

**WYE**  
*The Journal*  
*of*  
*The Wye College Agricola Club*



*Volume XIX*

*2023–2024*

*Number 4*



## Wye College Agricola Club

Agricola Club Secretariat, 32 Mill Lane, Besthorpe,  
Attleborough, Norfolk NR17 2NL United Kingdom

### Secretary

James Trounce

Tel: 01953 455997

Email: [secretary@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk](mailto:secretary@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk)

### Journal editor

Martin Rickatson

Tel: 01379 730227 / 07595 031217

Email: [secretary@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk](mailto:secretary@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk)

### Agricola Club Database Administrator

Siân Phelps

[database@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk](mailto:database@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk)

### Design and print

Geerings Print Ltd

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



*A couple of old documents from editor Martin Rickatson's collection of Wye College memorabilia. If you can share images of anything similar for the next edition of 'Wye', please get in touch - and if you are seeking a new home for such items, please make contact with Wye Heritage, details of which can be found elsewhere in this edition.*

# Contacts

- UK** All queries (including membership): James Trounce  
Tel: +44 (0)1953 455997  
Email: secretary@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk  
Agricola Club Secretariat, 32 Mill Lane, Besthorpe, Attelborough, Norfolk  
NR17 2NL, UK
- OVERSEAS** **Do get in touch with your named contact**
- Australia** Peter Darby, Box 308, Lyndoch, Barossa Valley, SA 5351  
Tel: +61 420720137 or +61 424448445  
Email: petegaildarby@bigpond.com  
Helen Day, PO Box 193 Kapunda SA 5373  
Email: thday@bigpond.com  
Robert Lewis, 21 Peters Road, Seville East, Victoria 3139  
Tel: +61 438547163 Email: robert.lewis2@programmed.com.au
- Botswana** Motshwari Obopile, Dept of Agricultural Research, PB 0033, Gaborone
- Eswatini**  
(Swaziland) David Gooday, PO Box 1288, Mbabane, H100, Eswatini  
Tel: +268 76030154  
Email: davidmalcolmgooday@gmail.com
- France** Jerome Houssait-Young, Centre équestre de Clavieres et Medoc polo club, 96 Rue d'Hourtin, Vendays-Montalivet, 33930. Tel: +33 677818871  
Peter Newell, 477 Rue des Fougieres, 24470, St Pardoux la Riviere, Nouvelle Aquitaine. Tel: +33 553603421  
David Pitcairn, 150 Chemin des Falets, Chamonix Mont-Blanc, 74400. Tel: +33 647824743
- Kenya** James Hutchings, PO Box 1877, Naivasha  
Email: james@dogrock.net
- New Zealand** John Varcoe, 154 Charles Road, Karaka, RD1 Papakura, 2580 Auckland  
Tel: +64 21997788 Email: johnv@everythingdesign.co.nz
- Nigeria** Christopher Akujuobi, Afribank Nigeria plc, N Chia Branch, 33 Hospital Road PMB 2002, Nchia-Eleone
- Uganda** John Magnay, 17 Akii Bua Road, Nakasero, P O Box 32041, Kampala  
Tel: 256 772771237 Email: johnmagnay@gmail.com
- USA** Adrian Wadley, 1750 27th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94122 - 4210  
Email: adrian@wadley.net.com



# Contents

<b>President’s message:</b> Paul Webster	2	<b>Life after Wye</b>	
<b>Chairman’s Report:</b> Michael Payne	5	Rob Smith (Wye 1968-1971)	42
<b>Editor’s page:</b> Martin Rickatson	7	Sophia Martin (Wye 1979-82)	47
<b>Secretary’s report:</b> James Trounce	8	Tim Passmore (Wye 1978-81)	49
<b>Wye College Agricola Club Committee Meeting</b>	9	John Meadley (Wye 1965-68)	51
<b>71<sup>st</sup> Wye College Agricola Club AGM 2023 minutes</b>	10	Bill Fletcher (Wye 1967-70)	54
<b>Wye College Agricola Club notice of Annual General Meeting</b>	13	Mike Boddington (staff 1967- )	60
<b>Deaths</b>	14	Berkeley Hill (staff 1970- )	65
<b>Obituaries</b>		<b>Features</b>	
Stephen Carr (Wye 1948-51)	14	The foundation of an agricultural college at Wye:	
Cliff Martindale (staff 1966- )	23	Michael Payne (Wye 1978-81)	67
George Medley (Wye 1949-52)	26	The hanging, de-hanging and re-hanging of Allan Jackson’s Coco De Mer: Bernard Sparkes, (Staff 1968-1983)	71
John Hudson (Wye 1964-67)	30	Assessing Africa’s agricultural needs: Martin Rickatson (Wye 1994-97)	72
Richard John (Dick) Parsons (Wye 1949-1952)	31	<b>Books</b>	
Doreen Miller (nee Griffiths, Wye 1957-58)	32	Vegetable Brassicas and Related Crucifers:	
Poul Brander (Wye 1962-64)	34	Prof Geoff Dixon (Wye 1962-68)	78
John Wheeler and Dorothy Wheeler (née Young) (Wye 1954-57)	34	Discovering Roman Wye: Dr. Paul Burnham - a review by Michael Payne (Wye 1978-81)	79
Amanda Webster (wife of Paul Webster, staff 1964- )	36	<b>Features</b>	
Dr Ruth Gasson MBE (Wye 1957-60)	36	Brook Rural Museum: a hidden gem: David Caffall (Wye 1970-73)	80
<b>News of Members</b>	39	The return of Wye College treasures	82
<b>The Wye Heritage Centre</b>	40		

## Reports

Co-ordinating the cohort: David Caffall	83
The 2023 Agricola Club Annual Dinner: Michael Payne (Wye 1978-81)	85
Wye Rustics' Cricket Tour 2023: Dickon Turner	87

## Agricola Club matters

Wye College Agricola Club Summer Hog Roast 2024	93
Wye College logo clothing	95
Wye College Agricola Club Accounts	97
Agricola Club Memorial Fund Accounts	103

## Agricola Club Contacts Directory

Email Addresses	111
Overseas Members Addresses	153
Lost Members	166



## 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](mailto:secretary@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk)

# President's message

**Paul Webster (postgraduate 1964- and staff)**

May I offer a warm welcome to the 2024 Agricola Club Journal. I am always amazed and fascinated to read of the post-Wye careers of students – there is so much variety and interest. Anyone involved in education gets tremendous pleasure from reading about the achievements of his or her former students. and I am no exception. This year I thought I might offer some of my own experience of developing a research program at Wye. Research is one of the most important features of life for an aspiring academic. It is essential for the continuous refreshing of the teaching, and it often goes on without much knowledge by students.

At Wye we had a broad range of disciplines but with a common interest in agriculture. In the Economics Department the choice of topic was largely up to the individual. We were in the fortunate position of being able to bounce ideas off colleagues and get suggestions from a wide range of specialists. Wye College really was collegiate.

This was the situation for me when I became interested in the study of risky decisions in the 1960s. Common observation of farmers at work showed that they were continually having to take risks. Unfortunately, farm economics in the 60s had very little to say about it. We blithely encouraged farmers to spend a lot of time constructing budgets (no spreadsheets in those days) but every figure they used was treated as certain. Farmers would say 'why are we spending so much time on these budgets when we know that almost every figure will be wrong?' And we would try to explain that the true value of a budget is the process of thinking through the likely outcomes of a plan, rather than the exact figures themselves. (But try telling that to your boss in a large organisation where your budget may morph into a target – a very different kettle of fish. But that's another story!)



I always had an interest as to how farmers might take a more logical approach to risky decisions. I remember in the mid '60s writing an extended essay on such matters, and was slightly taken aback what little there was. There were a few suggestions borrowed from the theory of games, such as the maximin criterion (choose that option which maximises the minimum possible income) and not much else. These might be fine for a few people in a few restricted situations, but the lack of generality was embarrassingly obvious.

However, in the late '60s the mainstream economics and business literature began to see the rise of the decision analysis approach, whose origins went back to Frank Ramsey in the 1920s. Ramsey had asked the question: 'what works for the people who make these decisions?' He formulated the notion that people make judgements about the likelihood of the various outcomes of the decision and they combine them with the attractiveness of each of the outcomes to arrive at a choice. He

---

put it on a firm logical and theoretical basis. Few people understood it at the time, and it was not until the '50s and '60s that the world began to sit up and take notice of Ramsey's efforts. It came to be known as the Subjective Expected Utility (SEU) model and is still widely used today. Whenever your friendly neighbourhood financial adviser asks you to state your risk appetite, he is knowingly or unknowingly using Ramsey's work.

On my return from Uganda in 1971, I started to investigate what the approach might hold for farming decisions. Research on agricultural applications of decision analysis was very limited at that time, but there was a group working on it at the University of New England in Australia. You may imagine my surprise in late 1972 when I got an approach to spend six months there, only a year after I had come back to Wye. Fortunately, my then boss was sympathetic, but said "just make sure you're back in time for the start of the Farmers Company course on 10<sup>th</sup> January"!

So it was that, having left Wye the day after the Commem Ball, and having just got off the plane in Armidale, I found myself being shown into the office of John Dillon, the head of the department there. He happened at that moment to be on the telephone to Sydney, bidding for a pair of convict leg-irons. But we soon got down to business and I found myself working with John Kennedy (Wye 1968-71) among others, and learned about the methods for eliciting subjective probabilities and risk attitudes. I remember one Australian farmer, having answered the apparently abstruse series of gambling questions, saying that he had had many interaction with farm economists over the years, but this was the first time he'd had to answer the sort of questions he faced every day in his work. I knew then that we were on to something. At the end of the six months, we duly returned to Wye in time for the Farmers Course. On the way back we spent a lovely Christmas in Fiji with Harry Franks and Rick Viner (Wye 63-66) who were both working there at the time.

So here was I, tooled up with the theory and



*Septoria tritici* in wheats (courtesy of Farmers Weekly/Blackthorn Arable)

practice of SEU decision analysis but looking for a problem to work on. Chance then intervened. One evening up at my Occupation Road allotment I was chatting to George Pegg who had the adjacent allotment. George, who was a reader in plant pathology in the Biological Sciences Department at the time, told me that the folks at the adjacent Wye Regional ADAS centre were having a problem with the provision of advice relating to late-onset Septoria disease in wheat and suggested I might be interested to have a look at it.

The problem was that if the farmer knew that he had the disease in his wheat crop, it was probably too late to do anything about it. It was expensive to spray against, but if you didn't, the revenue losses could be severe if it was a heavy disease year. At that time in the early 70s, it appeared perhaps only two years in five. 'To spray or not to spray' was thus a classic risky decision where several factors were involved. Whilst the specialist ADAS plant pathologists (one in each region) could give a tailored recommendation for an individual crop, there was no possibility that they could do this for the bulk of the farmer population. Local advisors just did not have the latest experimental results at their fingertips.



Indeed, there was a suspicion that the local advisors would follow the spray salesmen and give blanket recommendations to spray, since it covered up their mistakes!

With Robert Cook, the regional plant pathologist at Wye, we set about analysing the spray/no spray decision. It turned out that there were four key characteristics which determined the severity of the disease and thus the yield response to a spray. They were the variety being grown, the presence of disease already in the crop, the topography of the field and the weather forecast for the coming week. We then elicited the subjective probability distributions of yield response under these conditions from the regional specialists whose job it was to be up to date on all the experimental evidence. As to the attitudes to risk of farmers, I had been investigating this for the previous few years and had a sample size of around 80 to work with. Interestingly, over the relevant range of yield differences they faced from the disease, all were pretty much indifferent to the risks. This simplified things considerably and we ended up with a decision aid which the farmer or local adviser could use. All he needed to do was to answer four yes/no questions and, with knowledge of the likely costs of spraying (DIY or contract), the aid could immediately give a 'best bet' answer.

The advisers who had been initially very sceptical soon saw the sense of it. The spray/no spray decision *was* originally a gamble, and it *remained* a gamble, but the odds against getting it wrong had been much reduced. ADAS then produced a leaflet setting out the questions and leading directly to the recommendation. All wheat farmers in Kent were sent a copy. We calculated that the use of it was worth around £100,000 a year for Kentish farmers alone. Of course, this was in the 1970s and a lot has changed since then. But it did feed into the concept of managed disease control rather than the blanket spraying of anything that looked as if it might harm the crop. We published several papers in the economics literature and well as applied biology journals. The idea of probabilities

being subjective was still controversial in some disciplines, even though it had been around since the Rev Thomas Bayes in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. When I gave a seminar to the biologists in College, Walter Schwabe hated it. He couldn't see that no amount of experimentation could give a reasonable sample size across years when such factors as the varieties and active ingredients were changing perhaps every year. We were just formalising the judgements the specialists would have used anyway in the making of their recommendation. Interestingly for me, I had started out with the idea that the farmers were overspraying because they were risk averse. But what the work showed was that the farmers' subjective probabilities of disease loss were far too high. Perhaps they had too much faith in the advertisements of the fungicide manufacturers.

Looking back, I would say that it was probably the most immediately useful piece of research that I ever did. But I fear that it would not have found favour with the soon to be imposed Research Assessment Exercise. Yes, it was quite original with a few 'firsts', but it was applied only to a region within the UK. It used no resources apart from my time and that of the ADAS personnel, so whilst it was cheap, there were no big grants on display. But for me it led to further work on the economics of disease control in crops and a couple of stints on the Advisory Committee on Pesticides, which was very interesting. As you might expect, I used the work as a case study for teaching purposes for some years, giving each of the students a copy of the ADAS leaflet. After a few years I ran out of copies and asked for some more. But in the meantime, ADAS had been part-privatised and their response was that the leaflet was now only available to me at £25 per copy!

This was just one of the areas which I explored during my time at Wye. But it illustrates the way apparently random events can produce interesting results. I count myself lucky to have been in a place which gave such encouragement to its young academics.

# Chairman's report

## Michael Payne (Wye 1978-81)

Last September witnessed the annual gathering of the Agricola Club, held on this occasion at the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester, rather than in Wye itself. The sun shone and the evening reception was able to spill out from their equivalent of our former Parlour onto the lawns outside. However, when it came to ordering drinks for the table, from the bar set up in the room between the reception and the hall, despite having a comprehensive wine list, the very affable gentleman serving us was soon overrun with orders and had to dispatch his attentive understudy for more bottles from the cellar. It seems that perhaps Cirencester students may be a little more abstemious in their drinking habits than those from Wye! Despite pleas by him to serve us at the table instead, everyone was soon substituting orders for whatever bottles were available, and indeed the bar itself became the bottleneck!

The ancient dining hall lent itself to a Hogwarts-style atmosphere complete with a public address system that must have belonged to the same era. The long tables, good food, hospitality, and company soon made everyone feel at home and conversation flowed.

The occasion was also my baptism of fire as your new Chairman, having only been elected to the role at our AGM that afternoon. Hence, I wish to say a big thank you to Jane Reynolds, my predecessor, who has ably steered your Club through the last few years, including the difficulties presented by the pandemic. I also wish to thank Paul Webster, our President, who has been a great support to me and continues to give us all a strong and stable lead.

I am pleased to welcome John Magnay and Dorothy Fairburn as new members of your committee. John will be familiar to many of you through the Wye 70s WhatsApp group



*Michael at the 2023 National Fruit Show with former NFU president Minette Batters*

that he set up and has been running for several years. His understanding of all things social media-orientated is assisting us to update the website and other procedures. This is an opportunity for me to stress once again the importance of keeping your contact details up to date, especially including email addresses. Dorothy likewise will be a useful addition to your committee and will doubtless already be known to many of you through her previous work with the CLA.

I am also grateful for the assistance given to me by everyone else on your committee, especially Malcolm in his role of Vice Chairman, for acting as my sounding board with his words of wisdom. So too my thanks to James Trounce as Secretary, Charles Course our Treasurer and Martin Rickatson without whom this year's Journal would not have been possible. The other unsung hero is Sian Phelps, our database manager, who also produces our email newsletters. My thanks also go to those who have now stepped down from the committee after many years

of service to our Club. These include John Waters, Berkeley Hill, and Susan Atkinson.

So, what should we expect in the year ahead? Firstly, this year will see the return of a hog roast. This was to have been held in Lincolnshire courtesy of Archie Saul. Unfortunately, this has had to move to a different venue due to the adverse effects that the wet winter has brought to his part of the country, and we wish Archie well with the recovery of his soils and crops. The good news is that the gathering is now to be held in Yorkshire by kind invitation of Tom Mellor. It remains booked for the same date, 29 June 2024, and I look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible.

---

We are also hopeful that this year will see the opening of the first of the new residential units at Wye College. It has been a long gestation since the college closed in 2009 and whilst such a transformation may not have been our original wish, it does at least mean that the historic fabric of the buildings will have been saved. It is my hope that we will be able to return to Wye as part of our annual gathering in 2025 and that we will be able to see the restoration that will at least retain some crucial elements including the Jacobean Staircase, Chapel and Old Lecture Theatre, as well as the Parlour and Old Hall.



## 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](mailto:secretary@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk)

## Editor's page

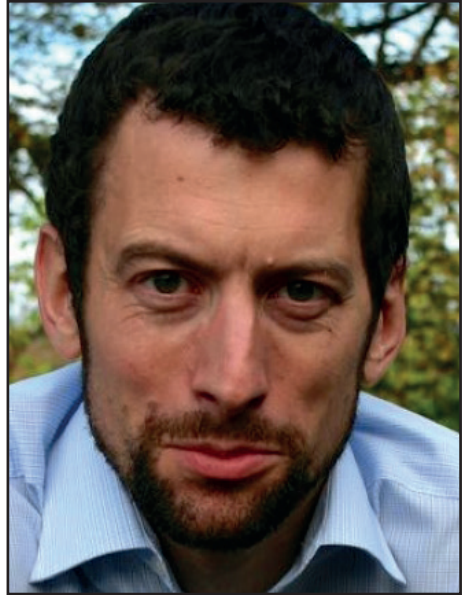
### Martin Rickatson (Wye 1994-97)

The one certainty in life is change. While there was plenty of that during the first decade of this century for those with connections to Wye College, in recent years time seems to have stood still a little for those passing by the College's main building, whether frequently as a local resident or on a visit back to old haunts as a former student taking a look for old times' sake. The large wooden doors of the main entrance remained closed for month after month and year after year, and there was little sign of anything happening within.

Now, though, change is afoot, and whatever water has flown murkily under the bridge, it is at least heartening to see something positive taking place as the next chapter in the life of the old College buildings begins and their conversion starts to take place. Those with an interest in what is happening at the site may care to take a look here <https://wyecollegecollection.com/about-us/>. Those who like to remember the College as it was may prefer not to. Little in life ever stays the same, though.

I was very pleased to receive many favourable comments on the last edition of 'Wye', my first as editor after a decade away. At the same time, I apologise to those who quite rightly pointed out errors and omissions, which are all solely my responsibility. Putting together an annual of this size on a solitary basis while maintaining in some sort of order all the emails full of material and photos is a task which I am not yet quite managing as efficiently as I could. Hopefully this edition will prove a little better than the last, and if it is I shall be happy,

Thanks are due to members of the Agricola Club committee and to former students and staff who have put fingers to keyboards (and in some cases pen to paper, setting me some handwriting deciphering challenges!) to provide such a wide range of articles and



reports, ranging from travels around America in the 1960s to Wye's foundations as an agricultural and horticultural college. If you know of fellow Wye graduates who are not Agricola Club members, please do tell them about its benefits, including this Journal, the annual gathering and the opportunity our resources present to make contact with old friends. The one certainty in life is change – and many of us are intrigued to see how our contemporaries have changed over the years!



# Secretary's report

## James Trounce (Wye 1976-79)

I'm pleased to report that during the past year there has been a revived interest in joining the Agricola Club from a number of ex-Wye people who did not sign up as members upon graduation. A good amount of this has been stimulated by various committee members who have publicised the club via social media and the farming press, and there have been over 20 new enquiries this year. If you have Wye contemporaries who are not Agricola Club members, please do encourage them to get in touch and join. My telephone number or email address on the inner front page of the journal are the best first points of contact, and there is an application form at the back of the journal. Subscription rates for the Agricola Club were reviewed earlier this year, and a proposal will be brought up at the next AGM. At present, life membership is only £50.

Elsewhere in this edition you can read about the 2023 Agricola Club gathering, which took place in September at the Royal Agricultural University in Cirencester, for a dinner on the Saturday evening followed by a farm tour on the Sunday. We are now looking forward to a this year's event, which will take the form of a hog roast and walk at Tom Mellor's farm in Yorkshire on Saturday June 29<sup>th</sup>.

### The Agricola Club committee

The committee continues to meet regularly on-line and, where possible, face to face. A 'hybrid' model has come to work quite well, and most recently a number of us met in London at the CLA offices, with other committee members joining over the internet. It is good to see new volunteers coming forward, with Dorothy Fairburn co-opted onto the committee at this meeting.

