively pedestrian 70 balls but underpinned a frightening Rustics total of 354 for 3 in their allotted 35 overs.

Any thoughts of a relaxing fielding session in late afternoon sunshine were quickly axed. Firstly, Rustics took the field without a ball, prompting Peter Holborn's embarrassed dash through a paddock of stinging nettles



Pool's child abuse, watched by Centurion Squire at the non-striker's end (and Richardson umpiring)



Tando shatters the stumps of a Kilmington middle order batsman

to collect a ball from his vehicle in the pub car park. This new ball was then smashed to all corners of the ground as the home team cracked 41 from their first 29 deliveries before George Weston rearranged the stumps of one opening batter. Tom Anderson (Tando) was the only bowler on either side to exert any control over proceedings, reeling in figures of 3 for 45 with his left arm spin. His spell of bowling, and composed catch from the surprised Ryan Waldock, left the hosts 145 for 5 after 20 overs. The game appeared over as a contest.

Kilmington's Oscar and Garner thought otherwise. They threw caution to the wind, striking balls ball high into the blue sky and cracking tiles on both the pavilion and a neighbouring house as they landed. (These were repaired immediately by the Kilmington's opening batsman; a

professional roofer who always brings his ladder to matches). At the start of the final over an unlikely 33 runs were still required, but with 10 from the first two balls, all results remained possible. The next delivery was hoicked to the deep midwicket boundary where Chris Neild (Mum) refused the catch in favour of slapping the ball back into play from somewhere dangerously close to the boundary rope. It was enough to seal a Rustic victory in a match where 690 runs had been scored in 70 overs. Was Bazball becoming contagious?

The tourists returned to their Retreat where the experienced Martin Hole had earlier tapped a barrel of Larkins IPA. His tentative technique left him drenched in a geyser of ale. Sensibly he had removed his MCC sweater beforehand.

Devon Dumplings, Monday 4th July 2022

While Hole searched for his discarded MCC sweater, "SuperJosh" Holmes was engaged in an extreme warm up session with the younger Rustics ahead of the crunch fixture with the Dumplings. Opening the bowling, Holmes managed just 11 balls before collapsing in a heap; his tour terminated by a muscular tear.

With a pinch of good fortune, the Dumplings steamed past 50 without losing a wicket, before rookie Connor Fuller was introduced into the attack. He broke through with his 4th delivery, thanks to a sharp stumping by Robert Pinney. In tandem with Craze, the spin twins produced 17 overs of tight off breaks and controlled the run rate while picking up two more wickets.

After a luckless opening spell, pace bowler Jack Upton (Juppers) returned to grab two wickets in two balls, and with the accurate Tando joining the wicket taking party, Dumplings went to lunch on a modest 191 for 7. They must have dined well as they returned to feast on the Rustic bowling adding 77 in 9 overs to declare on 268 – 9.

After his heroics in the first match, opener Squire confidently left alone his second

ball which proceeded to crashed into his leg stump. This presented an opportunity for Craze and Fuller to unite in their second beautiful partnership of the day. Complimented by their contrasting styles, Craze drove elegantly through the off-side and Fuller pulled fiercely to leg enabling the Rustics to post 91-1 at tea. As with lunch, the interval proved an unwelcome distraction to the tourists as shortly afterwards, the score had crashed to 106 for 5. Only George Weston had an answer to the Dumplings' slower bowlers as he drove the ball forcefully both with and against the spin. When he was the 9th man out for a gallant 45, he took all Rustic hopes back to the pavilion as the team subsided to 180 all out.

The Rustics spent the evening licking their wounds in the pubs of the aptly named seaside village of Beer. However, a hasty retreat was required when SuperJosh (who had spent all day numbing his painful injury with drink) threatened to cause a native uprising. When Squire is acting as a peacemaker, you can be sure that WW3 is about to erupt.