### Future events

Our plan for the annual Agricola Club gatherings is to continue with the pattern



of a formal dinner one year alternating with a summer farm-based event the next. We are, though, keen to ensure our meeting venues are spread around the UK to ease the travel for those living in different areas and to allow us to enjoy different venues and areas of countryside. If you have/know of suitable gathering venues and/or of a farm or horticultural enterprise we might be able to tour, please do get in touch.

### Wye Heritage

The Agricola Club committee continues to have regular dialogue with Wye Heritage as it develops a permanent base and an archive of College and village material. We are looking particularly to support the collection in relation to the College. If you have College memorabilia that may need a future home, please do contact Wye Heritage.

### Club merchandise and College memorabilia

We now have available a new source of clothing adorned with the Wye College logo. This includes polo shirts, sweat shirts and gilets. There is an order form in the back of this edition of the Journal. Club ties and bow ties are also in stock.

# Wye College Agricola Club Committee Meeting

## Minutes of Committee Meeting held on Sat 2nd Sept 2023 at 4.30 pm. Meeting held at The Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester

### Present

Malcolm Alexander (MA), Chris Baines (CB), Charles Course (CC, Hon. Treasurer), Michael Payne (MP, Chair-elect), Jane Reynolds (JR, Chair), Paul Webster (PW, President). Martin Rickatson (MR, Journal Editor) partially able to join via Zoom

- 1 **Apologies for absence** Sue Atkinson (SA), Geoff Dixon, Berkeley Hill (BH), David Simmons, James Trounce (JT, Hon Secretary)
- 2 **Minutes of the last meeting Friday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2023**  
The Minutes were approved.
- 3 **Matters arising**  
There were no matters arising.
- 4 **Secretary's Report (JT)**  
JT had circulated his report before the meeting. The key points were that BH was now standing down from Committee after his co-opted rôle updating the project looking at the Club's future, there had been 23 new membership enquiries via MR's Facebook post, although we had inevitably lost some members during the year. The application and subscription system was rather archaic [*this is being looked at following the meeting*].
- 5 **Treasurer's Report (CC)**  
The Journal had cost £11,800 inc postage, substantially less than previously – this was partly due to not including address lists so cutting down on weight. Meeting

costs were down to £1600. The Dinner costs and revenue were virtually similar. £18,000 drawn down from the Memorial Fund, leading to a surplus of £3594, therefore cost of operating the Club for the year was £15,000. Effectively the Agricola Club accounts are the balance sheet showing any creditors at the year end. The Memorial Fund has £485,000 in total, of which £290,000 is in the Agricola Club sub fund (repatriated from Imperial) and £195,000 in the Memorial sub fund.

PW suggested that we should consider making donations from the Memorial Fund in the current year, John Meadley possibly has worldwide contacts for overseas funding requests, and Wye Heritage is likely to require assistance re the new Heritage Centre.

PW intended to ask the AGM to delegate formal approval of the Club accounts to the Committee, assuming that the Examiner is content and there are no material changes.

### 6 **Journal Editor's Report (MR)**

MR thanked Agricola members, other graduates and staff for articles. Committing to the workload without assistance had been quite difficult, Geerings were very prompt with the printing, and there was a cost saving by not having a Proof Editor. JR was happy to assist proof reading and obtain assistance for another year. If publication could be brought forward by two months to May/June it would be very helpful, especially if a summer

BBQ is held next July. Using social media to publicise as per Secretary's report.

**7 Report from IT Working Group (CC)**

CC reported that the group had consisted of himself, Siân Phelps (Database Administrator), PW, MR and initially Keith Franklin (and Francis Huntington, still overseeing the website). It had been decided that MailChimp and Access were satisfactory for now. It was believed that we were GDPR compliant for a Members-only area on the website. Website talk with MR planned for the next meeting.

**8 Future events (JR)**

Next year's event was likely to be a BBQ, possibly at Archie Saul's in Lincolnshire *[this was apparently confirmed after the meeting]*.

**9 AGM matters**

PW aimed to get the accounts signed off as in the note to the Treasurer's report above.

Elections – MA, CC and JT re-elected. Sue Atkinson and BH were standing down, also lost John Walters. JR had contacted John Magnay in Uganda, who was happy to stand – proposed JR, seconded MA and agreed unanimously by Committee.

**10 AOB**

There was no other business

**11 Date of next meeting**

April 2024

Signed .....  
Date .....  
(Chair)

---

# Wye College Agricola Club AGM

## Minutes of the 71st Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 2nd September 2023 at 5.30 pm Meeting held at the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester

**Present:**

Malcolm Alexander (MA), Chris Baines (CB), Charles Course (CC, Hon Treasurer), Michael Payne (MP, Committee Chair-elect), Jane Reynolds (JR, Committee Chair), Paul Webster (PW, President), and a number of members.

**1 Apologies for absence**

Sue Atkinson (SA), Berkeley Hill, Geoff Dixon, Martin Rickatson (MR, Journal Editor – if internet connection fails), David Simmons, James Trounce (JT, Hon Secretary)

**2 Minutes – confirm the Minutes of the 70<sup>th</sup> AGM published in the Journal**

It was resolved that the Minutes of the 70<sup>th</sup> AGM were a true record.

**3 Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

**4 Chairman's Report**

JR reported a good year, calm and plain sailing with JT as Secretary. There was now a range of new Club merchandise, forms would be available for ordering sweatshirts, hoodies etc, and a newsletter would be going out

with details. JR thanked CC as Treasurer, MR as Journal Editor (and will be asking for others to assist him next year), PW as President and Siân Phelps (SP) as Database Administrator.

JR thanked BH, who had worked with MA and SA on a paper regarding the future of the Club. The conclusion is the current format of having a social event and a journal each year was both needed and sustainable. BH and SA have now both retired from the Committee.

CC was leading an IT group looking at improving the website and how to communicate better with the membership. It is envisaged that the membership list will be held in a secure area on the website; currently the list is available to members on request from SP.

MP had led a revision of the Club rules.

Rupert Burr had hosted a very successful hog roast in Wiltshire last year, with some 150 Club members in attendance.

This year the Committee had elected MP as the new Chairman to succeed JR who was stepping down; MA was also elected as Vice-Chairman. PW thanked JR on behalf of the Club for her highly successful term and many years of hard work.

## 5 Secretary's Report

PW presented the highlights of JT's report in his absence. These included BH and SA having stood down from Committee, the April meeting held at the Farmers' Club in London, that whilst some members had been lost at least 23 new enquiries had been made via MR's Facebook page, and that a summer farm-based event is planned in 2024.

## 6 Treasurer's Report

CC presented the Club accounts for 2022-23. The Journal cost of £11,800 was almost half the price of the year before, and this is the Club's most significant cost. Meeting costs were also down. £18,000 had been transferred

from reserves leading to a £3,000 surplus to be shown as an on-account surplus for next year. The conclusion was that this was a perfectly sustainable position for the Club – indeed, it could survive until "the last man (or woman) standing!"

## 7 Memorial Fund

CC continued his presentation by stating that the Club account was a trading account, not being a charity. Conversely, the Memorial Fund is a charity, and its accounts include two sub funds: that of the Memorial Fund itself (currently £174,000) together with the Club Fund (currently £290,000). Together then there was approximately £465,000, which was about £10,000 down on last year due to the transfer mentioned in item 6, and a small capital loss because of stock markets.

There had been no grants or donations made by the Fund post-Covid, but the Trustees were considering making grants to the Tropical Agriculture Association, Worshipful Company of Farmers courses, and Wye Heritage, which may well require around £10,000 towards their new Heritage Centre.

CC asked the meeting to delegate to the Committee the formal approval of the Club accounts, following their signing off by the external examiners, provided that no material differences were found, Approved nem con.

Harry Franks updated the meeting on the Tropical Agriculture Association. Whilst TAA in name, it is far from being that focused – this year it had held tours to North Wick (offshoot of Rothamsted) and a horticulture trip to Cornwall. He recommended that the Club think about joining the TAA.

## 8 Appointment of Auditors

Reappointment of Claverys approved.



**9 Journal Editor’s Report**

MR began his report by video link with input from CC due to technical issues. Assistance for the Editor is being investigated, for whilst the Treasurer was happy the Journal cost less this year, in part due to lower postage costs as address lists were not included, there had also been a saving from not using a Proof Editor, which might be of assistance in the future. MR was thanked for his work in producing this year’s Journal. A plea was made to the Club to keep the material coming, as many other institutions look at our alumni Journal with envy.

**10 Elections**

Three members had stood down during the year (Sue Atkinson, Berkely Hill, John Walters). Three members whose term had ended stood for re-election (Malcolm Alexander, Charles Course, James Trounce) and were re-elected unanimously.

John Magnay was unanimously elected as a new Committee member (proposed JR, seconded MA).

Two vacancies remained as no further nominations had been received. JR reminded the meeting that the Committee has the power to co-opt.

No recommendations were made regarding Vice Presidents or Honorary Membership.

**11 Revision of Club Regulations**

MP gave a resume of the salient points and PW took the meeting through the proposed regulations paragraph by paragraph. Adopted nem con.

**12 Future Plans for Club Events**

JR informed the meeting that it was hoped to hold a BBQ in 2024 on Archie Saul’s farm in Lincolnshire. Other ideas were welcome; locations need a clean, dry barn and possibly a farm walk/trailer ride. CB (as a hortic) mentioned that venues with orchards or gardens would be equally welcome.

**13 Update on the redevelopment of the College Campus**

PW noted that the latest Wye Heritage Centre report had recently been circulated by email and commended their website.

On the College campus, things were now happening, scaffolding was up for re-roofing and ground clearance had taken place in preparation for drainage work which was now underway.

CB noted his view that Wye CRAG’s failure had been due to not being able to persuade the local authority and Historic England to do more to protect the mediaeval scheduled monument and ensure it was converted properly, which was likely to be a loss leader for the developers. A line had to be drawn with the group but at least Wye CRAG had helped with saving this significant place. MA amplified that the group was without the monies to do the further work themselves.

**14 AOB**

MA noted that Stephen Carr had passed away in Malawi in June. He had undertaken work in Uganda for the World Bank, and was affectionately known as the Wye College Missionary. His obituary appeared in the Financial Times on the day of the AGM.

There being no further business the President closed the meeting.

Signed .....

date

.....

Chair

# Wye College Agricola Club – Notice of Annual General Meeting

The 72th Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday 25 October 2024 on line. Meeting starts at 6.00 pm

## Agenda

1. **Apologies for absence**
2. **Minutes** – confirm the minutes of the 71st 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 2023–2024
7. **Memorial Fund** – Trustees Report and Accounts 2023-2024
8. **Appointment of Independent Examiners of the Accounts for 2024–2025**
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 subscription rates**
  - The Committee proposal is to amend the current rates to £100 for Life Membership and £20 for Annual Membership with effect from the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025.
12. **Future plans for Club events**
13. **Update on the redevelopment of the College Campus**
14. **Any other business**

## Deaths

### **Avril Bennett (Wye 1955-58)**

Avril Bennett passed away in November 2023

### **Aubrey Bould (Wye 1957-60)**

Aubrey Bould passed away on 29 December, 2023

### **Una Carlin (Wye 1995-1998)**

Una Carlin passed away on 29 December, 2023

### **Charles Close-Brooks (Wye 1961-65)**

Charles Close-Brooks passed away in October 2023

### **Richard Furniss (Wye 1995-98)**

Richard Furniss passed away on 29 February, 2024

### **Ruth Gasson (Wye 1957-60 & staff).**

Ruth Gasson passed away on 29 April 2024. Her obituary appears elsewhere in this Journal.

### **Ian Lucas (Staff).**

Former Wye College principal Ian Lucas passed away on 4 May 2024. A full obituary will appear in the next Journal.

### **Cliff Martindale (Staff 1966- )**

Cliff Martindale passed away on 20 October, 2023

### **George Paul (Wye 1959-62)**

George Paul passed away on 9 October, 2022

### **Jim Tice (Wye 1949-52)**

Jim Tice passed away on 19 December, 2023

### **Ivan Warboys (Staff).**

Ivan Warboys passed away on 27 November 2023.

---

## Obituaries

### **Stephen Carr (Wye 1948-51)**

A short appreciation of the life of Stephen Carr, who died on June 2, 2023, was published on p22 of the last edition of 'Wye'. A full obituary, alongside further tributes and acknowledgments of his life's work, appear here:

Stephen Carr (Wye 1948-51) 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. Another son, Chris, lives in Switzerland.

**Malcolm Alexander writes:** Stephen Carr, who died in Blantyre, Malawi on Friday 2nd June 2023, spent a lifetime dedicated to improving smallholder farming in Africa. Initially working in remote rural areas in southern Sudan and Uganda for over 25 years, Stephen was a senior agricultural adviser to the World Bank until 1989. On retirement, he made his home on the Zomba plateau in southern Malawi, from where he organised an agricultural

extension programme through various church organisations.

Stephen John Carr was born in England on 22nd May 1928, the only child of John and Ivy May Carr. His mother was a ballerina and singer; his father followed a career in the merchant navy. As the threat of war loomed, Capt. Carr was able to arrange for his family to travel to Buenos Aires, where Stephen and his mother stayed until 1945. Meanwhile, his father's ship was sunk off the Brazilian coast, where he was rescued by a German ship and made a PoW in Bremen.

Stephen had been planning to read history at Cambridge when he was inspired by a sermon on the need for missionaries with practical skills. Switching to study agriculture, Stephen arrived at Wye College in October 1948, where he met Anne Grant, a competent rider, who was also starting her agricultural degree. Stephen, having ridden in Argentina, was able to accompany Anne on early morning rides on the Downs, returning for a quick breakfast before the day's studies.

As their friendship developed, Stephen met Anne's parents at their lovely Queen Anne house, set in eight acres in Rickmansworth. Anne's 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, a strong influence on Anne. Initially, Stephen was warmly welcomed into Anne's family, but their approval of her choice waned when they heard that a missionary career in Africa was being planned. 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, now the Church Mission Society) on a bachelor basis. Anne's father might have hoped that his future son-in-law's missionary zeal would evaporate, but this was not to be and Stephen and Anne were married on 8th May 1954 at Holy Trinity, Northwood.

For much of the next 25 years, Stephen and Anne supported each other in some pretty tough situations, the first being in southern Sudan at a Village Teachers' Training Centre in Yei. Here they settled into a round mud hut some 15ft across and started giving agricultural advice to local farmers. Life was 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, they were able to return in 1956 until, in May 1962, they were expelled on orders from central government.

This abrupt exit then led to many happy years in Uganda where, with funds provided by Christian Aid, Stephen and Anne started two schemes designed to show young school-leavers that it was possible to make a living from farming by adopting good agricultural practices and planting appropriate cash crops. The first scheme was at Nyakashaka in the hills of Ankole, with a climate suitable for tea production. Assisted by Karl and Gay Edwards, a young graduate couple from Nottingham University, they spent several months living in grass 'bivouacs' whilst more permanent mud-and-wattle thatched houses were built. During their time at Nyakashaka, Stephen and Anne recognised that they could not have children of their own, and made a decision to adopt. Christopher 'arrived' as a 10-day old in Kampala. Three years later, a fatal car crash led to a two-year old David, who had already been adopted, becoming 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 his talk led to two Wye graduates, Richard Adams and Malcolm Alexander (accompanied by his wife, Hélène), working with the Carrs





*Stephen with a group of farmers from Wambabya, 1968*

at the Wambabya scheme in Bunyoro. The hot tropical climate, much harsher than the Ankole hills, made it more difficult to establish tea in an area where it might not rain for 2-3 months.

Moving on from Wambabya, Stephen and Anne moved to the hills of Kigezi to develop disease-resistant varieties of 'English' potatoes, 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 D.C., whilst travelling widely across southern Africa.

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 fund projects mainly in east and central Africa, supporting rural medical services, disabled children, orphans and child nutrition.

In 1989, as Stephen approached retirement age at the World Bank, he was anxious to get back to village-level work. Having planned to return to Uganda, Stephen and Anne had second thoughts, opting for Malawi where on previous visits they had encountered the worst poverty and difficult agricultural problems, deciding to set up home on the Zomba plateau. The climate suited Stephen, but they decided also to have a base in England for Anne. Stephen would make regular summer visits to the house in Wye and Anne would travel to Malawi during the English winter.

Stephen, whose agricultural work was



*Stephen Carr pictured close to his house at Zomba mountain, Malawi, 2017 (photo by Ken Giller)*

recognised with an OBE, was not a typical 'expert'. He knew that it was essential to work with local farmers to understand their needs. While he was working, Anne would provide much-needed nutrition and health support to the women in the community. Stephen had a sharp mind and could be a rigorous critic of proposals that did not take full account of local conditions. He maintained close links with agricultural research in Africa and the UK, particularly at Wye, where he was made a Fellow of the College in 1987, and a Governor in September 1991, serving until the merger with Imperial in 2000.

Stephen always kept fit, leading a demanding lifestyle. When he joined the World Bank, he took up squash, very competently and with a fiercely competitive streak. His health suffered over his last two years, a broken hip leading to a long period of hospitalization and recovery in South Africa, before he

could return to Malawi. Anne died in Wye on Christmas Eve 2022, and then their son, David, an art teacher, who had just flown in from the USA, died on the morning of his mother's funeral on 26th January. Stephen is survived by his son Christopher, whose career was in IT, and grand-daughter, Tamsin, who live in Switzerland.

A shorter version of this obituary appeared in *The Times* on 2 September 2023.

### **Stephen Carr: an appreciation**

*By Jonathan Kydd, lecturer in economics at University of Malawi 1975-83; Lecturer then Professor of agricultural development economics Wye College and Imperial College 1983-2007), with inputs from Wye professors Ken Giller (Soil Science) and Andrew Dorward (Economics)*

Stephen Carr has left a monumental reputation in African small farmer

development and notably in Malawi, a very poor country with an exceptionally high share of the population living in rural areas making at least part of their living from farming. Stephen and his wife Anne Carr (née Grant, a Wye graduate) were also known within the UK-focused parts of the Wye community for reasons including their endowment of the Carr Lecture Theatre and for Stephen's service on Wye's Governing Body. Stephen took the opportunity of regular visits to the College to talk to students and staff, conveying his passion for critically important and intellectually complex challenges.

Stephen was an energetic communicator, unflinching in speaking truth to power. The powers he proved effective in influencing included African governments and the major international aid organisations. He also went into intellectual combat with NGOs (charities) and academics in cases where he disagreed with their analysis and prescriptions.

During the period of his life lived in Malawi, Stephen produced a substantial volume of writing, in addition to his hands-on applied research on farming technology and rural social and economic issues. His memoir *'Surprised by Laughter'* has a wide focus covering all aspects of his life, but does not tackle his professional work on Malawi in an organised way, although insights arise in passing.

A literature review on Stephen and Malawi found the best summary in a 2011 paper based on conversations between Stephen Carr and Thomas Bohnett, a background paper for a *World Faiths Development Dialogue* held at Georgetown University in March 2011. The paper was on the theme of links between faith and agriculture. Entitled *A Discussion with Stephen Carr, World Bank Retiree and Veteran African Agriculturalist*. This text, supplemented by second source mentioned below has the advantage of using Stephen's vivid and direct language. Those of us who knew him can envision

him saying these words: this tells the reader more than an academic summary<sup>1</sup>.

- 1 The text below starts with extracts from Thomas Bohnett written in the first person (i.e., Carr). A note to the paper makes it safe to assume that the text was agreed with Carr. (In some places I have modified the text to run sentences and paragraphs together and have provided some headings to organise the material.) A second useful source on Stephen Carr and Malawi is David Lepeska's March 2008 profile in *devex* "Stephen Carr: A man of the soil" ([David Lepeska https://www.devex.co](https://www.devex.co)). Tending towards a hagiography, it nevertheless contains useful reflections on Carr's opinions and claims, notably on fertiliser subsidies. Lepeska's piece represents a certain moment when there was a sense of euphoria around the proposition that the Malawi fertiliser subsidy programme had achieved spectacular results of increased smallholder maize production and poverty reduction.

### Stephen Carr interviewed by Thomas Bohnett (2011)

My own background in this sphere is that for my first 20 years in Africa, I worked as an agriculturalist with the British Church Missionary Society. Following on my retirement from the World Bank in 1989, I organized an agricultural extension and development programme through the various churches in Malawi.

The lessons of agricultural failures in Africa are not being taken fully into account, above all failures of government ministries and weak agricultural training. A review of the World Bank's experience on agriculture had found that something like 70 per cent of projects did not achieve their objective. The fundamental reason was that Africa had not yet developed a cadre of committed civil servants.

The experience with education is, on the whole, a bit better. That may be because with a school you have parents who are prepared to make a fuss if they think teachers are not doing their job. Nobody makes a fuss if the agriculture extension worker does not do his job.

My experience of working through churches as opposed to the civil service can be summarized under three headings:

(a) *Churches offer easy access to people and societies through organizations which they trust and to which they relate personally, as opposed to government which may not be trusted and is seen as remote from the realities of rural people.*

Africa is studded with church women's groups and mosque groups. Across the Christian parts of this continent you've got tens of thousands of existing village groups. Governments are wary of using faith groups, for several reasons, and so they try to form artificial clubs which have no real foundations in the community. It's infinitely preferable to use a group of people that already meets regularly. Whether there's an agricultural message or there isn't, the Mothers' Union or the Presbyterian Women's Group or the Catholic Sisters or whoever they are, are going to meet on Tuesday afternoon. In contrast, if you form an artificial agricultural club, which is what governments and major NGOs tend to do, the moment you stop funding a programme, the club falls apart.

The fundamental point about government extension services is that when you've got ratios of one extension worker to 3,000 or even 1,000 individual farm families, you really aren't going to have much impact. What the World Bank and other donor agencies are grappling with is what you do about it. Under the current situation, you can't employ another 10,000 extension workers because the budget won't carry it. You've got to look for alternatives, and so the Bank in the past has said, "Let's use the private sector." The problem, of course, is that no chemical company or marketing organization is going to go visit women who haven't got two pennies in their pockets and produce no surplus produce. And so when you put extension in the hands of commercial operators, they concentrate on the same 120 farmers that the government

extension workers are concentrating on. People are grappling with how you can get out to these people. My answer is: "Why don't you use 100,000 church women's clubs that are just sitting there, waiting to be contacted?"

(b) *Working through faith groups (in my case all my experience is with Christian churches) provides a level of flexibility which is far more difficult to obtain in the civil service. In the Sudan, Uganda and Malawi I introduced quite new technologies, learned from experience elsewhere, in a manner which would have been far more difficult had I been a civil servant.*

(c) *One of the great advantages of working through the faith organizations in Africa is the existence of a network of village groups across large areas of the countryside. In the case of the Christian parts of the continent this means that there are strong women's groups with loyal membership which meet on a weekly basis and provide a point of contact with local farmers which no other organization can match.*

When I initiated my extension service in Malawi, I took over staff from the Ministry of Agriculture (with official consent) and trained them to work through church women's groups. They had previously been working with 50 to 70 members of wealthier farmers who belonged to government organized credit clubs. They suddenly found that they each had easy and close contact with hundreds of women farmers.

What I did was train ten staff of the national extension service to demonstrate what could be done through working with women's groups. What was required within the women's groups was really not high technical knowledge. The programme was highly successful, and the World Bank then came in and said that they wanted the whole national programme to follow the same pattern. I left my good wife at home for most of six months and went to give training to 2,000 staff in the ministry



of agriculture. In the end, however, the programme didn't work. The central reason was that the extension workers were supervised by officers with low morale and little deep desire to make a difference. In consequence, they did not follow up at all on the field staff, who in turn did not go to the trouble of trying a new approach. We had a few decent supervisors, and the 10 that I trained, but beyond that, there wasn't anybody else. I expect that this approach is still on the books in Malawi as official policy but it's long since been forgotten.

It's often difficult to deal with governments. The alternative is to work through the NGOs, but they will have to do a better job of training their agricultural specialists, and then also be willing to work with church groups. This is one way to be really effective on a broad scale. The final prong is that they absolutely have to learn the value of monitoring and evaluation. You cannot just keep on going along without analysing what you're doing.

So I come back to where I started—since it has proved so difficult to get governments to run effective extension services, should we not try something with NGOs? But this time, with standards which they've never adopted in the past; standards of training for the staff and standards in monitoring and evaluation with proper supervision and proper accounting at the end of a project to see what they're doing. One or two of the secular NGOs are doing that, but so many of them have absolutely no concept of economics and don't count what it costs to achieve something. They take you along to show you five acres of irrigated maize with two people supervising five acres to show you what a success it is. As long as each maize cob is valued in gold, I suppose it is fine. It is not simply the training and the technology of agriculture, but also training in basic economics and in monitoring and evaluation. It's training in understanding why smallholders adopt some things and reject others.

### *Other challenges in Malawi – climate change*

I'm not so sure about climate change. The terrible drought of the 1970s, which ravaged much of West Africa, had nothing to do with long-term climate change. We've had droughts and floods in Africa for a long time. I'm not a climate change denier—I believe that it is happening, but at the moment, the fluctuations we're getting are no greater than the ones we've had over the last 50 years. I'm sure the worst is yet to come.

### *Soil fertility and what to do about it*

A major problem is population growth. Malawi 60 years ago had a population of three million, and families had three hectares each. They could use one for their farm, they could rest two and they could feed themselves very nicely, thank you. Now with a population of 14 million there are many farm families with less than 0.7 of a hectare. Without inorganic fertilizer, they haven't got a chance in hell of feeding themselves. So many people, here and in Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Nigeria, are down to small patches of land. People say quite rightly that the Chinese have much smaller pieces of land, but there are two differences. The Chinese have been having to farm on the same piece of land for 1,500 years. The times when the Chinese could leave their land for a 15-year fallow are back in the times of Christ, so they have built up skills over hundreds of generations to maximize the productivity of the land.

The Minister of Agriculture asked at a public meeting a few years ago: "Why can't Malawians produce as much as the Chinese?" I said: "Mr Minister, that is the easiest question that anybody has ever asked. We are now using 23 kilos of fertilizer per hectare and the Chinese are using 640. If we were using 640, we'd have food spouting out of our ears.

So Malawi, for the last four years, have been supporting a subsidy programme so that 1.6 million farmers get subsidized fertilizer and seed. We've jumped up a million tons

in our food production, and instead of being a famine relief basket case, we now export modest amounts of maize, having satisfied all our needs.

This has to become the model on the rest of the continent. The world is only fed by inorganic fertilizer. If China and India and Bangladesh didn't have inorganic fertilizer, they'd be starving. When I worked in Uganda 30 years ago, nobody had ever heard of inorganic fertilizer; you did not need it because the soils maintained fertility without it. That situation is gone and so there are profound differences.

Under a World Bank project which lasted for 20 years, the richest 15 per cent of Malawian farmers got fertilizer on subsidized credit. Consequently in every village in this country, there were people who had to walk past their neighbour's field, in which the land had been cultivated on the same day as their own, the maize had been planted on the same day, the maize had been weeded on the same day, and they were getting 700 kilos and the next door neighbour was getting two tons and the only difference between them was that the one had fertilizer and hybrid seed and the other didn't. And so in every survey we carried out among ordinary farmers, if you said, "What's your number one need?" They said, "We want inorganic fertilizer and hybrid seed." You were responding to a clamouring need. You didn't have to teach anybody, you didn't have to encourage anybody. People were fighting to get at it.

**Stephen Carr interviewed by David Lepaska (2008):**

Agronomist Stephen Carr used his intimate knowledge of Malawian smallholder farming, his familiarity with the donor community and his way with words to clinch the subsidy funding that is pulling Malawi out of poverty.

In 1989, Carr approached retirement age in the World Bank and was anxious to get back to village-level work. He had planned to return to Uganda but had second thoughts. "I was sent to Malawi by the bank

half a dozen times and encountered the worst poverty, and the most intransigent agricultural problems that I'd seen anywhere on the continent," he recalled. "I decided I'd be of more use here than Uganda."

In Malawi, Carr had a mountain to conquer. "When I came here, the opposition to a subsidy by the World Bank and USAID was so strong that it was absolutely like a brick wall," he said. Although small fertilizer subsidies were offered through the 1980s and into the '90s, donors refused to extend the policy and it soon ended.

After attempting several organic soil improvement techniques, Carr started a fertilizer-for-work programme. Locals built access roads and implemented irrigation and reforestation projects in return for inputs, mostly fertilizer and seed.

Even with support from the US Agency for International Development and the UK Department for International Development, "it just became apparent at the end of 10 years that we were not getting anywhere near the number of people on board, that this was never going to feed the country," Carr recalled. "So, I just switched my efforts."

That switch occurred just before a devastating harvest in 2005, which prompted newly elected President Bingu wa Mutharika to reinstate and increase fertilizer subsidies despite staunch scepticism from the United States, UK and the World Bank.

"What one has to ram home to people is that there is not a third way," he explained. "You either make inputs available to farmers so that they can grow their own food or you deny them the opportunity of growing enough food for themselves and you have hungry people and you stop them from actually starving by bringing in relief."

Over time, Carr wore the opposition down, and Mutharika's subsidy plan went into effect in early 2006 with \$8 million from the UK's aid programme. The results have been staggering, with maize harvests nearly tripling from 1.2 million metric tons in 2005 to 3.4 million metric tons in 2007. Some,



like U.S. Ambassador Alan Eastham, believe the bountiful harvests are merely the result of good rains. But eight of the past 20 years witnessed as much precipitation as 2006 and 2007.

According to Carr, the reason for success was simple: Fertilizer became affordable for a larger portion of the population. The World Bank's subsidy programme of the 1980s and early '90s subsidized 35 percent of the fertilizer cost, enabling only the wealthiest quarter of the population to buy fertilizer. The new government-run plan, which subsidizes 70 percent of the cost, is affordable for two-thirds of the populace.

Jeffrey Sachs, director of Columbia University's Earth Institute, uses Malawi as Exhibit A in his 'aid is good' argument. The country's success has sparked a reappraisal of the value of farm basics — fertilizer, improved seed and farmer education — and could ultimately become a tipping point for public support of fertilizer subsidies. Carr believes a few more good years would change donor minds.

Yet hurdles remain. The government has taken a staunch lead role, giving Malawi's relatively mature private sector minimal involvement. This has meant slower distribution, according to Carr, but could become more problematic in the near future. USAID has demanded a greater role for the private sector as a condition of its acceptance of the subsidy program, which means continued governmental control could jeopardize the program.

Still, Malawi has undergone an economic sea change, as Carr's empty front stoop can attest. Even more encouraging, a Malawian doctor recently reported an 80 per cent drop in seriously malnourished children at his hospital.

Carr is happy to have played a part. "What I have done is act as a midwife," he said. "It was Malawians [who] did the hard labour."

#### **Concluding comments by Jonathan Kydd**

About 15 years has elapsed since Stephen

Carr provided these lively reflections on his work in Malawi. The key themes of his work continue to be relevant to the quest for equitable rural development and poverty reduction in Sub-Saharan Africa. Critical appraisal of Carr's applied research and advocacy may provide promising points of entry for future researchers and activists.

Carr's most prominent contribution in Malawi was around fertiliser subsidies. Unfortunately, the highly positive impression conveyed above (2008 – 11) has not endured. The most thorough examination currently available is a book published in 2013 by Oxford University Press by Professor Ephraim Chirwa and Professor Andrew Dorward, *Agricultural Input Subsidies: the recent Malawi Experience*. Concerns include budgetary costs for the government, various kinds of corruption along the subsidy supply chain and potential adverse impacts on soils and water.

Another theme the study of which could yield important insights is Carr's emphasis on the value mobilising faith-based groups for agricultural development. From the standpoint of today, how has this worked out and what might be the policy conclusions? Linked to this is Carr's dismissive view of the government extension services in Malawi and the wider East-Central African region. Was this view justified at the time, and have matters improved? Official aid agencies and charities continue to work with and rely on government extension officers.

Finally, as an economist, I was happy with Carr's stress on the importance of understanding farm-level economics. But my sense was that his focus was perhaps excessively at the farm level and that he may have had blind spots when it comes to the crucial economics of transactions and supply chains.

#### **Concluding comment by Ken Giller**

Stephen certainly had many connections in the Malawian government and was respected and listened to, but to attribute the fertilizer subsidies solely to his influence

is unrealistic. My understanding is that he was an advocate and highly influential within Malawi, but the initiatives were taken by others and demanded a whole team of influencers outside the country.

Nor was Stephen solely a fertilizer advocate. He was heavily involved in promoting diversification with legumes – notably

soyabean as a new and highly nutritious crop, but also groundnut, pigeon pea and green manures such as the ‘fish bean’ (*Tephrosia*). He experimented with these together with local farmers around the house where he lived on the road up to the Zomba plateau.

## Cliff Martindale (staff 1966- )

The eulogy given by Peter and Henrietta Greig at Cliff Martindale’s funeral follows below:

**Peter:** Imagine, if you will, a dark and stormy night, on the approaches to Dover harbour. A small family sailing boat has endured a challenging crossing from Ostend. Plan A for the two intrepid sailors was that, by now, they would be sitting in front of a log fire in The Honest Miller, enjoying a pint, and regaling any locals who wanted to listen with the story of their seamanship.

But, as we all know, life doesn’t always go according to plan...

The little boat was sharing this stretch of the busiest shipping lane in the world with ‘floating blocks of flats’, as the skipper described them. The skipper was Cliff, the boat a family heirloom handed down from father to son, and the crew was Ian Lucas, who had recently taken up the role as Principal of Wye College.

It is thanks to a wonderful conversation with Ian, a couple of days ago, that we are able to recount the details of this adventure. Sadly Ian cannot be here, in person, but like so many, he is able to be with us as this celebration of Cliff’s remarkable life is being beamed across the world, as we speak, thanks to the wonders of modern technology!

But back to the small boat in choppy waters, and the perilous situation...

Cliff instructed Ian to take the helm and follow as closely as possible the line of

the sea wall. Meanwhile, Cliff, armed with 2 distress flares, one in each hand, stood on the stern of the boat, prepared, at any moment to ‘let them off, if any of those ‘blocks of flats’ got too close!

Thankfully the trip ended happily for our 2 brave sailors, later sitting in front of the fire with pints in hand, recounting their adventure. Ian described the close partnership that he developed with Cliff during their time at Wye, he valued his conversations and wise counsel when dealing with students and that partnership and teamwork is something that has been a very special privilege for Henri and I to lift the lid on over the last few days.

**Henri:** Now let us take you back almost 50 years to the mid-1970s when we were students at Wye College, the historic and world-renowned seat of learning. It was a time for rigorous academic study, a time when we created life-long friendships and in a few cases we found our mate for life.

Central in all of this was Cliff Martindale, initially a lecturer in chemistry, later to become Warden for the Men, and later still he agreed to Principal Ian Lucas’s request to become registrar on the retirement of John Orr-Ewing.

Wye College was unique, part of University of London and yet of a size and focus, Agriculture, Horticulture and Rural Environmental Studies (then in its earliest days), for university to be a more intimate experience. It was somewhere which understood the meaning of the phrase “Work hard, play hard” and we certainly did.

Life at Wye College was always kept exciting with the stirs that sometimes strayed beyond college walls!

**Peter:** Cliff's role as Men's Warden was to manage that fine line between maintaining order and discipline and managing the consequences of some of those "play hard/stirring" moments, which he did so successfully. He had a great sense of humour, essential for the role he played.

In March 2020, as we all locked down, John Magnay, who joins us from Uganda, started a Wye 70s Whatsapp Group, which now has over 150 people and, through lockdown and after, has been a source of much entertainment, photos, thoughts, discussion and even advice!

On 24 October, John gave us the sad news that Cliff had died, and this unleashed some wonderful stories and memories of Cliff, some of which we would like to share with you, incidents that were just part of Cliff's everyday working life in the mid-70s!

**Henri:** Cliff was universally liked and respected by the student body. He was scrupulously fair, reasonable and always retained his sense of humour. One always felt, no matter how much hot water (or indeed cold water) one was in, that he considered it a pardonable offence and would do as much as he could to smooth things over.

There is no one who could have been more suited to dealing with the idiocies of Wye College students. Simon Jenner remembers, as a member of C Block, a number of potentially 'difficult' interviews with Cliff. He says Cliff was always very understanding, allowed us to re-glaze our own windows to avoid the Pink Chit from the Maintenance Department, so long as they passed inspection, and treated with considerable tolerance the numerous, completely unavoidable minor damage we suffered, light bulbs being shot out, unexpected explosions, door hinges failing suddenly.

**Peter:** Cliff did have a slight sense of humour

failure when a water fight, which started in K block and spread to C block, got out of hand and flooded the computers on the ground floor. These were mainframe computers, the earliest of 'computing technology', cutting edge, the size of a car and worth £150,000 each. Students would earnestly go to and fro with their brilliant pieces of work digitized into stacks of 'punch cards'...until 'The Water Fight'.

And when it was pointed out that siting the computers under C block accommodation was less than prudent, Cliff's expression made it quite clear that this observation was neither helpful nor constructive.

**Henri:** Cliff was a sporting man, a sand sailor, a rugby referee and ran taekwondo classes, attended by some of the students at College. He was also a good sport, keen to referee the Rag Week Tug of War contests across the River Stour, and as often as not, ended up with a ducking himself.

Water seems to be a recurring theme! There was an incident with an exploding toilet, possibly involving a crow scarer, but with only the slightest bending of the truth the cause was put down to dry ice, intended for the punch for the Easter Ball, and stored temporarily in the toilet in C block. Cliff, a chemist, grasped the situation immediately; excess dry ice, toilet, frozen, shattered. The incident was re-enacted in the 3rd year review, when we presented 'Cliff Martindale, This Is Your Life', when the truth was finally admitted.

**Peter:** Dave Scarisbrick recalled the time when some of his Agric students filled his office to the ceiling with bales of hay. He was not impressed. Cliff came to the rescue, starting to clear the chaos and, once that news was out on the student bush telegraph, the perpetrators arrived and the bales were soon manhandled out of Dave's office window.

**Henri:** On another occasion for the Drag Dinner, the Garter Club converted Peter's old grey Morris Minor convertible into Greased Lightning, covered in silver foil

with flames painted along its sides, and the silencer removed by Pete Antrobus. Dressed in black leather jackets and feeling the vibe, we WERE that night Danny Zuko, Sandy Olsson and the T Birds!!

We asked if the huge oak doors into the Main Quad, usually kept firmly closed, could be opened so we could drive Greased Lightning, draped with members of the Garter Club, into the Main Quad for dinner, making a dramatic entrance!! Our wish was granted and I feel sure it was Cliff who gave the go-ahead. What an evening! Never to be forgotten!

**Peter:** Occasionally the impact of the stirs would sometimes backfire with locals, and Cliff was always on hand to resolve the situation. A significant contingent of the C block crew morphed into the 136 Bridge Street gang for their second and third years. This was to become the epicentre of some of the tremors around the village!!

John Magnay remembers the time when one night the post boxes in Wye were painted blue and being quietly told by Cliff to repaint them red, as it is a capital offence to 'interfere with Her Majesty's Royal Mail'

**Henri:** And there was the time when residents of the village received a notice on Wye College headed notepaper that a virus 'Leaf Roll Virus X' had escaped from the Horticulture Department and could threaten rosebuds. Residents were asked to come to the Maintenance Department to collect plastic bags to place carefully over their blooms to protect them.

An 'official memo' to The Maintenance Department alerted them to cope with the queue of villagers that formed wanting the bags, and the story made the lunchtime BBC news!

**Peter:** When Harry Darling retired as Principal of the College, the 136 Bridge Street gang felt this was a moment to commemorate. With meticulous planning, they wrote Goodbye Harry in letters 8 yards wide and 24 yards high alongside the Crown on the Downs above the village.

Some members of staff saw it as a travesty to desecrate such a special ecological site. But Cliff saw the bigger picture - this was a great gesture of goodwill.

**Henri:** One of the most evocative stories on the Whatsapp thread came from Marek. "I arrived in Wye in the evening in late October or early November 1973 – there was already some snow on the ground that morning in Warsaw. Next morning Cliff Martindale welcomed me at his office and most graciously explained the ins and outs of college life and details of the local geography. There he was, an official, the high authority!! And I must tell you how different he was from the 'authorities' I had left behind, just a day before, in Russian-occupied Poland. Cliff Martindale was the first one who welcomed me to England, to the better world, with that old fashioned English graciousness. Not to be forgotten."

Dave Scarisbrick describes Cliff as a wise and sympathetic advisor. Although he had no specialist qualification, he had an empathy and understanding of people, and students with problems linked to mental health were often directed to Cliff. He and Jean Andrews worked closely together.

**Peter:** Henri and I have had a wonderful time these last few days, gathering stories to paint a picture of one remarkable man, who has touched the lives of so many students, a man who was a significant influence on life at Wye College, who understood people and situations, a trusted friend and wise counsel for the staff, with a sense of humour and a word of greeting for whoever he met, and with that old fashioned English grace.

When Ian Lucas succeeded Harry Darling, he knew he had one of the best alongside him to make Wye the special place that has forged treasured memories for those of us who have been fortunate enough to have passed through as students. Maybe the 136 Bridge Street Gang could reconvene and create a message for today: 'Farewell Cliff - What a Legend! Rest in Peace.'