Shobrooke Park, Tuesday 5th July 2022

SuperJosh had little recollection of the lifesaving first aid which had been administered to his retching body overnight. For his saviours, a morning dip in the sea at sunny Sidmouth helped cleanse the bodies and dull the memories of the nocturnal nursing. Meanwhile, Hole was still hunting for his MCC sweater accusing his tourmates of unspeakable skulduggery.

Having encircled Shobrooke Park in opposite directions, the Rustic navigators finally pinpointed the entrance to the cricket ground. Within minutes, the Rustic top order had lost their way again as the score spluttered to 11-3. Craze and Tando rebuilt the innings with a 66 run partnership, built on solid stroke-play, but surviving hairy mid-wicket debates over the prospects of a quick

run. When Tando was dismissed for 27, Craze became dominant, hammering boundaries all around the park with elegant precision while his new partner, Jack Griffiths, played second fiddle with a beautiful array of selfless singles. Craze completed a magnificent ton before being caught for 121 with the total on 188 for 5. The Rustic rabbits scratched around for a further 6 overs, raising the total to 212 from the allotted 35 overs.

In response, the home team were mesmerised by Griffiths' opening spell of left arm swing bowling, which could have returned much more than the 2-19 in the scorebook. These days, the Rustic woolly mammoths may not contribute much on the field, but their targeted grooming of Junior Indian International, Jeremy Tojy,



Post bathing on the beach at Sidmouth

resulted in his guest appearance for the tourists and a wicket with his very first ball, as Shobroke slipped to 118 for 5 in the 21st over. However, dogged batting by the lower middle order kept them in the game and with one over remaining they required

10 runs to win, but had just two wickets in hand. The reliable Juppers was chosen to bowl that last decisive over and after just 3 deliveries, the match was over ... two – two – six.



Robert Craze strikes his final boundary

Beaminster, Wednesday 6th July 2022

There were worried frowns on the faces of the selection committee at breakfast. Only 12 Rustics had appeared and 5 of those were evidently lame, while another was still searching for his MCC sweater. Clever recruiting saw Rustic relic Tom Atkinson appear to open the innings with some surprisingly supple stroke-play. Waldock supported him with uncharacteristic straight drives, and a slog for six which proved all too much as he was dismissed next ball. The middle order proved equally productive as the naked aggression of Tim Mitchell combined in a stand of 80 with the more refined power hitting of Weston. This was followed by the first "third generation" Rustic to grace the tour, namely James Stacy-Marks, a hidden gem from the Pinney stable, who's classy 35 left many aghast at this untapped talent. Pinney himself scored 21 (in a family stand of 44) before Craze entered the fray with 5 balls of the innings remaining... and left with 17 runs to his name.

Recent history suggests that the tourists' impressive score of 253 – 8 from their 40 overs was no reason for confidence. Sure enough, a second wicket partnership of 121 in 20 overs swung the WinViz

predictor in favour of Beaminster. With the exception of Craze's failed juggling act, the Rustic fielding was relatively alert, but plugging gaps in the quick outfield proved problematic and boundaries were plentiful. With 40 runs required in 8 overs and with 6 wickets in hand, the home side were cruising, and the battered Rustics were throwing in the towel by giving the ball to Waldock. His first spell had yielded 19 runs in just two overs, and now he threatened to lose the game through a barrage of wides. And yet, on the eighth ball of the over, he astounded the set batsman with a straight delivery that crashed into the stumps. With Juppers successfully joining the fray, Rustics confounded the bookies by snatching a 24 run victory. Juppers' bowling figures of 8 overs, 4 maidens, 8 runs, 4 wickets were not only statistically symmetrical but astonishing in that each of his victims was clean bowled for a duck.

The tour provided three dramatic finishes, one near-death experience and a few days of mayhem that proved the spirit of Wye lives on through a new breed of cricketers and a herd of woolly mammoths that defy extinction.

Addendum

Hole's MCC sweater was subsequently posted back to his home address by the Chairman of Kilmington CC who had discovered it deserted on a bench.