## George Medley (Wye 1949-52)

*Alexandra White writes:* I am very sad to tell you that my father, George Medley, died on December 7th. He was very calm and comfortable and slipped away in no pain. He had been getting frailer and frailer over the past couple of years. He was extremely well cared for in the Worplesdon View Care Home in Guildford where he had been resident since my mother, Vera Medley, died in 2021. I live close by so was able to visit frequently, and my brother Patrick made regular visits from Australia.

Part of his memoirs included some recollections of his days spent at Wye in the 1950s, which I hope you can publish in the Agricola Club journal:

I came to Wye College in 1949. At the station our trunks were loaded onto a carrier's cart, complete with horse, for delivery to the college. In my first year I was put into digs as there were not enough rooms in the college buildings for all the students. This was not a hardship as my room was used only for sleeping and study. All my meals were taken in college.

Wye College was most unusual at that time as it had nearly equal numbers of male and female students equally divided into agricultural students and horticultural students. In 1946, after the war, the horticultural college at Swanley, for girls, was amalgamated with the agricultural college at Wye, which up to that time had been men only. A brand new building, Withersdane Hall, to house the female students, was built a quarter of a mile up the road away from the college. The existing Withersdane Hall was an old house; this was retained and a substantial new building was added onto it, together with a large hall complete with stage, lighting and enough room to seat all the students for college lectures and events of that nature. The student rooms were very modern, some units containing two individual rooms with a bathroom between. Other corridors had individual rooms with a bathroom shared by five rooms.

In contrast the rooms in Wye College had not changed since the college was built in 1900. Each student had his own room and shared a bathroom at the end of the corridor with six or seven others. However the main college buildings were similar to most universities, with quadrangles around which clustered the lecture theatres, science laboratories, dining hall and library. There was a comfortable common room and other facilities for relaxation for the undergraduates, as well as a senior common room for the staff.

Dinner was the only formal meal, for which all students had to wear their gowns, with the Principal and some staff members sitting at a high table at one end of the room and the rest of the undergraduates at long tables in the body of the hall with benches to sit on. Food rationing was still in place, but the catering staff did a magnificent job of providing palatable and substantial food. However there were occasions when the students were used as guinea pigs. On one Sunday we were asked to assess our boiled eggs. Apparently the chickens had been given different types of feed supplements and we were asked to describe the flavour of the eggs we had eaten. 'Fishy' and 'Old Socks' were two descriptions that come to mind!!

University life was very different from school life. Attendance at lectures was expected, but if you wanted to miss a lecture you could; no questions were asked unless you started to miss too many and your work suffered. Each student had a tutor, who held periodic tutorials to check up on your progress. My tutor was 'Wilkie', Dr Wilkinson, the senior lecturer in fruit growing, a wonderful person. At that time he was unmarried but later married one of the students from the year above me, Rosemary.

I found my first year quite taxing as I had only done one term at Winchester of botany and physiology, having to change my direction after failing the Sandhurst medical. I was fine on chemistry and physics

and on the practical lectures and field work, but botany, zoology and physiology I found a grind. We had an exam, called Inter, at the end of our first year; I failed the botany and physiology so had to return a day or two early at the beginning of the second year to re-take the exam. This time I passed.

This was also my first real contact with the opposite sex on a day-to-day basis and I found it quite disturbing and at the same time exhilarating. I formed a liaison with a South African girl, Angela, who was even more immature than I was. For my first term we did quite a lot together, dances, sitting together in lectures and practical classes and going to events. At the end of that term she had had enough and the liaison was called off just before Christmas. She had a close friend, Sally, totally unlike Angela in every way. She had quite an abrupt manner and was, like me, not particularly academically gifted. I got to know her quite well and together we became involved in a printing operation, printing invitations, leaflets, Christmas cards and other similar bits and pieces for the student body.

The college had a small Adana printing press but this was not big enough for our needs as we developed the printing operation. We persuaded the powers that be that we needed a bigger press and were given some money to find one. We eventually tracked down a secondhand press, a proper professional machine although still run by treadle power, and we became more adventurous in our output, using different colours and typefaces and setting individual characters at different angles. I learnt a great deal about printing and proof reading and discovered that I had the ability to read through a piece and spot the errors easily. On our search for a new printing press we had to go to London and Sally kindly asked me to stay with her parents in Barons Court. I stayed there a number of times over the next two years.

I had a number of male friends, Bill Fletcher, Chris Haes, Derek Cross, Tony Meredith, Tom

Wright and Mark Inman amongst them. In my second year, when I was in a room in college, we had animated discussions on many topics, often far into the night.

I played football in my first year and became the college goalkeeper. Most of the others on the team were agriculture students so I did not make any firm friends there. I also did athletics, concentrating on the high hurdles and the 440 yards. I played squash and generally spent quite a lot of time playing games of one sort or another. Sally was my only close female friend and the relationship was platonic. Derek Cross was friendly with Vera Brand, a horticultural student a year ahead of us, but I do not remember any other female friends in our group as neither Bill nor Chris seemed to strike up any close relationships with the opposite sex.

Rag week at Wye was always a great occasion. That year it was decided to kidnap the Carnival Queen, on her way from Ashford to Wye by train. Two of the rag gang got on the train to pull the communication cord so that the train would stop in the country by a farm lane. As I had my MG at college, I was asked if I would be the 'get-away' driver. I took my MG down this farm track and we waited expectantly for the train to arrive and stop. Unfortunately it never stopped and the two on board told us that, although they pulled the communication chain (and yards of it came out), the driver probably surmised that it was a prank.

Petrol was still rationed and I had a small allocation, but soon found that this was not enough. Our farm tractor had run on TPO, a type of paraffin, after the engine was started with petrol, so I assumed that my car could be fuelled similarly. Of course this was not so and although it ran somewhat jerkily it sooted up the plugs and made a considerable mess of the engine. Shortly after this I decided that running a car at college was not a good idea and found a garage in Southsea that would sell it for me. They had to strip the engine before it could be sold and I did not get very much money for it.



In the autumn of 1950 I got in a contractor to plough up the top of the field at Retreat and started to plant it up with rootstocks for apple and pear trees. I also bought blackcurrant cuttings. I worked all through the Christmas holidays planting the rootstocks and as I was not making the progress that was needed to complete the task before I had to return to college I asked Vera to come to Retreat for a week to help me. Even with this help we had not finished before term began. In desperation to get the rest of the planting completed I asked some of my friends to come for a weekend and Wilkie kindly agreed to come with us and to drive us over in his Land-Rover. The gang consisted of Sally, Mark Inman, Vera and myself and we worked hard in a very wet field and in the garden at Retreat to complete the planting. On the way back to Wye, because it had been raining so hard, the road to Melksham was flooded, but Wilkie succeeded in driving the Land-Rover through the floods.

In 1951 my parents decided that Retreat was too much for them and they also wanted to find a property that I could turn into a fruit farm when I left college. They eventually bought an 18-acre property in an isolated position near Felton in Somerset. This consisted of a small house and garden with two grass fields separated by a hedge. The house had no electricity or telephone but it did have water and a septic tank for drainage.

In the Easter holidays of 1951 the university ran a week's athletics coaching at Motspur Park, the university athletics grounds. I decided that I would like to go on the course and duly turned up. On the first day we indicated the distances that we wanted to run and be coached in and I chose the high hurdles and the 440 yards, my best events at Winchester. We were coached by the best coaches in Britain at that time, all of them themselves Olympic athletes, many of whom had taken part in the 1950 Olympic Games in London.

We ran our various races on the first day, and I did not perform particularly well in

the high hurdles but did tolerably well in the 440 yards. One of the coaches, I forget which now, suggested I might try the 440 yards hurdles, a relatively new event. I had a go at it and rather enjoyed it. The hurdles, instead of being three foot six inches in height were only three foot and I found it a lot easier to get over them. My stride length also seemed to fit the longer distance between the hurdles and so I concentrated on this distance for the rest of the course. At the end of the course we had an athletics match and I won the 440 yards hurdles with some ease.

As a consequence of this I was invited to run for the University of London at that distance and also in the 220 yards hurdles, a completely new event with hurdles that were only two foot six inches high. I had enormous fun that summer, running in athletics matches in London, Oxford and Cambridge against their universities and in Paris and Amsterdam on two overseas trips. I was awarded a full purple (The University of London equivalent to the Oxford or Cambridge blue) for my achievements, a significant honour as most of the athletics team only got half purples. I won both the 440 yards hurdles and the 220 yards hurdles in the university's athletics championships and in the latter set the record for the event because it was the first time it had been run. It was amusing to read in the newspaper, some 12 or so years later, that my record had been broken. I was quite proud that it had stood for so long.

The amateur athletics championships that year were held in August and I ran in the 440 yards hurdles, coming fourth, the fourth fastest person in Britain in that event that year! I have a medal to show that I passed the standard for the event, 56 seconds. Today the 400 metre hurdlers do the distance in around 46 seconds! As we were all amateurs, the prizes could not be in cash. In Amsterdam, I remember, I received a bolt of cloth as my prize. I gave it to my mother but what she did with it I do not remember. The match in Paris was in late

July and I wanted to bring something back for Vera. With great trepidation I went to Galerie Lafayette, to the blouse department, and chose a nice embroidered blouse after much giggling from the sales assistant, both at my schoolboy French and trying to get the right size by holding the blouse up against one or other of the assistants that I judged to be about Vera's size. I bore this home in triumph and it turned out to be the correct size.

As the university athletics team trained at Motspur Park I had quite a journey to get up to London and out to Motspur every Wednesday and Saturday through the term. As a consequence I skipped a large number of lectures, putting my athletics before my work. We did college exams at the end of the summer term and, not unexpectedly, I failed mine and had to come up early in the autumn to retake them so that I could go on to my final year.

At Wye, at the end of each summer term, the dramatic society put on a play. That year we did Rebecca, and I had the part of Max de Winter and Vera played Mrs Danvers. We had already started to go out together, hence my desire to bring something back for her from Paris. She was a year ahead of me at college so how she succeeded in taking part in the dramatic society's production at the same time as doing her final exams I do not know.

My father had perfected a lecture on 'Public Speaking', which he used to give to the Staff College students at Camberley. When the debating society were looking for speakers I suggested my father as I had never heard his lecture. He was invited in the summer of 1951 and came, with my mother, for a night. Unfortunately this coincided with an athletics match and I had to go to London and did not get back in time to hear him. He told me afterwards that it was one of the most difficult that he had experienced as all the girls in the audience were knitting and he found it very off-putting!

I started to bud all the rootstocks in the field

at Retreat, getting most of my budwood from John Partridge at Devizes. As it was clear that I would not be able to finish the work by myself, I asked Vera if she would come to help. She was going to work on a small fruit farm near Steep in Hampshire for David Archer and his wife, Didi, who were a truly delightful couple, but she came to Retreat for four weeks first. It was also my twenty-first birthday on August 2nd and we had a big party and a dance at Retreat. I invited Vera, Sally, Diana Hedgecoe and Margery Percival, friends from Singapore days, as well as a number of local friends including Jill Brocklebank. The drawing room at Retreat was turned into a dance floor and we danced to records, all great fun.

After all the jollification I had to get down to hard work on the budding, very backbreaking but quite satisfying. I suppose it was during this time that I began to woo Vera. My parents kept chickens that had to be shut up at night and Vera and I volunteered for the job most nights, staying out under the stars on our way to and from the chicken run. One Sunday towards the end of August we took a walk to the river, which ran across the fields not far from Holt. There, sitting by a bridge over the river, I proposed to her, having been rehearsing my words for many days. She did not say 'yes' immediately, but agreed to marry me a few weeks later when we had gone to stay with David and Didi.

Vera had passed her degree in the summer, worked for David and Didi for a couple of months, and then found a job at Wye College in the agricultural accounts department. She had a room in Withersdane and had the use of the senior common room in Withersdane Hall, which was very useful as we were able to go there in the evening for me to revise for my exams in the summer. I really had to buckle down to it as I had neglected my work badly in my second year because of all the extra-curricular activities I had undertaken.

Tony Meredith had a large car that Vera and I borrowed occasionally to drive out into the country for an afternoon together. On one

occasion I had driven into a small wood and we got stuck. I had to walk to the nearest phone and call up Mark Inman, who had a motorcycle, and another friend to come and help push us out. Our final exams were sat in college and, for the practicals, in London. Four of us went up to London for the practicals in Tony's car. We returned to Wye that evening and Tony was driving. As we went through Maidstone we were stopped by a police car who said that Tony had been speeding as he overtook another car, which indeed he had. Tony got a ticket and had to

appear in court later, although he got the AA to represent him and pleaded guilty so he didn't actually have to go to court in person.

We were given our results through the post shortly after the end of term. Greatly to my relief I passed, probably just scraping through. The degrees at Wye at that time were a simple matter of pass or fail. The pass mark was 40% and you received your BSc (Horticulture) whether you got 90% or 41%. Vera and I were married that summer and started our life at Felton Fruit Farm.

---

## John Hudson (Wye 1964-67)

*Mick Slater (Wye 1965-67) writes:* I first met John, who passed away on December 8, 2023, in the first week of October 1965. The precise date escapes me, but it was on my second night at Wye, and the freshers like me arrived the day before the second and third years.

On the first day we were all welcomed by the Principal and Director of Studies, in marked contrast to the second day as it transpired. In the early hours of the second night my study door burst open and lights switched on to reveal the leader of this particular party who would become a life-long friend, John Hudson. He and the rest of the second year had all been in the pub and during the night were busy bathing all the freshers, with the throw-away line "welcome to Wye College".

John was a no-nonsense northerner who was schooled at Rossall and played school and club rugby in and around Manchester. He was a huge character at Wye on and off the rugby pitch and remained so for evermore. He graduated with a B.Sc in horticulture, then left for Australia where his rugby career blossomed, and he got a job in the agrochemical industry in which he remained most of his working life.

It was in Australia he met the lovely Carol. They married and came back to the UK a few

years later and that was when we rekindled our relationship. After a few months staying with Richard Beresford in Harrow on the Hill they moved to Lattice Cottage in Wargrave. This provided John with a home in a lovely part of the UK on the banks of the Thames, but importantly a town with great pubs, interesting people and close to Henley Rugby Club for whom he played for many years.

When I returned to the UK we would meet and play squash. The result was always a thorough trashing by John. He was a big powerful lad who would knock you for six in a collision on the court. For very nearly 50 years we would meet every month for a few beers often with Roger Murphy, another close friend. John's name for the pub was the 'Office'. He would phone and tell my secretary that we needed to meet in the 'Office', a code which persisted until this day.

We had many enjoyable family events together and have lost count of the restaurants where we were told by the patron to calm down. Wokeism was a subject not understood by this group or their wives with whom we had many raucous dinners.

John was the arranger of our meetings. It was always he who phoned Roger and me. In the busy lives we all led it was John who was the party organiser, and we salute him indeed.

John was always cheerful, and laughter was the hallmark of our meetings as we dissected the ways of the world. His passing has left a huge gap for his close family and friends. We have wonderful memories of our hilarious times together and will surely miss him.

Carol has two lovely daughters, Jo and Natalie, and their husbands and we wish them well in the future.

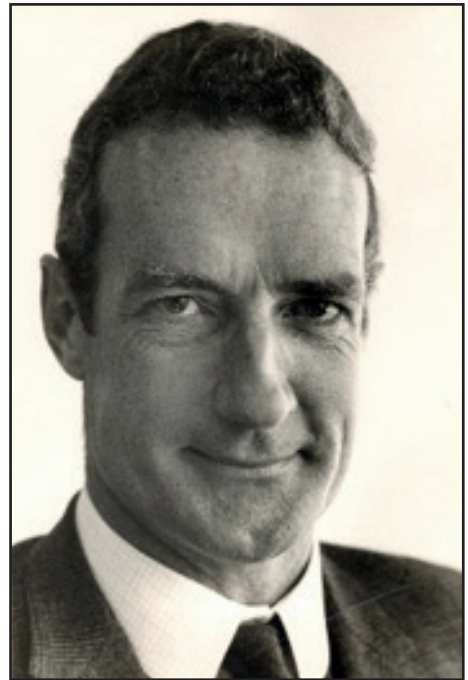
John's last weeks in hospital were difficult as the infection re-emerged in other locations of the body. A very anxious time for the family; Carol was in the hospital every day sometimes several times and she could not have done more to keep this fine fellow going.

May God bless John, Carol, and the children.

## Richard John (Dick) Parsons (Wye 1949-1952)

*Barbara Parsons (nee Somerville) writes:* It is with great sadness that I write to inform you that my husband, Richard John (Dick) Parsons (Wye 1949-1952; BSc Agric) died on 31 October 2023, aged 94. Richard and I met at Wye in 1949 and were married in 1952. Richard thoroughly enjoyed his years at Wye - he joined the hockey team, became captain, was awarded his colours and represented the University of London team; he was also a member of the tennis team. A point of interest: Richard's father, Thomas Edward Parsons, also studied at Wye College in the 1920s.

After leaving Wye Richard and I emigrated to Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), where he worked in the Department of Conservation and Extension for 32 years, finishing his career in Zimbabwe as Provincial Officer for Matabeleland South, based in Bulawayo. His work in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe included the supervision of the building of earth dams and contour ridges on farms, advising on general farming matters. In later years he had to help tobacco farmers gain the knowledge to diversify into growing other crops and farming cattle, after sanctions were applied to the country following the declaration of independence in 1965. On his retirement, in 1984, we moved to South Africa where Richard worked for KFC (Kwazulu Finance and Investment Corporation) for nine years, assisting local



sugar producers. After he retired (again), we moved to Australia (Canberra) to be closer to two of our four children and their families – one other is still in Harare, Zimbabwe, and the youngest is a vet in Zambia. His years of retirement were spent being involved with volunteer community work, enjoying travel, gardening, reading and spending time with family and friends.

Quoting a former work colleague: "I



*Standing: John Barnham, Bill Mitchell, Roy Hewitt, Ross Houghton, David Kingsford, John Hosking  
Seated: Cecil Jordan, Mike Madden-Mayers, Richard Parsons, David Jenner, Mike Owen*

*Wye College hockey team 1952*

remember Dick as the epitome of a gentleman. I never remember him ever uttering an angry word or showing any aggression. He was a wonderful boss and it was a privilege to have worked with him. At the same time, he was a great friend, full of wise counsel, and I owe him a great debt

of gratitude for all his help through both good and bad times. All who knew him will remember him with great affection and feel a deep sense of loss."

Richard will be greatly missed by me, our four children and their families.

## **Doreen Miller (nee Griffiths, Wye 1957-58)**

**Tony Evers, Gordon Rae and Doreen's son, Ben Harris, write:** Doreen was born in Harrow. A bright girl, she was awarded a state scholarship and, in 1957, took up a place on the Agric. (Hons) course at Wye, where she met that year's cohort, among whom was Liz Walker. Doreen and Liz had already met during their pre-Wye practical year, having

worked on the same farm. Liz, who became a lifelong friend, passed away in 2021, and her obituary appeared in the 2021-2 edition of 'Wye'.

With Tony Evers, David Gooday and Liz, Doreen organised an agric tour, a week of farm visits in western England. Doreen's connections with Sparsholt Agricultural College and her cousin's Gannah Farm in Herefordshire facilitated two of the visits.



*This photo was taken, probably by a press photographer, on a farm tour in summer 1958 at the Gannah farm. Doreen is pictured in the dark jumper, holding the bull.*



Jeanne Ingram was a supportive faculty member who later compiled a report. The photograph, taken by a local newspaper, shows the visitors to Gannah. Unfortunately, Doreen left Wye after one year, but she maintained contact with Jeanne and several fellow students. Through Gordon Rae, the circle of contemporary ex-students who keep in touch has been extended, and Doreen was an enthusiastic contributor of news and opinions.

Following her departure, Doreen went on to Bristol University and took a degree in Philosophy. She then entered academia and taught and ran the course in Literature and Philosophy at Middlesex Polytechnic/University.

Doreen married Terry Harris and had a son, Benjamin (Ben), who kindly provided much of this information. After this marriage was dissolved, she married Robert Maitre, a fellow philosopher and published poet. After 45 years together, Robert died and Doreen was reunited with one of her students of some 30 years previously, David Miller. They

married, and Liz Walker was bridesmaid, 'carrying a stick', she said.

With David's considerable encouragement, Doreen finished her second book, 'Creative Consciousness'. Most of us who received the flyer had to admit to her that we did not understand the title, never mind the contents!

As well as being a philosopher and lover of wisdom, Doreen also loved life and she lived it to the full. She was both kind and caring and had a legendary sense of humour. She loved literature, (she quickly became common-room librarian at Wye), music and her clothes. As she said she 'dressed to impress'.

In his eulogy, at Doreen's funeral near her and David's home in Bridport, Ben said that her pleasures were simple: 'reading, gardening, a smoke (Havana cigars for preference), a glass of fizz and a walk by the sea'.

Doreen was a great girl who left a lasting impression after her short time at Wye.



## Poul Brander (Wye 1962-64)

### *Moira Morley-Warland (Wye 1960-64)*

**writes:** Poul was a postgraduate at Wye from 1962 until 1964, in the Department of Horticulture, under Prof. Wilkinson, specializing in the development of ornamental shrubs, such as Cotoneaster. Poul's interest in plants developed as a child growing up on a small farm in North Jutland, Denmark, with his 12 siblings. He was the second youngest, so the loss of his father in 1945 when he was only 8 was a blow.

He first became a traditional gardener and later studied for a degree in horticulture in Copenhagen, before coming to Wye in 1962 and then continuing his studies at Kew Gardens. He met his Dutch wife, Trudy, in England, and they married in 1965. Three children swiftly followed. Tragically, Poul lost his wife to cancer in 1995 and then his son in 2000. A few years later he met his second wife, Hanne, and they married in 2001.

After leaving England, Poul became a botanist (Cand. Hortonom) in Hornum, Denmark, where he developed plants best suited to the Danish climate. In 2000 he developed a collaboration with other nurseries selecting plants for the climate under the brand name 'Nordic'.

Over the years he also worked as an examiner of students studying landscape architecture. At this time, he compiled 'Havens Planteleksikon' (Garden Lexicon).

When he retired in 2004, he wrote two books called 'Traer og buske i by og land' (Trees and shrubs of city and countryside), published first in 2010, and then in 2021. They are highly appreciated by botanists, gardeners and others working in that field.

He also travelled the world, especially to Japan where he collected plants which he later developed for the Danish climate, among others *Nandina domestica* and *Stewartia* and many others. Several plants have been named after him, among others *Cotoneaster franchetii* 'Brander'.

His knowledge was extensive and he became a guru to people interested in gardens and plants. He was highly respected among fellow botanists and had an enormous impact in his special field.

His eldest daughter, Anneliese, adds: "My garden today is filled with plants from him and I cannot look out there without thinking of him..."

On a personal note, Poul was great fun and took a lot of teasing with great good humour. He was also a strong member of our Christian Fellowship of the time and a faithful friend.

---

## John Wheeler and Dorothy Wheeler (née Young) (Wye 1954-57)

John and Dorothy (*writes Rosemary Sempell, their daughter*) met at Wye while studying agriculture. In 1957, John graduated in agricultural science, gaining a PhD in grassland agronomy, while Dorothy graduated with an MSc (Agriculture) in the same year. Upon graduation, they married and moved to Australia, where John took up a position with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) in Armidale, NSW.

John grew up in Croydon and attended Wallington County Grammar School. His contributions to animal production have been diverse. Significant among his research achievements were the studies of the methodology of grazing experiments; evaluation of the role of forage crops in complementing pasture; and overcoming the limitations to animal production from forage sorghum involving studies of cyanogenetics in sorghum and white clover.

John was the author of eighty research papers, reviews and book chapters, and



an editor or joint author of four books. The publication of key review articles was a feature of John's contribution, the most notable of which arose from his commission in 1985 by the Australian Wool Corporation to review pasture research and edit the conference proceedings.

Overseas, John contributed to agricultural development in Indonesia, Kenya, and Nepal. His diplomatic and inspiring leadership of the Project for Animal Research and Development in Bogor, West Java from 1981 to 1983 was widely valued. John was active in the Australian Society of Animal Production, becoming Secretary and later President of the New England Branch of the Society. In 1966 he became the Federal President of the Society and was made a Fellow in 1998. He was also an active member of the

Australian Institute of Agricultural Science and Technology of which he was made a Fellow in 1993.

John took early retirement from CSIRO in 1989. He and Dorothy were sponsored by the Anglican Church to work in a government university in Sulawesi in eastern Indonesia where he assisted with postgraduate training and contributed to numerous research projects during his three-year posting. He also co-ordinated an Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) study into the limitations to village pig production systems. On returning to Australia in 1993 John undertook a graduate degree in counselling and became a counsellor for Cancer Council of Australia and Lifeline.

Dorothy came from Sydney, NSW, to England in 1952 after completing a Bachelor of Science at the University of Sydney. She travelled through the United Kingdom and Europe before starting work at the Grasslands Research Institute and commencing studies at Wye College, graduating with a Master of Science (Agriculture) in 1957. She moved with John to Armidale where they lived until the late 1980s.

Dorothy began working in the Faculty of Rural Science at the University of New England in 1958. After the birth of three children and a sabbatical year in the UK and USA, Dorothy returned to the University as a botanist. Later, she completed Diploma of Education (1970) and a Graduate Diploma in English as a Second Language (1988). In the late 1970s Dorothy commenced work with two other botanists on the book *Grasses of NSW*. This was first published in 1982 and is now in its fourth edition.

While with John in Indonesia, she continued her botanical interest by studying bamboos, developed her skills in photography, and gained a love of Indonesian textiles, especially the creation of batiks. On her return to Australia,

Dorothy pursued further academic studies by gaining a Diploma of Theology in 2000. Both John and Dorothy were committed Christians and were active in local churches wherever they lived. During their time in Armidale, they provided hospitality to hundreds of overseas students including the provision of a place to cook and eat familiar cuisine and overcome feelings of homesickness. Their children's lives were enriched with these spiritual and cultural interactions, especially from times living in the United States (1964/65) and Kenya (1974/74). John died in 2018 and Dorothy in 2023. They were much loved by their family and friends.



*Right - Dorothy and John in 1981*

---

### **Amanda Webster (wife of Paul Webster, staff 1964- )**

*Mike Webster, Amanda and Paul's son, writes:* We lost our mum, Amanda Webster, on Wednesday 13th December. She died peacefully at home in her sleep, at the age of 81. My sister, dad and I were all with her. Thank you all for the kind words, messages, flowers and support since then. She had battled multiple sclerosis for 38

years, which gradually impacted on her mobility and cognition. However, she still managed to fit in a life full of achievement – a multilingual doctor, fierce advocate of the NHS and women's reproductive rights, working across the world and well-loved in the local community. A wonderful wife and mother who, even though she never quite reached 5ft, always made sure we felt supported and that my sister and I didn't step out of line!

---

### **Dr Ruth Gasson MBE (Wye 1957-60)**

*Berkeley Hill (staff 1970 – 2005), with assistance from Ruth's nephew Richard Griffin and Angela Edwards, colleague and friend, writes:* Ruth had a long association with Wye College as a student and staff member, though her reputation and contacts in her fields of specialisation were global. Ruth operated

on the interface between agricultural economics and rural sociology and had the ability to make lasting friendships and collaborations that bridged the divide. Her work on the goals and values of farmers, the farm family and, in particular, the role of women, is renowned.

Ruth was born in Hastings in 1938 to parents who were on the staff of a solicitor's office. Her father Jim was a fireman during World War II and also

held several posts as a church organist, including a spell at St. George's, Brede. They lived in a modern house in Hastings, but Jim had a clear determination to become a farmer, and in March 1952 the family moved into Randall's Farm, Sedlescombe. Ruth and her younger sister Rita learned a lot about combining dairy farming with their own schooling. The farm was apparently on the brink of bankruptcy for five years, had no electricity, no mains water (only a well system that supplied the cowshed), no mains drainage, no wireless and no telephone, and no car after the first two years.

Despite these hardships, Ruth received a good education and gained entrance to Wye College in 1957, graduating with a 2:1 degree in 1960. This was followed by a very happy year in Oxford earning a Postgraduate Diploma in Agricultural Economics, in which she gained a distinction. As she claimed she had covered all the work already at Wye, Ruth spent much time reading, bell-ringing and cycling in the countryside. She then returned to a staff post at Wye in the department headed by Professor Wibberley.

Tragedy struck Ruth's family when, in 1965, her father Jim was killed in an accident in which the tractor he was driving reared backwards upon him. The farm's livestock and assets were sold by auction soon afterwards, and a year or so later her widowed mother Margaret left the farm.

After her father's early death Ruth moved to Cambridge from 1966 until 1977, a period during which, according to later conversations, she felt increasingly unhappy with the department's senior management. In 1971 Ruth had been fortunate to buy York Cottage in Brede – which she had known through a family connection since about 1942 – for use as a holiday cottage. She subsequently

moved there full time in 1977, a handy base within an easy drive of Wye College and accessible to London by rail. Ruth developed her existing roots with the local community, including active membership of the Rye Singers.

This was the start of a further fruitful period of Ruth's professional career, but this time not as a Wye College formal staff member but as a freelancer. Nominally a Senior Research Fellow of the Wye Centre for European Agricultural Studies (CEAS), finance came in the form mostly of a series of research grants from MAFF of which I was the nominated applicant and holder at Wye College. These covered *inter alia* pluriactivity ('part-time farming'), the impact of tenure on farm performance, the educational standards of farmers, the transfer systems for putting MAFF-funded scientific advances into practice on farms of different types, and housing on farms. In line with her high level of energy and focus, Ruth's collaborations also extended well beyond Wye and she often told me of projects she had on the go with academics such as Andrew Errington (Reading University) and Michael Winter (Exeter University) and bodies such as The Women's Farm and Garden Association. Each of us appreciated her thoroughness, reliability and absolute integrity. Ruth was hugely skilled in discerning patterns in a mass of survey data, testing their statistical significance, and explaining their relevance to our understanding of the sector. She was fearless in championing issues that she felt had been neglected by conventional academics, such as the complex nature of decisions made by farming families. Ruth built an impressive list of publications – books, journal articles and more popular pieces in the farming press to share her findings. She also found time to serve periods as editor of *Sociologia Ruralis* and Book Review editor of the *Journal of Agricultural Economics*. Her award in 1993 of an MBE

for services to agricultural economics was richly deserved.

When Imperial College merged with Wye College in 2000 Ruth decided that it was time for her to withdraw from agricultural economics. Her focus shifted to her local community and, in particular, her role as a Reader in the Church of England. She undertook training and seemed to take a large part in running the parish church in Brede. With the passing of time increasing mobility problems (she had suffered from

rheumatoid arthritis for years) meant that driving was curtailed and life in her ancient cottage, with its productive but demanding garden, eventually became impractical.

Ruth moved into Whitegates Residential Home in Westfield in September 2022. Her intellect remained as sharp as ever, as was demonstrated by a stream of perceptive email correspondence. Ruth will be greatly missed.



## 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](mailto:secretary@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk)

## News of members

### Patrick Dobbs (Wye 1954-1957)

Patrick writes to say that he has moved from his farm at Llanddeusant, near Llangadog in Carmarthenshire to Llandovery in the same county. "I retired at last after nearly 63 years a hill sheep farmer. There are changes coming fast to Welsh farming, and most of them changes for the better, but it needs younger folk than me to implement them. I find living in a tidy street with gas from a pipe and no animals to care for (except Patsy the cat) something of a culture shock. Patsy seems to have adapted quicker than I have, but I expect I will get used to it!

### Lewis Wallis (Wye 1957-60)

Lewis writes to say that he still enjoys hearing news from Wye via the Journal. "It is wonderful to hear from Wye. After retirement from the Commonwealth Development Corporation (now British International Investment) back in 1982 I spent much time in Ukraine up to 2014, as well as in Somaliland, working with the Yeheb Project, which aims to restore land and livelihoods in the region's drylands of the Horn of Africa.

Unfortunately age has caught up with me and with Heather, my wife of 57 years. "The basis of life relies on the soil, and war destroys all nature. My time at Wye under Prof. Wain was very important for me.



# The Wye Heritage Centre

**'Our past shapes our future'**

**Karen Mitcalfe (Chair) and Francis Huntington (Hon. Sec.)**  
**report on recent progress made in the activities of the Wye Heritage Centre.**

As many of you will have gathered from recent reports, the developers of the College buildings will be leasing, to Wye Heritage, a part of the Edwardian buildings at a peppercorn rent. Wye Heritage is a registered charity created to curate and display historical material relating to the village of Wye and the former Wye College. If you have not caught up with the plans for the new Heritage Centre do visit our website [www.wyeheritage.org.uk](http://www.wyeheritage.org.uk)

The renovation of the main College buildings is now well underway, and we continue to work with the developers Telereal Trillium (TT), their architects and builders, on the details of the new Heritage Centre. It is anticipated that we will open towards the end of the 2024.

## Fitting out the new Centre

TT will be handing over the new Heritage Centre with the basic building work complete with Wye Heritage being responsible for the 'fitting out'. Currently we are working on the specification for the internal fixtures, fittings and equipment, and we anticipate we will be launching an appeal in the spring to secure funds to 'fit out' the new Centre – and will certainly be approaching Agricola Club members for their financial support.

## Working with the Wye College Agricola Club

We look forward to working with the Agricola Club committee and the Club membership to deliver a Centre which displays the history and heritage of the College buildings and their varied uses, as well as capturing something of the College's

ethos and endeavours from its 1894–2009 history. It is vital that all that was experienced and achieved in that period in the fields of agriculture, horticulture, animal and plant sciences, food production and the environment are properly recorded and celebrated.



*Despite the current closure of the College and its Chapel due to the renovation works, it has been possible to maintain one annual tradition. A wreath was laid for Remembrance Day 2023 at the World War II Memorial in the Cloister Quad in remembrance of those from Wye College who fought in the two World Wars. The picture shows this being undertaken by Francis and Lucy Huntington, replete with hard hats for the occasion.*

## Archive Working Group

During 2023 we made excellent progress with cataloguing and filing the ever-expanding collections of documents, photographs and artefacts. Under the leadership of Lucy Huntington, our Archive Working Group meets every Friday afternoon. In the last year, past students and their families have gifted a significant number of items for inclusion in the archive. Please do keep them coming, and let us know if you have documents, photographs and artefacts that you would like to gift, as you will be helping us to record the diverse history of the College as a centre of learning of worldwide importance. We can be contacted at [admin@wyeheritage.org.uk](mailto:admin@wyeheritage.org.uk)

## Regular displays

Every other month we put together a new display highlighting a particular aspect of the life and times of the village of Wye and/

or of the College. By changing the displays, we aim to extract material from the archives for all to see and enjoy.

## Current Heritage Centre

The Latin School remains our temporary 'home' until the new Heritage Centre is ready. We are currently open to the general public on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month, to coincide with the Wye Farmers Market. The Saturday morning openings have become very popular with a steady stream of Wye residents and visitors enjoying coffee and home-made cake and becoming immersed in the history and heritage of the village of Wye and Wye College.

---

## Life after Wye

**Rob Smith (Wye 1968-1971) tells how a radical change of study path brought him to Wye by way of Southampton.**

My journey to Wye was unusual, as I first started university life reading Civil Engineering at Southampton. It did not take me long to recognise that this was not a subject I could relate to, and I left after one year.

A friend of ours who had just completed the one year Farm Business Management course at Wye, suggested I should try my hand at studying agriculture. After gaining work experience on the College farm, I was accepted for the degree course in agriculture starting in 1968. I found this to be a life-changing experience as I discovered the subject to be very much to my liking, especially the economics side of agriculture.

I spent my first year in halls in K Block, and found the setting rather like a boarding school. Having been in halls at Southampton where it was normal for both male and female students to come and go as they pleased at all hours, I found myself falling foul of the rules of halls at Wye. Any girlfriend visiting had to be smuggled in over the weekend past the Porters' Lodge. On one occasion, the cleaner reported me to the Warden after finding some feminine articles left in my room on the Monday. I was duly summoned and thence ensued an amusing conversation with the Warden! I moved into digs the following year.



*Rob Smith (back row, third left) and hockey team-mates during the 1969/70 season*

Southampton was not a complete waste of time as I met a girl who was at the teacher training college there, and we were married three years later, when I was starting my third year at Wye. Being married to a primary school teacher meant there was more cash around, and we rented a flat in Ashford where she taught for the year. I commuted to Wye daily (most days anyway) to attend lectures, and we generally partook in Wye activities. I played hockey for the College and was also captain of tennis. I think I was considered an oddity being married with a working wife, but there was one other married couple in the year group – though they were both students – and also a mature married student.

In those days when you finished your course there were numerous jobs on offer. Out of the offers I received I chose one from the Milk Marketing Board and started with them in the autumn of 1971 as a management trainee working out of the Waterloo office. I spent time in the South East area, training with the likes of Unigate to gain work experience, attending meetings promoting fresh milk and milk products, and being hands-on driving a milk float and doing the duties of your local milkman!

Later that autumn I was told I was to be transferred to the MMB's Mid-Western region to carry on with my training. The office was based in Yeovil. It was at the time when milk collection was being transferred from collection in churns to bulk tankers and the Mid-Western region was at the forefront of these developments. Among others, my duties included visiting all the farms in the region and assessing whether the bulk tankers could access the dairy using the existing driveway. Typically, farmers had to take their churns to the stand at the end of the farm drive so the milk could be picked up and loaded onto the back of flat-deck lorries. Unsurprisingly, much

of the access was not always suitable for even the smaller bulk tankers and required adaptation.

Along with bulk tanks came the tedious process of calibrating them when installed which was my next job. For readings to be taken, the metal rod measure in the tank had to be calibrated so the amount of milk in the tank could be accurately worked out. This was done by working with the tank supplier's engineer who had a measured canister usually of ten gallons which he would empty into the tank and I would take the reading of the metal rod. I have to say that it was not the most comfortable of jobs, especially if it was a large tank of five hundred gallons or more (those were considered large in 1972!) and the weather was cold and wet. The job could take most of the day depending on the speed of the engineer and his equipment – some were a lot quicker than others.

One of the other duties the Board had was checking the amount of milk cheesemakers were using. This is because their milk was not handled directly by the MMB, and so it had to rely on their figures! To carry out this random checking we had to assemble outside in the early morning and count the tankers in. It was a rarity that the figures they submitted were incorrect.

The region was also involved with the development of flow meters on bulk tankers to speed up and make recording easier. The experimental trials were carried out with the Unigate factory at Wootton Bassett, and readings were checked by us against the calibrated figures to report on the accuracy of the meters.

One of the most useful skills I gained that year was obtaining my HGV Class 3 driving licence. We were asked to do this in case of strikes by the drivers, as milk could obviously not be left on

farms and the alternative would be to let the milk out, so we would take over the role of collector. Fortunately, strikes rarely happened on my watch and the one occasion it did was resolved fairly quickly, though I did have to take a tanker from Yeovil to Southampton one evening, which was a challenging experience for a newly qualified driver.

Eventually I was told that they wanted me back at head office in Thames Ditton, but this was the time of the enormous hike in house prices and I told them I simply could not afford to move back there and buy a house in the vicinity. Fortunately, a job cropped up at Wye for a research assistant to work with Geoff Allanson on devising a computer model for dairy herd expansion. At that time computer science in agriculture was relatively new, although some members of staff, Paul Webster for one, had a good grasp of the subject matter. In those days there were printed cards to feed into the newly installed computer, but I have to admit I never quite had the enthusiasm for the project that I should have done.

After two years in the job we were expecting our first child and I decided that a job in the commercial sector along with a company car and perks was a much more attractive proposition. We had bought a house near Charing, Kent, and we could stay in the area as I took on the role of technical adviser for FSL, a company specialising in feeding to dairy cows a liquid product based on urea. There was much scepticism about the efficacy of such a product but it worked if the balance of the rest of the diet was correct.

Three years later an opportunity came up with Nitrovit, a feed company, for a cattle adviser. One of their main mills was at Witham, Essex, so we had to up sticks and move to East Anglia, buying a 16th century cottage on the

Suffolk border. Forty seven years later, we are still in the same house, though physically it has grown considerably in size. DIY has been almost a second job for me over the years, filling the gaps when not in full-time employment as was the case when I left Nitrovit to set up as an agent. This did not work out to my satisfaction and briefly I returned to the employment fold to replenish funds, working for a feed company operating out of Canterbury, before moving on to join the Agricultural Training Board. This was in the early 1980s, and my work as a training adviser, which involved forming training groups and writing and arranging training programmes, that I came into contact with a number of ex-Wye graduates. It proved to be a very satisfying occupation.

However, I was withdrawn from this role and asked to work in the research department in the head office at Beckenham, Kent, where the ATB had obtained considerable funding to develop an open learning programme for the mushroom industry. There had long been a demand for a bricks and mortar training centre for the industry based on the Dutch model. However, this was considered too expensive, so the idea of developing a series of open learning modules was relatively a much cheaper option. We liked to feel we were successful in developing these modules which were then sold on to growers, but the uptake, to be fair, was not that great.

The long-term future of the Agricultural Training Board was under discussion by the-then Government and inevitably it was closed down at the end of the decade. I jumped ship before its demise and joined a Government agency known as Food From Britain (FFB). It was split into different divisions based on the different roles within the food chain, and I joined what was known as the Cooperative Division, set up to encourage farmers to join marketing and



buying groups and providing the legally compliant cooperative structures.