The Tour Party

Ex Wye College: Simon Richardson (1971-74), Peter Holborn (1974-75), Nigel Snape (1977-80), John Dinnis (1979-82), Tom Atkinson (1979-82), Martin Hole (1982-85), Dickon Turner (1982-85), Charlie Squire (1987-90), Richard Pool (1992-95)

Wye College Progeny: Robert Pinney, Robert Craze, George Dinnis

Honoured Guests: Chris Neild, Ryan Waldock, Josh Holmes, Jack Upton, Jack Griffiths, Tom Anderson, George Weston, Connor Fuller, James Stacy-Marks, Jeremy Tojy.

Statistics

Rustics	354 for 3	C Squire 101 ret, R Poole 94, R Craze 53 ret, J Griffiths 38.
Kilmington	336 for 5	T Anderson 7-0-45-3
Rustics won by 18 runs		
Dumplings	268 for 9 dec	J Upton 14-2-50-3, T Anderson 9.4-0-31-2, C Fuller 13-1-69-2, R Craze 13-1-71-2,
Rustics	180 all out	R Craze 52, G Weston 45, C Fuller 36.
Dumplings won by 88 runs		
Rustics	212 for 9	R Craze 121, T Anderson 27, J Griffiths 21.
Shobrooke Pk	213 for 8	R Craze 4-0-17-2, J Griffiths 6-1-19-2 T Anderson 7-1-41-2, J Tojy 6-2-51-2,
Shobrooke won by 2 wickets		
Rustics	253 for 8	T Mitchell 46, G Weston 37, J Stacy-Marks 35, T Atkinson 34. R Waldock 32, R Pinney 21
Beaminster	229 all out	J Upton 8-4-8-4, R Waldock 6-0-38-2
Rustics won by 24 runs		



Revision to Wye College Agricola Club Regulations

Your Committee has reviewed the existing Club Regulations that were last revised and adopted on 26 September 2014. Accordingly, your Committee recommends the adoption of the recommended revision of the regulations dated 14 April at the AGM of the Wye College Agricola Club AGM on 2 September 2023."

RECOMMENDED REVISED REGULATIONS FOR ADOPTION AT THE CLUB AGM 2023

1. Objectives

The Club shall be called "The Wye College Agricola Club" and its objects shall be to keep all who have been at Wye College, Swanley College or Imperial College at Wye in touch with one another and with the former College and to promote the professional development of its Members.

2. Members

The Club shall consist of Full and Honorary Members. All Full Members must have been students of Wye College, Swanley College, Imperial College at Wye, (including the External Programme) and past members of the Teaching, Research or Administrative Staff who have been in post for one full academic year.

Exceptionally, full membership may be extended to senior administrative or management staff of comparable professional status.

3. Honorary Members

Honorary Members shall enjoy all privileges of the Club except the right to vote at meetings of the Club. No subscription shall be requested, and they shall be entitled to receive a copy of the Journal in each year.

Only at the Annual Meeting and on the recommendation of the Committee can Honorary Members be elected.

4. Committee of Management

The management of The Club shall be in the hands of a committee consisting of the President, Honorary Treasurer, Honorary Editor, Honorary Secretary, up to ten full Members, and up to three Co-opted Members. The Trustees of the Discretionary Funds shall be de facto members of the Committee.

5. Election of President

The President shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for a period of three years. Nominations for the office of President shall be in the hands of the Honorary Secretary at least fourteen days before the date of the Annual Meeting. Nominations must be accompanied by a declaration signed by the nominees expressing willingness to serve. In the event of more than one nomination being received, election shall be by ballot at the Annual Meeting. Invitations for nominations must be posted in the Journal of the preceding year.