At that time Food from Britain was responsible for administering many of the grant schemes available to the industry involving both UK and EU schemes of which there were many. Some readers will be familiar in particular with FEOGAs and the 1035/72 schemes targeted at farmers' marketing groups, or producer organisations (POs) as they were known. East Anglia and the south east of England had the largest and most successful co-operatives, accounting for about 70 to 80 per cent of UK co-operative output, and this was the area I covered. However, the overall market share of co-operatives in the UK was and still is small beer compared with mainland Europe, where co-operation is valued much more to counteract the purchasing power of the big supermarkets.

Horticulture, field vegetables and top fruit were the sectors that gained the most from these schemes, although grain stores were also major beneficiaries. I have to say I was always welcomed on my visits to all the POs and met many characters, a number of them ex-Wye as you would expect in the farming community. I think my welcome had something to do with the various grants schemes on offer which I could assist the POs to access. As the visiting officer, it was my job to help to go through their application and provide information to HQ as to whether they met with the eligibility criteria. The amounts of money involved were considerable, with seven figure sums not unusual for cold-stores, apple grading lines, grain bins and stores, pea viner...the list went on. However, we also had to monitor for the authorities to ensure that the grants were used correctly for the programmes as submitted. This meant inspecting the items installed were as agreed. There

was also the issue brought up by the Ratings Authority on what and when the cold-stores were used for. Rates were zero for the PO members' produce but attracted rates for storing non-member produce.

The amount I signed off in terms of funding must have been millions if not tens of millions. All good things come to an end though; by the early nineties it was decided by the authorities that an organisation supporting British agriculture and promoting the food industry at home and abroad was an unnecessary burden on the Treasury, so FFB was dismantled. The work we did in the co-operative division was taken on by MAFF (now DEFRA) and the Rural Payments Agency.

Now starts the most interesting part of my career. Five of us in the co-operative division decided we would set up our own company and make use of the expertise we had built up in co-operative law and co-operative structures. Genesis was born, with five directors working as sole traders looking to sell our expertise to the newly-freed eastern European countries as well as former Soviet Union states now moving from a command economy to a more open one. One of my fellow directors was Murrough MacDonnell, also ex-Wye, and we worked on a number of projects together.

The projects in Eastern Europe were funded by the British Knowhow Fund, and in former Soviet Union countries by TACIS, with involvement also in Moldova from the World Bank. Our tasks were really to do what we used to do in the UK: providing advice on setting up farmer-owned organisations and developing food marketing chains.

Another of the activities we were involved with was the organisation of 'inward missions'. This was where relevant personnel from these countries

were invited to the UK to view how POs operated in this country. Ukraine was a participant in this with other eastern European countries. This was in one- or two-week blocks and we visited many of the POs we had worked with as FFB. They were very supportive and gave up a lot of their time to show these visitors their facilities and an explanation how it all worked.

All the former eastern bloc countries were keen to learn from the west and to welcome the teams who came in to help them. The former Soviet Union countries were a bit more of a challenge, especially Russia. The whole philosophy of life is so different and it can be an uncomfortable experience. There was no living in luxurious hotels for our projects – we were only allowed Russian level accommodation which, one could say, was different to western expectations.

One of the most enjoyable places to work in was Moldova. It was the poorest country in Europe but the people were so friendly and hospitable. If you visited their houses, they would put out a feast of food and drink for their visitors. I always felt embarrassed enjoying their hospitality, as I knew what little they possessed. The offices we used in Chisinau, the capital, could not afford heating and we would warm our fingers by placing them behind the old desktop computers blowing out hot air before we could use the keyboard!

Though I worked on a number of these projects I prioritised working in the UK as an adviser/consultant, with a number of POs I had got to know in my days at FFB. Together with an accountant colleague and another ex- FFB colleague, we helped devise structures which would qualify for EU grants and also provided the services to run the schemes. I always enjoyed writing applications for grant schemes



*Anne and Rob Smith*

and was familiar with the phrases and actions you needed to include to be successful. I was gamekeeper turned poacher and was known in the circle I worked with as 'the bullshit specialist'! Working with these POs was much like a social occasion with work thrown in, and I got to know the members well. This kept me going for twenty four years but by the time I reached my late sixties I had had enough of dealing with the organisations now running the schemes and told my clients I was retiring – but not before I found others who could step in and help them continue. In retirement, my wife Anne and I continue to live on the Suffolk/Essex border, and I remain in contact with many of the colleagues I used to work with.

## Life after Wye

**Sophia Martin (Wye 1979-82) explains her fascination with the origins of field names – and how it has resulted in publication of a book on the subject.**

After I left Wye in 1982 I worked for a couple of years and then went to Lancaster University for an MA in Systems in Management. It was one year, full time and I got an SERC grant to cover my studies – incredible luxury. I'm not sure if anyone else remembers Paul Webster introducing us to Soft Systems Methodology in Management III, but that was the topic and I enjoyed it so much that I stayed on as a research associate and completed an MPhil. As part of the MA, I'd done a project in the NHS which developed into a secondment into a change management consultancy which supported change in the health service. I've more or less stuck with that in the 35 years since – although I don't do so much consultancy or systems thinking any more, it's mainly leadership and coaching. As I started out rather cerebral it's been nice to discover in middle age that I've finally got some skills for supporting people.

I'm living in south Cumbria and just have one agriculture-related activity, which is feeding orphan lambs for one of my farming neighbours.

A few years ago I joined a local history project which tried to map out all the ancient and modern field names in the Rusland valley. The idea grew out of the experience of a neighbour trying to explain to a farmer where some of his sheep were out, and her amazement in discovering he had names for all his fields. I must admit, it's something I'd known for a long time, but never realised that it was a curiosity to others. We worked in teams, each taking a local area. I looked at names here in Finsthwaite with two neighbours and had such success that I wrote the findings up as a book, 'Feather Bed and Shive of Cheese',



which records hundreds of names of fields and woodlands in this area. It's an area still with two hill farms, but the past names show evidence not only of huge amounts of wood working (things like charcoal making for the local iron industry) but also of cereal growing (mainly subsistence) which hasn't been done since WWII.

The oldest names in Finsthwaite date back to the 1550s, and although some have changed as farms have changed hands over the years, many endure for centuries. It took several months to do the research, but it was fascinating. Some people agree: one of our kindest book reviewers said "while it ought to be academically grey it is instead thoroughly entertaining and enlightening."

We found a lot of information in archives in the local records office. One of our farmers



still has a 19th century estate plan which is a bit of a working document too as some changes to names have been pencilled-in in the early 20th century when land was acquired or renamed. As well as archive research we also talked to farmers to find out what they called their fields, and what they knew of where those names originated. As well as obvious things like a name that reflects landscape conditions (Hard Hills is a sloping field with a lot of bedrock in it, and Sourbutts is a butt of land distant from the main farm with a mire at one end and sour is a dialect word for a marsh), there are examples of names reflecting land usage (Peaselands, the Cow Pastures), and a very common habit of naming a field or wood after the person it was bought from. A man called Walker sold off plots of land in the 1630s that still bore his surname in the 19th century, so memories are long. When I did a talk about our findings someone came up to me at the end and said she and her husband had bought land from a neighbour and still referred to the acquisitions as 'Margaret's fields' and seemed pleased they were continuing a centuries-old tradition. Another example of long memories is a small field known as Swinebroach which may have that name because it was once a piece of common land where villagers kept pigs in the medieval past. We have some examples of medieval open fields where

several people owned a strip of land, or dale, and those fields although ending up owned by a single farm keep names like 'The Dales' or 'The Brow Dales'.

A key goal was to research and record the names before they were lost. It proved to be worth doing. Individual names for fields are tending to decline while group names are used for an area. Indeed some of the boundaries – which in this part of the world are drystone walls – are coming down and what were small fields are gently amalgamating into larger areas of grazing. The fell grazing is still used, but there's no longer any arable land – and hasn't been since WWII. But it makes it the more fascinating to see where farmers grew oats and barley in arable plots in the past.

Anyone wanting more of my enlightening and fascinating detail about Finsthwaite and its field names can buy Feather Bed and Shive of Cheese from Amazon or Waterstones (ISBN 978-1-9160217-1-6). This is the cover picture of the village, from the fellside. And if you are inspired to do something locally, you may find the digital map for the whole Rusland Valley project worth looking at on the Rusland Horizons website and following the links to the Mapped Histories project. Or get in touch ([sophiamartin99@btinternet.com](mailto:sophiamartin99@btinternet.com)).



## Life after Wye

### Tim Passmore (Wye 1978-81) describes his move from pig farming into policing, having been elected Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk.

In May this year I sought re-election as Suffolk's Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), having had the privilege of being first elected in November 2012. I have always been of the view that good and effective policing supports economic growth and inward investment, and this has never been more important considering the huge financial challenges facing our nation today. I firmly believe the only sensible way to reduce national debt is by expanding the economy (led by the private sector), therefore increasing the tax base. The prospect of an even larger state with greater centralisation is a cause for huge concern with the country struggling under the burden of high levels of taxation and over regulation.

I left Wye College in 1981 and like many members of the Agricola Club regard the closure of Wye College as an absolute travesty and extremely short-sighted. It is only after many years one realises how fortunate we were to attend such a great institution with its unique approach to (in my case) agricultural education coupled with an unforgettable social and sporting agenda!

Since then, I farmed on my own account and delivered world-wide consultancy on pig genetic breeding programmes, and latterly support for the rural economy through various government grant schemes. When I was elected as Suffolk's PCC, I stopped my agricultural work since being a PCC is a way of life and really is all consuming, although I do find time to carry on with my rugby union refereeing commitments across East Anglia even at the ripe old age of 64!

Times change and not always for the better. The global geo-political situation is simply

appalling. The unprovoked Russian invasions of South Ossetia, Georgia, Crimea and other large parts of Ukraine have demonstrated the weakness and complacency of Western and European leadership which is utterly shameful. The ongoing conflict in the Middle East, parts of Africa and tension over Taiwan and Korea are deeply worrying.

These actions have brought to the fore that the primary responsibilities of any government should always be defence, safe borders, food and energy security. In this turbulent world nothing should be taken for granted. Good policing is affected by all these issues and many more.

Another important role I have is the chairmanship of the National Rural Crime Network. It really is high time the Home Office recognised the significance of our rural economy and the damage organised crime groups, in particular, do to large areas of the English and Welsh countryside. Rural forces like Suffolk receive far less per capita central government funding for policing than our metropolitan counterparts. The Home Office has for many years promised a more equitable distribution of policing resources, but nothing has changed. The status quo is totally unacceptable.

A further reason I am seeking a fourth term in office is to do whatever is possible to support rural areas in tackling and preventing crime. We all know of the consequences of plant and machinery theft, heritage and wildlife crime, forced labour, livestock rustling and within the food chain. Organised crime groups are involved in many of these crimes and much more besides, including fly-tipping. Many have links with overseas criminal gangs. There are also concerns regarding firearms licensing.



Application of the law needs appropriate administration by individuals who actually understand what they are talking about.

The intimidation by anarchist groups targeting livestock businesses and auction markets needs a much more vigorous policing response. In my opinion the same applies to protests by groups such as Just Stop Oil and Extinction Rebellion. Everyone has a right to peaceful protest, but they do not have the right to impede individuals and businesses going about their legal normal work.

Much more needs to be done on fraud in particular; this pernicious crime must be taken far more seriously. For some bizarre reason the Office for National Statistics does not include fraud data in its crime statistics!

Lastly, there is an education approach required in two specific areas. Public sector procurement spends millions of pounds of our hard-earned taxes each year on goods and services. Intelligent use of our collective

supply chains could deliver a significant boost our own economy and support local or UK-based business especially in the food and drink industries. Time to wake up and do more to help ourselves.

The criminal justice system is in urgent need of repair and increased capacity. The very welcome increase in police officer numbers over the last three years should soon raise detection levels and result in more prosecutions. Our prisons and court rooms are under enormous pressure, and this is the fault of poor planning by successive governments of all colours going back over twenty years. It will not change overnight but we must stop fiddling whilst Rome burns – a long-term plan to start putting matters right with which we can all help is required.

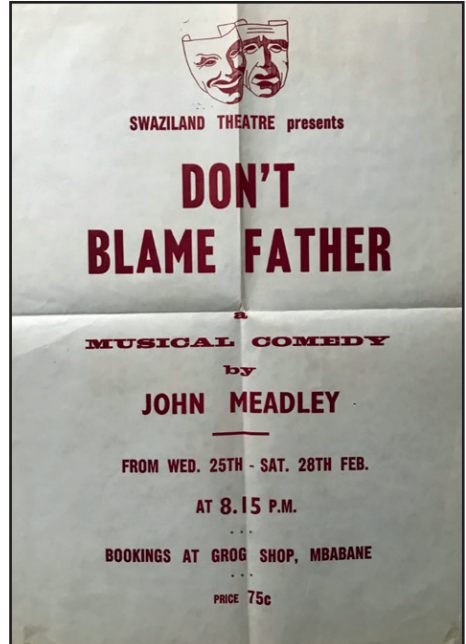
There is so much more to talk about as a PCC, but that will have to wait for another time. As Churchill said many years ago: "Let us go forward together" Quite so – let's get on with it.

## Life at Wye

**John Meadley (Wye 1965-68) recalls the culture shock of coming to Wye from Newcastle when his pea studies brought him many miles south.**

In the early 1960s the north-south divide was very real. When studying agriculture at Newcastle upon Tyne I wanted to do a special study on peas. I had to get the permission of the Senior Tutor because peas grew south of the Humber. And when I wanted to do the same with hops I had to get the permission of Prof. Cooper – because hops grew south of the Trent! Until I arrived at Wye I had, with the exception of three primary school years spent in Bristol, always lived north of the Trent – in Hull, Leeds and the Peak District as my father, an itinerant minister, moved from circuit to circuit amongst communities that were plain speaking, generous and who lived largely at the margin.

After the rows of back-to-back houses in Newcastle it came as something of a culture shock to arrive at Wye – in a rolling landscape that northerners might call 'nesh' and to find that the Principal rode to hounds. Not being particularly clubbable by nature, and having at school lost myself in the world of music rather than sport, I was probably something of a loner. I focused on my research work and in due course got involved in the Folk Club (with Chris Baines, Pete Wright and John Beath) and then rekindled the college orchestra, which I conducted and where the first violin was none other than my academic supervisor, Prof. Graham Milbourn. When the college produced *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* I wrote some fairly simple incidental music (with Sue Cook on flute, Pete Wright on mandolin and me on clarinet) and then started writing some nonsense songs for the Folk Club such as *Why the Peanut has a complex*, *The Mushroom Rock and Roll* and *Windy Wye*.



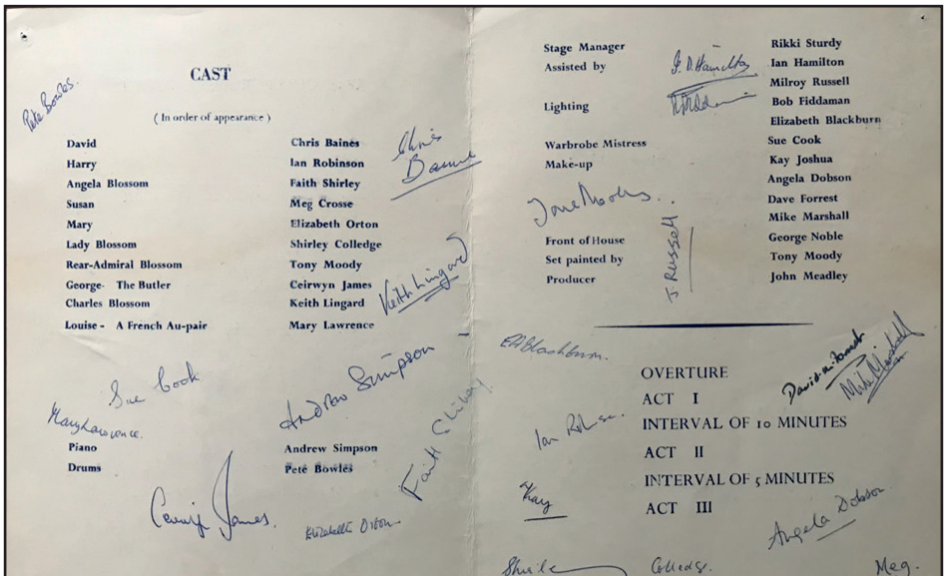
From somewhere – probably when spending endless hours mindlessly measuring the leaf area index of tens of square feet of pea leaves using an airflow planimeter, counting the number of pods and the number of peas in each pod as well as the tenderness of those peas (using the aptly named Tenderometer) – came the idea of writing some light-hearted songs that would reflect the culture shock that I felt when I arrived at Wye. And as I wrote them it morphed into the idea of a full-length musical. It was *Romeo and Juliet* and *West Side Story*, in that two young people from very different backgrounds fall in love, but *Gilbert and Sullivan* in that it had both an element of the absurd and a happy ending.

At the time I was lodging in a tiny room in a small house called Roselawn in Cherry Gardens, which led up to the playing fields. My landlady was the delightful Miss Wickins, who must have been well into her 70s. I remember giving her a lift to Devon one Christmas in my A35 van, grinding for hour after hour in the snow along the A272. With no heater in the vehicle she huddled in the passenger seat under rugs, clutching a hot water bottle for as long as it eked out some warmth and whilst I routinely stopped to clear the windscreen of snow.

My room contained a narrow bed, a small table and chair (that looked out through the curtained window onto the lane) and my guitar. I realise now that I must have written the original version of the music entirely on the guitar, although on the stage the songs were accompanied by a piano (played by Andrew Simpson with Pete Bowles on drums). I am sure that there must have been a plan as to how the story would unfold, but in practice I would write some text and then a song – after which I would go downstairs and

sing it to the patient Miss Wickins - who would smile and give me her approval (or not) and the confidence to move forward. Eventually the pieces fell into place and I could start writing the score for the piano accompaniment.

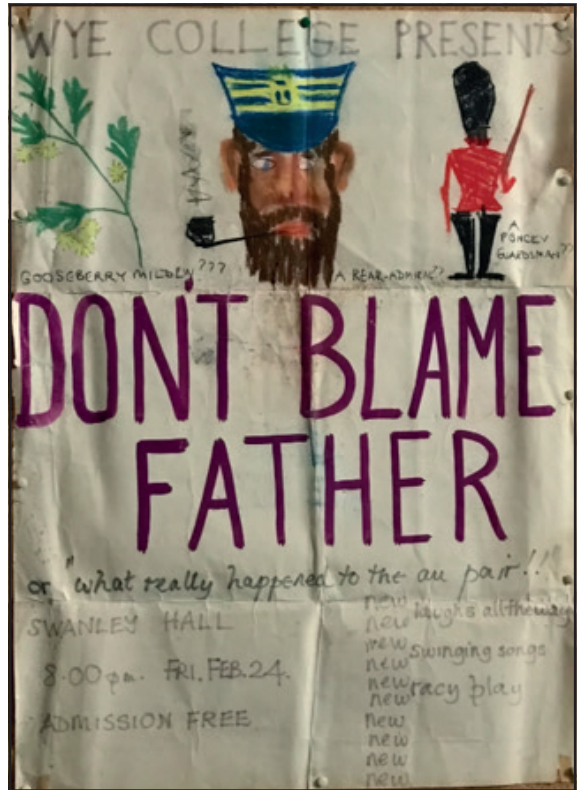
Perhaps not surprisingly it starts in an agricultural college. David (whose father is a refuse collector in Wigan - played by Chris Baines) falls in love with Angela (played by Faith Shirley and who was supported by a chorus of her fellow students Libby Orton and Meg Crosse). Angela is the well-spoken daughter of Rear-Admiral Blossom (played by Tony Moody) and Lady Blossom (played by Shirley Colledge). The action quickly moves from the college to Blossom Towers to which David has been invited by Angela, much to her mother's chagrin and her father's apoplexy. Other characters that emerge and muddy the waters are the butler (played by Ceirwyn James), the intoxicating French maid (played by Mary Lawrence) and Angela's rather effete brother Charles (played by Keith Lingard) who is in the Coldstream Guards and who grooms his busby. There are many ups and



downs in the Rubik's Cube of relationships, but in the end love conquers all and her father loudly and tonelessly leads the closing chorus with the title song - Don't Blame Father!

There were two performances to a packed house in Withersdane Hall on 23/24 February 1967. You can hear a rather rusty recording of the songs (originally recorded on a spool tape and then transferred to a cassette and then digitised) which you should find at <https://bit.ly/DBF-recording>. Because it is not always easy to hear the lyrics they can be found at <https://bit.ly/DBF-lyrics>. Amongst the laughter, contemporaries might recognise that of a couple of people sitting nearest to the tape recorder. I have also put the script of the closing scene – the denouement - on a pdf, which you will find at <https://bit.ly/DBF-closingscene>.