6. Election of Honorary Life Vice-Presidents

Honorary Life Vice-Presidents may be elected at the Annual Meeting and shall not exceed five in number. Nominations for the office shall be in the hands of the Honorary Secretary at least fourteen days before the date of the Annual Meeting. Nominations must be accompanied by a declaration signed by the nominee expressing willingness to serve. In the event of more than one nomination being received for only a single vacancy,

election shall be by ballot at the Annual Meeting. Invitations for nominations must be posted in the Journal of the preceding year.

7. Election of Officers

The Honorary Treasurer, the Honorary Editor and the Honorary Secretary shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of The Club. Their period of office shall be for three years, and they shall be eligible for re-election. Casual vacancies may be filled by the Committee until the next Annual Meeting.

8. Election of Full Members of the Committee

The Full Members of the Committee shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of The Club. Full Members of the Committee shall hold office for three years and may be re-elected for a further two terms. This rule shall not apply to elected Officers.

9. Co-option of Members to the Committee

The Committee shall have the power to co-opt not more than three persons who are Full Members of The Club. The period of service of Co-opted Members shall not exceed one year without further election.

10. Committee Chairman

The Committee shall elect its own Chairman who may serve for a period of up to three years, with power to re-elect at the end of that period if desired, or to fill any vacancy in the meantime. Candidates for the Chair must have served for at least one year on the Committee before becoming eligible for the post.

11. Committee Vice Chairman

The Committee shall elect its own Vice Chairman who may serve for a period of up to three years, with power to re-elect at the end of that period if desired, or to fill any vacancy in the meantime. Candidates for the Vice

Chairman must have served for at least one year on the Committee before becoming eligible for the post.

12. Deputy Treasurer, Deputy Editor and Deputy Secretary

The Committee may elect its own Deputy Treasurer, Deputy Editor and Deputy Secretary who may serve for a period of up to three years, with power to re-elect at the end of that period if desired, or to fill any vacancy in the meantime. In addition, the Editor may appoint his or her own Assistant Editors from outside the Committee.

13. Committee Meetings

The Committee shall meet as often as may be necessary but at least twice in each year. Notice of such meetings, together with an agenda, shall be sent in writing by the Honorary Secretary to each member of the Committee at least fourteen days before the date of the meeting. Any other business items will be allowed only for information purposes.

14. Sub Committees and Working Groups

The Committee shall be able to constitute any Sub Committee or Working Group in pursuit of the objectives of The Club. Any Sub Committee or Working Group so formed shall be Chaired by a Member of the Committee who may co-opt other Members from outside the Committee to that Sub Committee or Working Group.

15. Voting

In addition to each Full Member of the Committee, the President and Honorary Life Vice Presidents shall have a vote. Co-opted Members to the Committee shall not have a vote. The Chairman of the Committee Meeting or of the Annual General Meeting shall in addition have a casting vote. Where the Chairman of the Committee Meeting or of the Annual General

Meeting uses his or her casting vote it should be used to maintain the status quo.

16. Agricola Club Memorial Fund

The Committee shall nominate not less than three members of The Club to be appointed Trustees of the Agricola Club Memorial Fund for a period of five years. Trustees shall be eligible for re-appointment for a further two terms.

17. Membership of Club

Every candidate for membership of The Club shall complete an Application for Membership form. This form when completed, and the declaration to abide by the Club Regulations signed, shall be sent with the subscription to the Honorary Secretary. At least 75% of the Committee shall approve or reject the nomination of any candidate, a quorum of ten being present, without giving the reason. The responsibility for membership approval shall be vested in the Committee and no candidate shall assume full enrolment until approval has been obtained at a Committee meeting. The Committee shall have the right, by unanimous vote and after written notice, to withdraw the privilege of full membership from any member without giving the reason.

18. Meetings

A General Meeting of The Club (the Annual Meeting) shall be held at least once in every year, at which any business connected with The Club may be brought forward. Any amendments to the Regulations shall be set out in the Agenda for the Annual meeting as also shall any recommended change in subscriptions. The Agenda for the Annual Meeting shall be dispatched by the Honorary Secretary to all members at least 28 days before the meeting. The Honorary Secretary shall call an Extraordinary Meeting of The Club at the request of the President or at the signed request of thirty members.

19. Journal

A Journal shall be issued annually reporting the affairs of The Club. Every member shall be entitled to a copy of each issue of this Journal. The Journal shall be withheld from any Member until his/her subscription has been paid covering the year of publication.

20. Subscription

Subscriptions shall be such as are recommended by the Committee and passed by resolution at an Annual Meeting of The Club, notice of which shall have been given in the published agenda. The name of any full Member whose subscription is two years in arrears shall be brought before the Committee with a view to cancellation of membership.

A joint subscription, payment in advance, (both former members of the College) shall be accepted. Joint Membership covers the supply of one copy of the journal and one set of communications to one address.

21. Accounts and Finance

The accounts shall be made up to the end of July in each year, examined by an accountant and approved by the Annual Meeting. The statement of the income and expenditure and balance sheet shall be published in the Journal in the year following the Annual Meeting.

All monies of The Club shall be paid to a bank approved by the Committee and cheques shall be signed by the Honorary Treasurer and one other nominated officer of The Club.

All monies not required for current purposes may, on the authority of a resolution of the Committee, be invested on behalf of The Club with power for the Committee at any time to vary such investments and any existing investments, and the Committee may invest the whole of the funds in the

wide range of investments authorised by the Trustee Investment Act 1961 or its successors.

22. Club Colours

The Club colours shall be alternate red and yellow stripes on a grey ground.

23. Regulations

A copy of these regulations shall be supplied by the Honorary Secretary to each person on election to membership of The Club or on request.

AGREED BY COMMITTEE 14 April 2023



Wye College Agricola Club Annual Dinner

Saturday, September 2nd 2023

**Royal Agricultural University,
Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 6JS**

We hope to welcome a good turnout of members to keep the flag flying for Wye. Everyone who went to Wye is welcome along with your partners. This year in particular we would like to welcome people who graduated in any year ending in a '3' i.e. 1963, 1973, 1983, 1993, 2003. So please encourage your contemporaries to come and get a table together. If you started at Wye in any of these years you might like to celebrate the anniversary of your arrival. Some accommodation is available at the College on a first come, first served basis.

Please see page 136 for more details.

Wye College Agricola Club

Accounts

for the year ended 31 July 2022

Wye College Agricola Club**Accounts****for the year ended 31 July 2022**

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Accountants' report

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 2022 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 2022 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:

Wye College Agricola Club

Income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 July 2022

	2022	2021
	£	£
Income		
Sale of ties, prints etc.	365	43
Subscriptions	1,610	1,688
Donations	42	100
Annual dinner	5,001	-
Hog roast	5,670	-
Memorial Fund journal contribution	25,000	20,000
	<u>37,687</u>	<u>21,831</u>
Expenditure		
Opening stock	751	780
Purchases of ties, etc.	-	-
Closing stock	<u>(444)</u>	<u>(751)</u>
	306	29
Annual dinner	5,292	-
Hog roast	2,519	-
Wye Journal	23,495	19,127
Website expenses	238	178
Meetings, expenses and secretarial	2,075	1,356
Gift to outgoing officer	-	81
Insurance	378	366
Subscriptions TAA, Heritage	205	145
Accountancy	<u>318</u>	<u>318</u>
	34,519	21,570
	<u>34,825</u>	<u>21,600</u>
Net surplus	<u>2,861</u>	<u>231</u>

**Balance sheet
as at 31 July 2022**

	2022		2021	
	£	£	£	£
Current assets				
Lloyds Bank	3,942		574	
Stocks	444		751	
Debtors	-		-	
Prepayments	-		200	
		4,386		1,525
Current liabilities				
Accruals		(300)		(300)
Net assets		4,086		1,225
Accumulated funds				
Opening reserves		1,225		994
Surplus for the year		2,861		231
Accumulated reserves		4,086		1,225

We approve the accounts set out on pages to disclosing a net surplus of £2861 and we confirm that we have made available all relevant records and information for their purpose.