In 1968 I started my first job, teaching crop production at the Swaziland Agricultural College. Located, not surprisingly, in a rural area the social life was limited and I found myself regularly driving the 25 miles to the capital, Mbabane. There I became a member of the Theatre Club, which put on plays and musicals. At some point I must have mentioned Don't Blame Father because they asked if they could perform it. Somewhat bemused I agreed to the proposition and started writing some more music for a chorus that would permit more people to be on stage. I ended up playing the role of David. It ran for four nights. Given that this was a musical about the extremes of social class in the UK, and that it was being performed in the capital of an African country that had only become independent two year's



previously, its success in Mbabane was something of an enigma. Perhaps writing some more music so that more people could play musical instruments and be on stage did the trick – or perhaps the issue of social class is simply universal and it touched a chord.

Those days at Wye were very special and the beneficial impact of its diaspora over the decades has been immense. Whilst mourning its sad demise as a vibrant community engaged in agricultural education and research we should also celebrate what it achieved, the friendships that we all made and how it nurtured us to engage pragmatically in the wider world.



## Life at Wye

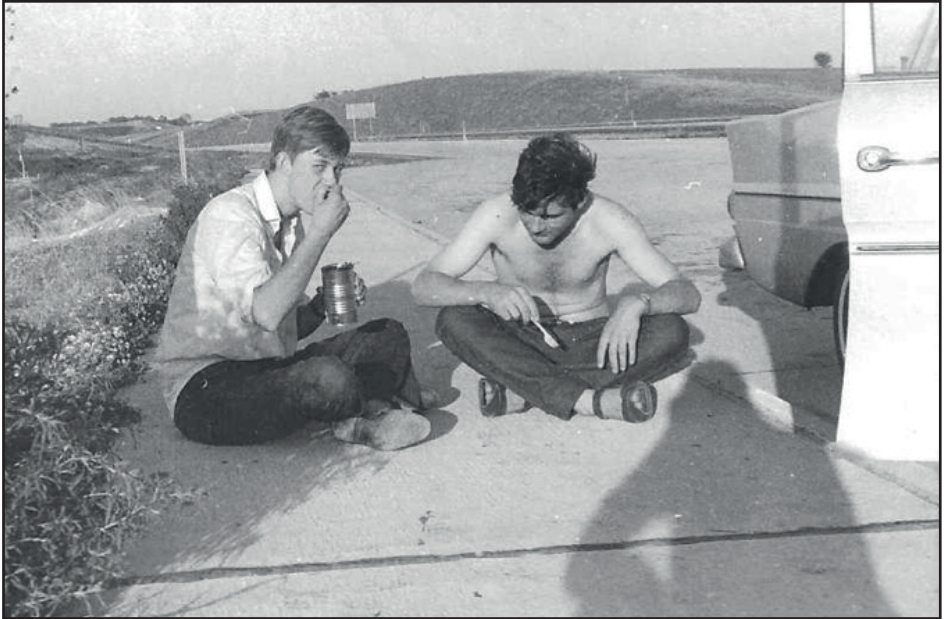
### Bill Fletcher (Wye 1967-70) remembers a transatlantic adventure with some Wye College chums one summer.

I'm afraid this isn't an interesting Life After Wye article, but it has been inspired by reading Doug Roberts' (67-71) and Andy Patterson's (67-70) articles in the last few Agricola Club journals, and has also resulted from giving up growing, finding my old diaries from the late 1960s and this winter's terrible weather.

It was a shock to find I had written the aforesaid diary up in such detail, or as one friend delicately put it, a bit anal, so if you want to stop reading now I won't be offended. My reasoned explanation is that I must obviously have had early aspirations for a First, but then I fell in with the wrong crowd in my second year. Anyway quite a few of us at the time took advantage of the BUNAC scheme, which I see is still running

today, to get work visas for the USA and Canada and cheaper flights, and I teamed up with Charles Malone (67-70) and Ken Duckett (67-68) to go on our first summer vac.

Charles was an agric, while Ken and I were both hortics, and we found some work on a fruit farm and packing station in Medford, Oregon through John Priest's (67-70) father with his connections in the fruit trade. We flew out to New York on July 9, staying in the Sheraton Atlantic where we had a bit of induction from BUNAC. Luckily Charles had a friend, Teri, who introduced us to New York, her friends, large steaks, and the Hotel Diplomat with disco, strobe lighting, films on walls, long hair and shorter skirts – all for \$1.50. After a couple of days we



*Ken and Bill lunch on manifold beans*





*Point of Rocks, Wyoming*

managed to find a Drive-Way car that needed taking to San Francisco – only Ken, being over 21, was allowed to drive, but we seemed to find a way round that – for \$40 deposit but \$50 back in SF.

So we took the train to Philadelphia and picked up the car – an automatic Mercedes 200 sedan with air conditioning, a bit different to Dad's Rover 75! We stopped later that first evening at a Howard Johnsons, and with our best English accents were picked up by Mike who took us back to his house; his mother got out her best Worcester china, made us coddled eggs and insisted we stayed the night – no problem. Next morning we got back onto the turnpike – note the US vernacular – and decided we had better push on. After 500 miles we pulled into the Pokagon State Park, Indiana, and slept in and under the car, but that was our first mistake as the next morning we had been bitten by midges all over. Now we were beginning to understand the scale of the country and, being very hot – about 90F – we decided to

keep driving through the night to Salt Lake City – one of the highlights being the girl in Des Moines being so excited at meeting her first English men/boys, another being Omaha with the biggest cattle market in the world. We liked Salt Lake City with its mountainous backdrop and then set off, calling at the Great Salt Lake for a float (\$1) and drove through the night again. As we were ahead of schedule we decided to head north to Medford, Oregon, to drop off our gear at the Reter Fruit Company. Over the next two days we made our way down Highway 101 and Highway 1 along the Pacific coast, taking the odd swim, camping in the magnificent scenery of the Rockies and redwoods until we reached San Francisco, having covered 3,610 miles in nice days. Most importantly, we got our \$50 back!

From here we went up to Medford in Oregon, a short hop of 350 miles; the ubiquitous Greyhound took us so far, then we had to hitch lifts, illegal in those times, using our Union Jacks etc until we reached



*Our Mercedes at Harrisburg*

Medford about midnight and slept next to pile of bushel boxes at the Harry and David factory, still in business today. Next morning we rang up Raymond R Reter from the Reter Fruit Company, growers and packers of the Maltese Cross brand of Rogue River Valley Oregon pears. He was all we could imagine an American boss to be: big, brash, driving an enormous Lincoln Continental with all the extras that we now take for normal, but best of all he was very generous, found us a flat for the duration of our work, took us to his house and country club and introduced us to his business growing and packing approximately 1,000 acres of Bartlett and Comice pears. The picking season was a bit late so we had about ten days of mundane work, hoeing round pear trees and moving paraffin heaters out of orchards, until picking started with the migrant pickers from Texas. We were lucky to be shown around the rest of Oregon by an extension officer including Crater Lake, Portland and the Willamette Valley, now well known for Oregon Pinot Noir. Our funds were

running low after a month in the USA with minimal work, but now picking started in earnest and our wages went up to \$1.80/hr. Ironically we were working stacking packed pears in the cold stores at 34F – the cold store was four floors high with conveyors winding up from the ground floor bringing the wooden/cardboard boxes from the packhouse. We did this for about three weeks, during which time we started to investigate buying a car to travel round the rest of the States for our last month. Walking about town looking at the car lots we were, of course, conspicuously un-American, and were picked up, according to my diary, by 'Linda, Linda, Debbie, Debbie and Mick!!!' I was obviously getting a bit excited. We hung around with them and their friends in the evenings for a few days – one memory is that it was the time of the Vietnam war and they were very afraid of being conscripted. Being under age for bars and clubs, they drank and smoked a lot when they had a party in their homes. In the meantime we had found a Rambler

Straight 6 station wagon that we bought for \$150 – not perhaps the coolest car in town! Insurance was the next problem until Raymond R Reter pulled a few strings with his broker to get us into Canada and a gave us a connection there to insure us. We had decided to go north via Canada as Charles had some contacts and we weren't feeling too flush, so we took the requisite photos, said our farewells to the guys in the cold stores, the girls and boys, our landlady, the extension officer and to Raymond R Reter who had really looked after us. Then we set off north in the Rambler with our earnings of \$118.80 each to last us until New York.

So the last leg of our journey started by travelling up the west side of the Rockies to Seattle, seeing a Stonehenge replica en route, Mt Rainier in the clouds and having to throw away our box of pears at the Canadian border. We arrived in Vancouver, and stayed mostly in our wagon, then took the ferry to Vancouver Island, amidst

magnificent coastal scenery. We met with Charles's great uncle Harry, a real character with a lot of stories. After a day on the island we went back to the mainland and set off to drive over the Rockies through the Okanagan Valley, but the Rambler was starting to use a worrying amount of oil so fingers were crossed. The Valley was full of orchards and the scenery quite awe-inspiring through Banff, Lake Louise and the Trans-Canada Highway – but the car was getting worrying and slower with the altitude.

We came down from the mountains through cattle country to another of Charles's friends at Calgary, who after a night sent us on our way with a picnic to the oil fields around Medicine Hat and then onto the real flat prairies of Saskatchewan with all the massive machinery working the fields. Our Union Jacks were being recognised and we even met an Englishman coming out of Moosejaw. We then



*Irrigated orchards*





*Dairy farm visit*

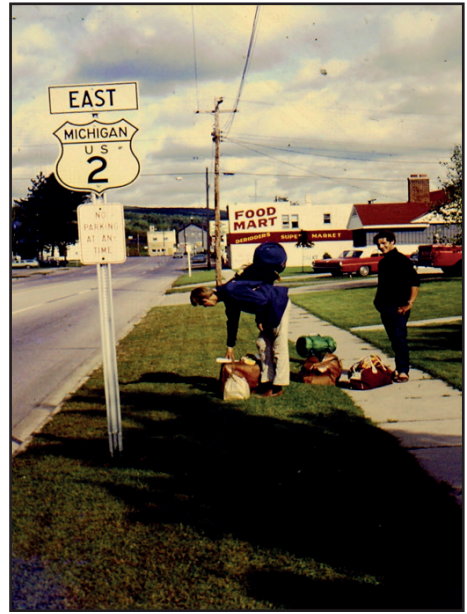
decided to go south across the border to North Dakota, I think we wanted a bit of cowboy country, but we had attracted the attention of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and were stopped twice. We played out our cowboy bit in the Badlands and then continued through Minnesota into Wisconsin where we thought for Charles's sake we'd pull into a dairy farm and ask to look round. We chose well, as Arlie Wetzel showed us proudly round his new milking stalls and farm in a lot of detail, gave us a great lunch and then insisted he showed us around the rest of his local area – he took us to a cheese maker, a chicken farm, and a navy bean and potato farm where they had made their own two-row self-propelled potato harvester. We were then given a big supper and pushed on, as we were by now a bit behind schedule. Disaster then struck, though, with the car striking some bad potholes and the clutch failing as we drove away, meaning we slept at the side of the road for the night. To make matters

worse, we woke to a flat tyre, and the car transmission was stuck, so we crawled for 20 miles in second gear – and then lost that as well. Eventually we got a tow to the nearest town, which was quite some experience, with our rescuer pulling us along at as much as 75mph, the fastest we had been all trip. Eventually we sold the car for \$15, it it had done us proud, covering 3,220 miles in 17 days!

So from now we were hitching – Charles on his own as he had the contacts, and Ken and I together, and very much relying on the kindness of strangers. Our route became past Chicago, through Detroit, Niagara Falls, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City, after which we were advised/told by New York state patrol to catch the Greyhound direct to New York. The kindness of strangers included a 500-mile hitch and beer with Dan, two girls stopped by cops doing 90mph in Detroit, an Indian RC priest to Niagara Falls, and lunch,

*Crater Lake*

student and Frenchman to Toronto, where we caught up with Charles staying with his cousin. Then it was two guys with case of beer under the seat to Ottawa, two girls to Montreal – now practicing our French as the girls were looking more chic in Montreal and Quebec City where we spent a couple of days. Our nights were twice spent sleeping under a freeway bridge where we had been dropped off, or at the cheapest hotel in town. Because we were hitching we couldn't stop to have a look at the farming, but we learnt much more about the country and about life from our drivers. We got a couple of lifts to the US border but then found it difficult to hitch on the freeway, so we left our luggage in the trees and started walking into town for food. The cops stopped us, picked up our baggage and took us to Border Control (Canadians were crossing illegally to work in USA). We passed ok, but were then advised to take the Greyhound direct to New York. We were very lucky to stay with Teri again in NYC,

*Hitching*

and felt much more comfortable second time round – we did the tourist bits: Empire State, Macy's, Botanical Garden, MOMA and more, but we also hung about being cool (!) in Greenwich Village, saw some jazz with Thelonious Monk at the Village Vanguard, and 'The Caretaker' by Harold Pinter – but we needed to have earned more money to really go for it. So then it was back home to reality. But what a great adventure – 10 weeks, 10,000 miles, total cost £74 cash taken out and £65 earned in the US. If anybody has read to this point, thank you, but be warned – I've got more diaries! Hopefully this will also have brought back some BUNAC memories for other people.



## Life at Wye

**Mike Boddington (staff 1967- ) recalls how his five years as a lecturer at Wye led him to a life rich in experiences.**

I was a member of staff at Wye College from 1967 to 1972. That was the most formative period of my life, and everything I have done since then has depended upon and built upon those five years.

Farming had been a major tradition in the Boddington family, and my father was a small farmer in the Lake District. It was not a pursuit that garnered wealth, and the education of his three children was somewhat at the dispensation of a small family trust.

I left school in 1958 after taking my O-levels. From there I worked on a farm for a year before going to an agricultural institute in Lancashire. I came out of that pretty well with a National Diploma in Agriculture, and was able to secure a place at King's College, Durham University, to study agriculture. King's was the only university agriculture faculty that admitted students with an NDA and no A-levels. My oral examiner for the NDA, Jim Hall, Principal of Newton Rigg agricultural institute in Cumbria, asked me what I was going to do, and when I told him he expressed concern for my ability to match King's requirements in chemistry. Later, I had cause to remember that.

So it was that in September 1961 I arrived in Newcastle, the home of King's College, and became a member of the student community. It was an incredibly rich community with so many opportunities that I had never experienced before. I went up a week early and joined the Freshers' Conference, which introduced me to that richness and coaxed me into joining a range of activities: drama, politics, music, journalism (I became the news editor of the college newspaper almost immediately), the exploration society... I met many people (some of whom are still friends) and I entered into a mad whirl the like of which was completely new to me.

In February, I was introduced to a young lady who told me she had heard a lot about me and had wanted to meet me. Her name was Ruth Barlow and she was studying social studies. I had never met her before but, somehow – the way things are – I kept bumping into her after that. She was the third of four daughters of an Anglican priest, and she had a boyfriend amongst the student body. Somehow, I knew from the beginning that she could be mine, and she gave me every reason to believe so.

One of the things that engaged my time was planning a summer vacation expedition with a group of seven others, to travel overland to Greece and spend several weeks on an island, Kea, in the Cyclades. Completely absent from my life to that point was overseas travel. This was to be my first experience and it would encompass France, Germany, Austria, Yugoslavia, Greece, Italy and Switzerland: an incredibly exciting adventure in my life.

As the year progressed, my relationship with Ruth became stronger, and eventually she dropped her other boyfriend and we became very serious about one another. Then she opened her heart to me and told me that she had given birth to a baby girl. Now this was the beginning of the 1960s: the swinging had yet to get under way. Unmarried mothers were regarded as the pits and fatherless children as much worse.

This was her story: When she left school, she had won a scholarship to attend Brandeis University, in the USA, for a year. Whilst there, she had met a photojournalist and, before she returned to UK, she was pregnant.

She came back to UK and proceeded to King's College for her degree studies. Her choice of King's rested upon the fact that her father had been the vicar of Corbridge upon Tyne. Vicars were not especially well remunerated and,

with a wife and four daughters, holidays were a matter for very careful consideration. Her father would take a locum in another parish for a month every year, and that was the parish of Rock in Northumberland. Rock was the home of a man called Charles Bosanquet who became the Rector (Chief Executive) of King's College. Bosanquet lived in Rock Hall, the centre of his comfortable estate there. The Barlows and the Bosanquets became firm friends over the years.

As October passed into November 1960, Ruth managed to hide her plight somehow, but she knew that it could not continue much longer. At the end of November, she travelled back to her home in Surrey, where her father was now based, and confessed to her parents – who were devastated. Her mother had a spinster sister who was the principal of a teacher-training college in Eastbourne, and Ruth was immediately packed off there for the delivery, which occurred on Christmas Day. Astonishingly, she had managed to conceal her condition right up until eight months, so that she was able to travel back to Newcastle, briefly, at the end of January 1961 to tidy her affairs and tell her friends that she had been ill and was dropping out for the rest of the year: she would come back in October 1961 and start again. Her father sought understanding and agreement to the arrangements from Charles Bosanquet by telling him what had happened.

At the end of the year, summer 1962, I passed my exams in botany, zoology, geology and statistics, but I failed in chemistry. Well spotted, Jim Hall. Had I been a serious and responsible student, I would have immediately cancelled my expedition to Greece and settled down to a summer of solemn chemical studies. Three of our expedition number fell out for that very reason. But, for me, this trip meant just so much and I was not prepared to abandon it. So I went. I had to leave the expedition early and hitch back to my resit. I had done little work and I failed again, dismally.

By now, I was heavily involved with Ruth. We discussed marriage. We were both very young: just 21 years of age. I had failed my exams



*Ruth and Mike on their wedding day*

and had few prospects. I must have presented a very sorry match for a Barlow daughter and my own father was comprehensively against any idea of marriage. But the Barlows were not prepared for their daughter have another mishap: one was much, much more than enough, and they became unlikely allies. They travelled up to the Lakes to meet my parents and try, unsuccessfully, to persuade them to support the marriage.

I left my Lakeland family home and went back to Newcastle, determined to get a job and be with Ruth whilst I worked things out. That was the beginning of the terrible winter of 1962-63 when unemployment was very high in Newcastle. I learned that there was always work to be had if one was prepared to do it, and I was employed in a series of menial tasks. I decided to sit for A-levels in geology, botany and zoology with the idea of getting back into the university and studying either geology or botany. A degree was a must. Both Professor Stanley Westoll FRS, in geology, and Professor Sir John Burnett, in botany, agreed to offer

me a place if I got my A-levels. Come April, I quit working in order to revise for my A-levels, supported by the Barlows. I worked hard and obtained three good passes.

Suddenly, Westoll and Burnett were unable to offer me a place. I guess that, as an active student in my failed first year, I had attracted attention of the undesirable kind. I decided to try and stay in the north-east, and I telephoned to the Botany Department at Sunderland Technical College, where they were offering external London degrees. The head of the department offered me a place over the phone. I had to go in to meet her the following day.

I have no memory of the circumstances of my first meeting with Charles Bosanquet. He was the head of an institution with 3,500 students and, under the normal run of things, his dealings with individual students would be minimal. In any event, he wrote me a hand-written letter suggesting that I was now very well qualified with my NDA and my three A-levels: I should seek a job. He suggested that I go into the university careers office and see the head, Mr Pickles, who would be able to put me on the right track. It seemed that I had just enough time to go into the careers office the following morning before getting the train to Sunderland.

And so it was. It also was that Mr Pickles was away on leave, so I turned right round and walked out of the careers office to go to the station. And there, on the pavement of Kensington Terrace, headed for his office, was Charles Bosanquet.

"Oh, oh, oh, Michael, what are you doing?" he stuttered.

I told him I had just been in to see Mr Pickles as he had suggested, and that he was not there, so I was now on my way to Sunderland Tech to register for an external London botany degree.

"You had better come with me," he said and led me into his office – now as Vice-Chancellor of the newly formed Newcastle University.

He tried hard to persuade me that I should give up all idea of resuming my studies in any subject, and instead get a job. I was insistent

that heading off into the world of the 1960s without a degree was not an option. In the end, he invited me to wait in his waiting room for a while. After 20 minutes, he called me back in and told me to go and see Professor Mac Cooper in agriculture. He would take me back.

Cooper was not a happy man, and said that he was doing this much against his better judgement and entirely because he was instructed by the Vice-Chancellor. I would have to repeat the whole of the first year.

Ruth and I were married on January 2nd 1964. We were regular dinner guests at the Vice-Chancellor's residence and would be included in concert parties and the like. At the time, I did not attach any particular importance to that: on reflection, it is astonishing, and I can only conclude that he and his wife, Barbara, were acting *in loco parentis* for Ruth.