These accounts were approved on

C P Course

Treasurer

(for and on behalf of the committee)

**Notes to the accounts
for the year ended 31 July 2022**

I 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.

Charity No: 307896

Agricola Club Memorial Fund

**Accounts
for the year ended 31 July 2022**

Agricola Club Memorial Fund

Charity information

Trustees C P Course
Mrs J D Reynolds (retired 30 November 2021)
Prof. J P G Webster
Prof. J D Leaver
Mrs J Oakes (appointed 8 April 2022)

Treasurer C P Course

Charity number 307896

Registered office Heathpatch Ltd
Dairy Farm Office
Dairy Road
Semer
Ipswich
IP7 6RA

Accountants Chavereys
2 Jubilee Way
Faversham
Kent
ME13 8GD

Agricola Club Memorial Fund

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Agricola Club Memorial Fund

Accountants' report

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 Accepted 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.

The report is made to you, in accordance with the terms of our engagement. Our work has been undertaken so that we might compile the financial statements that we have been engaged to compile, report to you that we have done so, and state those matters that we have agreed to state to you in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the members of Wye College Agricola Club Memorial Fund, for our work, or for this report.

You have approved the financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2022 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:

Agricola Club Memorial Fund**Income and expenditure account
for the year ended 31 July 2022**

	Note	£	2022 £	£	2021 £
Income					
Dividends received		14,130		15,280	
Donations		-		-	
			14,130		15,280
Expenditure					
Student / member awards	2	-		-	
Support of Wye College Agricola Club		25,000		20,000	
Governance expenses		3,882		3,839	
			(28,882)		(23,839)
Net deficit for the year			(14,752)		(8,559)
Retained surplus brought forward			512,517		445,395
			497,765		436,836
Net (decrease)/increase in value of investments			(22,079)		75,681
Retained surplus carried forward			475,687		512,517

All receipts are unrestricted funds

Agricola Club Memorial Fund

Statement of assets and liabilities

as at 31 July 2022

	2022	2021
£	£	£
Cash funds		
Current account	1,318	5,263
Cash held by broker - Portfolio 1	8,891	6,780
Cash held by broker - Portfolio 2	30,124	4,044
Investment assets		
2,052.00 Charifund Income Units	30,866	31,652
897.09 BlackRock European Income Units	28,649	32,991
Portfolio 1		
846.42 Rathbone Income Units	7,135	7,224
2,248.85 Artemis Income Fund Class R	4,954	4,995
- Invesco monthly inc plus fund	-	-
- Ninety One UK Total Return Fund A	-	-
- IFSL Brooks Defensive Capital Class B Acc	-	-
88.00 Veritas Global Equity Income GBP Class A	18,512	17,891
51.35 Fidelity Cash W (inc)	51	85
10,000.00 Threadneedle High Yield Bond clas I	3,691	4,279
21,079.87 ARC TIME Commercial Long Income D (Inc)	21,470	21,040
1,746.00 Aberforth Smaller Companies (ASL)	22,087	27,098
5,514.41 VT Gravis Clean Energy Income C (Inc)	9,041	8,347
3,092.96 BNY Mellon Global Emerging Mkt Fund Inst. W(Inc)	6,973	7,875
458.71 Ninety One UK Special Situations B (Acc)	6,236	6,507
	100,150	105,340
Portfolio 2		
814.42 Fidelity Asia A (Acc)	12,347	15,649
- Janus Henderson UK Property	-	21,851
15,493.63 Invesco Monthly Income Plus Fund	14,869	18,595
44,344.32 M & G Global High Yield Bond X Class	17,920	23,508
352.56 Fidelity Cash W (inc)	353	167
45,000.00 Threadneedle High Yield Bond Class	16,610	19,256
- Threadneedle UK Property Trust	-	-
4,722.00 Murray Income Trust (MUT)	41,176	42,805
1,862.00 Aberforth Smaller Companies (ASL)	23,554	28,898
6,586.15 Stewart investors Asia Pacific Leaders Class A	58,008	64,881
22,484.83 ARC TIME Commercial Long Income D (Inc)	22,901	22,442
14,147.86 ARC TIME Freehold Income Auth. H (Inc)	31,458	30,807
14,859.43 BNY Mellon Global Income (Inc)	36,996	38,088
	276,189	326,947
Less accruals		
Accountancy	(500)	(500)
	(500)	(500)
	475,687	512,517

Agricola Club Memorial Fund

Statement of assets and liabilities as at 31 July 2022

We approve the accounts set out on pages 2 to 5 disclosing a net deficit of £14752 and confirm that we have made available all relevant records and information for their purpose.

These accounts were approved by the trustees on

Prof. J P G Webster
Trustee

C P Course
Trustee

Agricola Club Memorial Fund

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 July 2022

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.

Report on use of the Wye Agricola Club

2019 and 2020 grants to TAAF

Introduction

TAAF helps young UK long term residents to gain appropriate experience and insights into developing countries in order to get a foot on the career ladder and contribute to the UK knowledge base. The bulk of our awards are made to masters students undertaking research for their dissertations in developing countries, with some reserved for longer term research/projects of six months or more. Masters awards are up to £1,500 each with Standard Awards approximately £2000.

Until now UK residency has been a pre-requisite, but TAAF is looking to expand its reach and respond to demand from overseas students studying in the UK. In addition, TAA's new strategy will bring together active individuals from both North and South through an enhanced digital offer which will open up the awards to an even larger cohort.

2019 grant of £4000

£2000 has enabled a long term award to PhD student Martin Watts to conduct research in Moshi, Tanzania on home garden agroforestry on the slopes of Kilimanjaro as an adaptation strategy for smallholder farmers to future climate variability and change. Martin's research was extended considerably due to Covid-19 preventing travel. He is in the process of finalising his findings and planning dissemination in Tanzania. He presented his research to TAA AGM in 2021 (see separate PDF of his presentation). He is just publishing his initial findings in Science of the Total Environment next month. I will send you a copy of his final report once we have it.

£1000 for Masters student Emma Abadi to explore the role of cocoa producers in chocolate manufacturer's sustainable sourcing commitments in Ghana. Emma is now working in the finance sector as a Research Analyst with Signal Climate Analytics which provides insights into corporate decarbonisation and business model transformation.

£1000 funded a one-day workshop for returned awardees in November 2019 to help them with their careers. 18 participants took part of which 11 were recently returned along with 7 members of TAAF committee (4 themselves ex awardees). This was deemed successful by all participants. It enabled them to gain experience in presenting and discussing their work with peers as well as establish links with others and gain career insights through a careers workshop.

2020 grant of £4000

The period of the Covid-19 pandemic was a very challenging one for students and universities alike with many curtailing students study overseas. Travel restrictions and the patchy opening up of countries contributed to ongoing uncertainty too. Over 2020-2021 TAAF decided to offer the option of smaller grants for students to conduct remote research with the use of local field assistants and translators. This was welcomed by universities and enabled six students to carry out their projects some with short visits overseas and others entirely remotely.

A £2000 WAC award was given to a very able PhD student, Juniper Kiss to conduct research into improved soil management techniques in order to

enhance food security in Papua New Guinea. Her departure was much delayed until spring 2022. In the first month she was able to set up her trial plots however during that time she contracted drug resistant malaria and so had to be evacuated. The research institute and field sites are in the lowlands which are malarial hotspots throughout the year. As a result, her insurers and university have advised her not to return. This was extremely disappointing for Juniper who has put her PhD research on hold as a result. We had high hopes for her research and its applications too. We are in the process of re-claiming the grant and will re-allocate it.

£1000 has been allocated to a 2022 masters student at Imperial College, Lola Grundmann, whose project is looking at the very topical issue of agricultural transition in Sri Lanka: to what extent can paddy (rice) farming in Sri Lanka can rely on organic fertilisers and how the use of chemical fertilizers can be reduced.

£1000 has been allocated to a 2022 masters student, Lucy Birchall to investigate the experiences and empowerment of women participating in the Mozambique's honey value chain. This means, (once we have been able to reclaim Juniper's grant) there should be £2000 of WAC funds remaining. We plan to allocate it during the current TAA financial year (ending in July 2023) to two masters student in the forthcoming application round. We will let you once this has happened.

The Future

It has been a challenging few years for both TAAF and the TAA. TAA is now developing a new strategy based around the reach of the online peer-reviewed, open-access journal, which will increase its credibility and appeal and draw in involvement and

enabling networking of professionals from across the world. It will mean a significant enhancement of website and its capabilities is required. As a result, it will create opportunities for expansion of both the TAA and TAAF offerings.

We therefore envisage an expansion of the TAA awards to a more diverse cohort. We are extremely grateful for the support of WAC thus far which has provided support for some very able students and would be grateful of ongoing WAC support to enable us to put in place our new strategy.

I would be very happy to provide further information if required.

Jane Wilkinson
TAAF Chair



Wye College Agricola Club Annual Dinner

Saturday, September 2nd 2023

**Royal Agricultural University,
Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 6JS**

We hope to welcome a good turnout of members to keep the flag flying for Wye. Everyone who went to Wye is welcome along with your partners. This year in particular we would like to welcome people who graduated in any year ending in a '3' i.e. 1963, 1973, 1983, 1993, 2003. So please encourage your contemporaries to come and get a table together. If you started at Wye in any of these years you might like to celebrate the anniversary of your arrival. Some accommodation is available at the College on a first come, first served basis – please see below.

(Dress: Smart – Black Tie or Jacket & Tie please)

Menu

Sparkling wine & Canapes from 6.45pm

Starters:

Gin cured Salmon, apple remoulade, compressed & pickled cucumber, herb oil

OR:

Leek & Potato Soup with toasted seeds

Main Course:

Slow-cooked Pork belly, black pudding bonbon, fondant potato, cavolo nero, cider cream reduction

OR:

Pan-fried Polenta, roasted Mediterranean vegetables with a basil pesto dressing

Dessert:

Triple Chocolate Brownie, dulce de leche, chocolate sauce, raspberries, Chantilly cream

OR:

Cheese – local artisan selection with biscuits, apple, grape, celery & chutney

Tea / coffee

.....

Wye College Agricola Club Annual Dinner 2nd September 2023

Name Tel.no

Address Postcode

Email address

Years of attendance at Wye College

Please reserve places at **£45** (inc. VAT) per person

Please list full names for the seating plan;

Is there anyone else your party wish to be seated near;

Menu: Please indicate Nos:

Dessert

Starter: Salmon ☐ OR Leek & Potato Soup ☐ Chocolate Brownie ☐

Main: Pork belly ☐ OR Polenta & Med. veg ☐ OR Cheese ☐

Please note, Cirencester will be running a pay bar for drinks at the table.

Accommodation: Ensuite Doubles & Twin bedrooms are available at £102/room, including breakfast.

10 ensuite single rooms are also available at £61.50, including breakfast.

I/We will require a Double room £102

I will require a Single room£61.50

Please return this form & your cheque payable to the 'Wye College Agricola Club' by **August 18th** to Mrs Jane Reynolds, The Pent, Postling, Hythe, Kent CT21 4EY.

OR if you wish to pay online, please send or scan your form to me first and I will email you the bank details.

Any queries to info@janesgardendesign.com or 01303 862436.

You will be acknowledged by email (please write it clearly!) otherwise send an SAE

Notes