I went through the three years to an ordinary degree in agriculture and a fourth year for an honours degree, with success in both. I will say that, in order to face up to my *bête noire*, chemistry, and with my previous experience, I concluded that the route to success in this subject was self-tuition and the periodic table. I became very familiar with it and sailed through!

Charles Bosanquet came to meet Ruth and me, in the quad, on my graduation and to congratulate me. I guess it was a great relief to him that he had been vindicated.

## Into a career

As we headed through the final term, I began to think about my next move. Mathematical approaches to economics, it seemed to me, were the new big thing, and I should become skilled in such. There was a very quantitatively-slanted Master's degree in agricultural marketing at Nottingham University. I applied for a place on that, got it, and was searching for a grant to attend it when my professor at Newcastle, John Ashton, asked me to see him.

"What are you going to do now?" he asked.

I told him about having a place at Nottingham and searching for a grant.

"Professor Wibberley has a post going at Wye for a mature student," he said, picking up his phone and instructing his secretary: "Get me Wibberley at Wye." Putting in a long distance (trunk) call in those days required very deep pockets.

Wibberley was like a god. He was one of the best-known and most cited gurus in agricultural economics and much in demand at conferences. I met him at the coffee shop at King's Cross station whilst he was en route to some engagement, and things clicked: I was on the way. Later, I went down to Wye for an interview with him, Donald Sykes and Ian Reid, in the Prin's Parlour. During the course of the event, the Parlour's tenant, Dunstan Skilbeck, popped in.

"What side are you interested in, Boddington, micro or macro?"

I hadn't got a clue what he was talking about.

"We've covered that already, Principal," said Wib. "Boddington tends to the micro side."

The College needed someone to work on micro-economic research projects for the Ministry of Agriculture, so that fixed that!

And so it was that I was appointed and began the most remarkable time of my whole career. Suddenly, I was accepted into the adult world and treated like someone who had opinions worth listening to.

Now that I have reached somewhat advanced years, looking back to those days the dots are so much closer together and easier to join up. Skilbeck came from a Northumbrian farming family. Like the Bosanquets, they were gentleman farmers, and were well acquainted. In addition, Charles and Dunstan would attend academic heads meetings and keep in touch with one another. There were numerous members of staff at Newcastle who had been on the staff at Wye, and vice versa. I heard of nobody else who was called in by their tutor or professor or whatever and told that the route they were planning was inappropriate and that another one was better suited to them. Charles had fixed it up. With Dunstan.

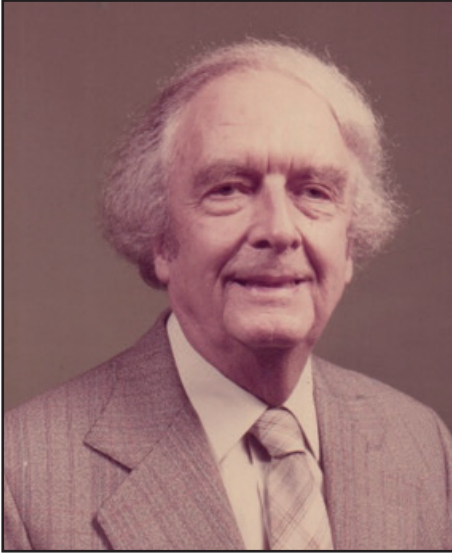
I became an academic staff member of a

college of London University with no more than an honours degree. For my first year, I was a research assistant, becoming an assistant lecturer the following year and a lecturer the year after that. Today, in the time of 166 universities in the UK, it would be a near-impossibility to get an academic job in the least of them without a PhD – and several years 'experience'.

Nonetheless, I acquitted myself. When I arrived, the Agricultural Economics department was about to start four Masters degrees, mainly addressed to overseas students: Agricultural Economics, Agricultural Marketing, Agricultural Management and Agrarian Development Overseas. Two courses had been prepared for each. To get a Masters, one had to take four courses, one and two from the specialism and two of the three courses from the other specialisms, plus a dissertation. There was nothing on quantitative methods, which I had wanted to go to Nottingham to study. I mentioned this and suggested putting one together, which I did, in four weeks, with the help of George Gwyer. That course was put on as a voluntary, non-examinable course in its first year. Following that it became an examinable course and one of the two optional Masters courses.

I became the treasurer for the Senior Common Room, treasurer for the Beagles, and treasurer for the Association of University Teachers' Wye Branch. I lectured on land economics, tutored multiple students and was Director of Studies for several more.

I was extremely lucky that Gerald Wibberley favoured me. He was the rural planning/land use economics whizz of the UK and got involved in numerous consultancy projects. He needed someone to do the spadework and I was the one. First of all he was retained by the Royal Commission on the Third London Airport to contribute the agricultural costs, which was a mega-job: I defined the methodology, carried out the fieldwork, did the calculations and wrote up the results for the biggest cost-benefit that had ever been done in UK. He was retained on the Milton Keynes Master Plan.



*Gerald Wibberley*

Again, I was his bag-carrier and did all the field work etc.

Eventually, I determined that consultancy was taking over my life and I could not, in all honesty, continue to commit myself to my academic duties. I left Wye to set up Rural Planning Services (RPS)<sup>1</sup> and opened a new chapter in my life which lasted some 25 years. Gerald was the Chairman of RPS for the first ten formative years. Throughout this time I was also deeply involved in setting up – or helping to – multiple charities and NGOs, including the Rural Planning Research Trust, the Alternative Society, Local Initiative Support, Land Trusts Association, Foundation for Alternatives, Cambodia Trust and, later, Power International, which offered rehabilitation services for war victims, most especially landmine victims. That last one took over my life and brought me to Lao PDR.

For much of the period until Wye was closed down, I continued in association with the College. I worked a great deal with Iain Carruthers, especially with FAO, and also worked with Eric Clayton, establishing a

consultancy in Kenya. I tried to get the College to agree to establish a consultancy business, but it feared that it would dominate the academic work. Might things have been different?

I prepared obituaries for the *Times* for Gerald Wibberley, Ian Carruthers and Eric Clayton (beware being a professor in agricultural economics at Wye and friends with Mike Boddington!), and gave eulogies at the funerals of Gerald and Iain. The epitaph for Gerald Wibberley, on the wall of Wye churchyard, 'Take care of the Elysian Fields, Gerald', was from my pen. I also became, along with Ruth Gasson and some others, an Honorary Research Fellow of the College.

All of this was by chance:

The chance that I met Ruth Barlow and that she had had an illegitimate child.

The chance that Charles Bosanquet was taking a personal interest in her welfare.

The chance that Mr Pickles, the Newcastle University Careers Officer, was away on leave.

The chance that I bumped into Charles Bosanquet that morning outside the Careers Office.

The chance that Charles Bosanquet knew Dunstan Skilbeck.

Thank you very much to Ruth Barlow.

Thank you so very much to Charles Bosanquet.

Thank you very much to Gerald Wibberley.

You two, Gerald and Charles, gave me such an incredible start. I hope that the things that I have done, though not quite what you might have expected, are worthy of the faith you placed in me.

---

1 I was the owner and CEO of RPS for ten years: it grew to include several other companies: Agricultural and Social Development International Consultants, The Business Development Centre, BRC Recruitment Consultants, etc. but I lost financial control in 1982 and left. This year, RPS was sold for £693 million to Tetra Tech!



## Life at Wye

### Berkeley Hill (staff 1970- ) recalls some of his favourite performances with Wye College Opera Society, and makes an appeal for information.

Following the publication of my article 'Wye College Choral Society – a Brief History' in Volume XVIII Number 10 of the Journal (2019-2020) I received multiple letters from former students who had fond memories of the Choral Society and its concerts. Almost all of them had continued to sing with choirs after graduation. The 'Brief History' had grown out of a Covid lock-down project that involved transferring my archive of live recording of Choral Society concerts over the period 1980 to 1999 from cassettes to CDs. I was able to provide copies as requested, and am still able to do so for anyone interested.

The article also mentioned the Wye College Opera Society which, like the Choral Society, received financial support from the Students' Union. The Opera Society deserves acknowledgement as an important contributor to the rich menu of College life, though the tangible records are sparser than those of the Choral Society as recording and videoing were less easy in the turmoil of a live show on the stage of the Swanley Hall, Withersdane. Let's hope that memories will be jogged so that a more comprehensive account can be compiled.

Quite when the custom of mounting light operas and musicals at Wye College started is uncertain, but it must have been in the 1960s. By the time I joined the staff in 1970 the tradition was well-established. My introduction to the vibrant extra-curricular life of Wye College was being asked to play double-bass in the orchestra for that season's Gilbert and Sullivan opera. The conductor was Gerald Pfaff, a retired bank manager from Hythe and very capable amateur musician. Most of the orchestral players and the key soloists who took the main roles were not members of College but came from Canterbury or Ashford, having been engaged (for very modest fees) by enterprising Wye students. I cannot recall which of the G&S pieces was being performed. It must have been to a good standard, as the whole production was transferred

to the Gulbenkian Theatre at the University of Kent at Canterbury for a short run. Gerald Pfaff was keen to relinquish his involvement, citing the innumerable journeys from Hythe to Wye, and somehow I inherited his role as Musical Director for many of the productions over the following decades until these shows died out (as so much did) on the merger with Imperial.

A definitive list of what was performed in which years is not yet available, and needs to be built up. David Scarisbrick (staff, who took various principal roles) has the programmes for *The Pirates of Penzance* in 1976, *Yeoman of the Guard* in 1977 and *Ruddigore* in 1978. Michael Payne (now *Agricola* Club Secretary) remembers *HMS Pinafore* which must have been 1979, *Iolanthe* 1980 and the *Sorcerer* 1981. The *Gondoliers* also featured at least twice (I have an undated programme), as did *The Mikado* (though on both occasions a student was in charge of the music). Outside the G&S tradition *Salad Days* was performed twice (a singularly appropriate show mounted between final examinations and the publication of results) and *The Boyfriend* once.

Perhaps I should explain what happened when one of the G&S operas, or a similar show, was performed. Initiation of productions came from within the student body, and the Opera Society was affiliated to the Student Union. The key individuals were the producer (who was responsible for the organisation of things, including decisions on rehearsals, hire of costumes, engagement of anyone from outside College etc.), the stage director (responsible for the actions) and the musical director (responsible for delivering the performances to an acceptable standard, and for conducting at the performances). In reality the three had to work closely together, especially in decisions on the allocation of roles and the coaching of principals and chorus. The producer and director usually were students, some very

talented at organising and knowing what was needed to mount a successful show. I was usually invited to be the musical director. As someone a bit older (26 when I started) and on the staff it was easier for me to be a little outside the hurly-burly of the action.

Of course, an essential ingredient was enough keen and able students and staff who were willing to turn up to an intense series of rehearsals, dress rehearsals and performances and, most important, learn their lines. We were fortunate in that, by the mid-1970s, the student body could provide not only a sturdy chorus but also almost all the solo parts, with not only young ladies of appropriate ages to take the heroine roles envisaged by W S Gilbert but also more high tenors (rare beasts, such as Conrad Aveling) than might have been expected in an institution that did not include vocal abilities in its selection criteria. A surprisingly large number of staff and their families took part as principals or in the chorus (Wendy and Paul Burnham, Lyn Garraway, Tom Hill, Bob Kempson, Sinclair Mantell David Pickard, Anita Royal, Tony Schofield, David Scarisbrick, Ivan Warboys, Paul Webster, Eric Weston come to mind). Unlike Choral Society concerts, whose membership overlapped with the Opera Society but where scores could be used throughout, music and words for the stage productions needed to be committed to memory. Staff were typically less assiduous than students at learning lines and often had other college and domestic commitments. Counting everyone, including a chorus of 20, makeup, lighting etc., there must have been at least 40 involved. From the mid-1970s we had to abandon a live orchestra because of costs and impracticality (attendance on four or five nights in the final week of the show proved a stumbling block), but engaged two excellent pianists from King's School Canterbury (Robert Scott and Christopher Tinkler) to play the special two-piano arrangements of the score which could be hired from D'Oyly-Carte (the publishers who held the copyright).

### Some memorable moments:

As the conductor I was responsible for keeping everyone together, for which purpose I was allowed a score, though actually seeing it was not always easy. It was surprising that more did not go

wrong. Some of the more interesting moments from my perspective were when:

- Staff principals, who were notoriously able to get lost in their songs, pinned crib sheets to the linings of their costumes, which hardly helped their projection of the words to the audience.
- In an attempt to make some staff look older copious amounts of talcum powder was applied, so that when hats were removed or restored a cloud of white dust was created (David Scarisbrick specialised in this).
- Staff who took the roles of Victorian police in *Pirates of Penzance* were totally unable to march together or salute; their chaos would have been no challenge to any self-respecting set of pirates.
- Several of the soloists were ill and switched parts without telling me, so that as conductor I was unable to know who was going to sing what.

It was all good fun. The Opera Society helped build collegiate spirit not only among students but also between staff and students, and between the College and the local community that provided the audiences. One of my fondest memories is of being fetched from my bed at home in Kennington, where I had gone, exhausted, at the end of a run of performances in about 1973, by students intent on me joining the after-show party in Withersdane. This was extremely kind and thoughtful of them, and I enjoyed the party, not least their energy in re-running most of the show with the girls singing the boys' music and vice versa.

Why did the tradition of Wye College Opera wither and die? At this distance it is difficult to pinpoint what was happening, but there was a gradual change in attitude towards the seriousness of academic work both among students and staff linked to research assessment exercises, fewer staff prepared to value and put time into the things that built Wye College as a community, and fewer students with organisational flair.

If you have any recollections about dates, repertory or happenings, I would be glad to receive them and will collate into a more comprehensive record of the Wye College Opera.

**b.hill@imperial.ac.uk**

## The foundation of an agricultural college at Wye

**That Wye College was founded using 'Whisky Money' and its first Principal regarded wine as a 'gift from heaven' might have been good omens for the generations of students who followed, suggests Michael Payne (Wye 1978-81)...**

If the late Dunstan Skilbeck was the gentleman responsible for founding the success of Wye College as part of the University of London after the Second World War, then it was his predecessor, Sir Alfred Daniel Hall, the first Principal of the South-Eastern Agricultural College at its inception in 1894, who metaphorically laid the foundation stone pointing the way forward.

In many regards the two men were similar. Both were countrymen at heart, Skilbeck's leisure pursuits including hunting whilst Hall was a keen angler throughout his life. Indeed, Hall like Skilbeck was an Oxford man having gone up to Balliol in 1881, at the age of 17, the son of a flannel manufacturer from Rochdale. It had been in the countryside of south Lancashire that Hall's curiosity and aptitude had turned to the works of nature. It was the freedom of unspoilt hills, moorland and meadow that had been within easy reach of the young boy that inspired his curiosity. Quite apart from his organisational abilities, he was later also able to set the tone of the College for the generations that followed. Hall ranked wine as a gift from heaven and it was at Wye that according to his biographer, Harold Edward Dale, he acquired both true appreciation of it and the means to gratify it within reason!

How often history appears to repeat itself. In the 1890s there was a widespread view that British agriculture was dead and only awaited burial at the hands of the Board of Agriculture. Daniel Hall refused to accept that the old



*Sir Alfred Daniel Hall (KN Collins, Dunstable)*

systems based on craftsmanship rather than science could not be developed as the national needs changed. This, though, required scientific education which at the time was only available at few university colleges and the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester.



*The Principal's House (Wye College Photo 'Sport and General')*

In 1890, by political accident, government funding suddenly became available for 'Technical Education in the Counties'. This so called 'Whisky Money' came about because the House of Commons had imposed a new tax on alcohol to provide funds for the compensation of publicans losing their licenses under a Government Bill to reduce the number of public houses. However, it had then been decided that public funds should not be used in this way, leaving several hundred thousand pounds a year to be used as they chose. In a half empty house Sir Arthur Acland Bt., the MP for Rotherham, and Vice-President of the Committee on Education in William Ewart Gladstone's government, suggested that the money should be allocated to technical education, and the House agreed.

Together Kent and Surrey decided to take the plunge, using this funding to plan and run University Extension lectures, and the job to do this was given to Daniel Hall in the autumn of 1891. Hall delivered nine courses with an average attendance of 31 students. The longest course consisted of 24 lectures in agricultural chemistry, and the following spring and autumn all the courses were devoted to general chemistry. In 1893 he began additional courses at seven centres, with five of the seven primarily concerned with land cultivation. The results were disappointing for Hall, not because of the courses themselves or his ability in tuition but because of the stigma

that the ordinary farmer thought they would not learn from a young university man who they believed knew nothing about practical farming. Despite attendance being low, it gave Hall a foothold in the agricultural community in south-east England. He soon realised that nothing short of a properly developed two-year course for younger farmers was required if the specific issues faced by older farmers were to be overcome.

So it was in 1894 that Wye College was born, with Daniel Hall having secured not only the backing of Surrey and Kent County Councils in supporting its establishment and finding a location, but also having been offered by them the role of being first Principal that spring.

The year itself, 1894, saw the lowest point of the great depression in agriculture that had begun fifteen years before with the price of wheat falling to 22s 10d per quarter that summer, and consequently the arable acreage of the country had gone slowly down. Hence it was not an auspicious time for Hall to be embarking on his new mission.

However, the creation of the South-Eastern Agricultural College at Wye that year was to become the first place in England south of Reading and Cirencester to offer higher agricultural education. Three men should be remembered for having achieved this feat. One was Hugh Macan, Secretary for Technical Education in Surrey. Secondly, E.J. Halsey, Chairman of Surrey County Council and the first Chairman of Governors at Wye and, thirdly, Daniel Hall himself as the first Principal. They already knew each other well from the three years of Extension Lectures, and Macan and Hall had also been contemporaries at the Chemistry School in Oxford.

Macan's original concept was for Kent and Surrey, as well as East and West Sussex, to found and support the College. Both East and West Sussex pulled out leaving Kent as the leading financial partner. It was decided to base the College in the famous agricultural county and the old College at Wye was thought to be geographically convenient. Together Macan and Halsey produced a



Wye College Farm 1894 (Mr AG Davies, 14 September 1958)

scheme with the Charity Commissioners establishing an Agricultural College as an educational establishment with a Governing Body. Those nominated to serve from Kent and Surrey Councils were in proportion to the financial contributions of the two counties, together with representatives of Oxford, Cambridge and London Universities. The Earl of Winchelsea was also appointed Hereditary Governor to represent Cardinal Kempe's original Trust.

The Charity Commissioners who had administered the Trust and buildings prior to 1894 were willing to hand them over if a new elementary school was provided. The Governors of the new College paid the Trustees of the old Charity the sum of £1,000 the following year which was to be used to

provide for a new school. In this way Cardinal Kempe's original foundation of 1447, which had maintained an educational interest by prescribing that one member of his college should be specially detailed to instruct the village children for free, in the art of grammar, was fulfilled.

This meant that the College then had buildings, Governors and a Principal, and its opening was fixed for October 1894, just six months after Daniel Hall had been appointed. The buildings had to be altered and extended, together with a new water supply being provided, and with only three acres a college farm had to be found. This was of course in addition to fitting out as well as hiring teaching and domestic staff, not to mention preparing the course tuition and finding students!



In the event the opening had to be delayed by a fortnight due to a delay in sinking the new artesian well. Meanwhile, a farm of some two hundred and thirty acres was obtained close to the College. One hundred and thirty acres of this was arable, including hops. It was, however, later described in 1939, Agricultural Progress 16, as being 'hungry and out of condition' and was 'notorious for its poverty as its name – Coldharbour – indicated'.

Hence it came to pass that the South-Eastern Agricultural College at Wye was born on 29<sup>th</sup> November 1894. At dinner in the Old Hall its first Principal addressed the thirteen young men who were to be its initial students. After laying down a few rules of the conduct expected of them, Daniel Hall ended with the following words:

*"I am very glad to see you all dining here tonight. It is now something like four hundred and fifty years since this noble hall was first built as a home for learning – a little centre of peace and good works. Since then many storms have beaten on the old walls, a reformation, two civil wars, and a revolution have passed, yet the light*

*of knowledge, which the founder lit here, has never been quite extinguished. The truths that were taught here of old are not forgotten today – the beauty of the place is as great as ever; these are the things that live on in the world, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things that are lovely, whatsoever things that are of good report." And just the same in the life of each of us, the good is permanent; whatever foundation you can lay here during the next year or two, of uprightness and order and knowledge, will remain a tower of strength to you till the end of your days.*

*The old College of Wye begins afresh today, let us all make ourselves worthy of its new foundation."*

It is perhaps poignant that Daniel Hall recorded that at Wye a few years later the Chairman of the College Governors would point to the wheatsheaf in the arms of Cardinal Kempe, blazoned in a window of the old buildings of his original College, as the only evidence likely to remain in that district of what had once been the mainstay of English farming.



*The Old Hall/Refectory (from the collection of Wye College)*

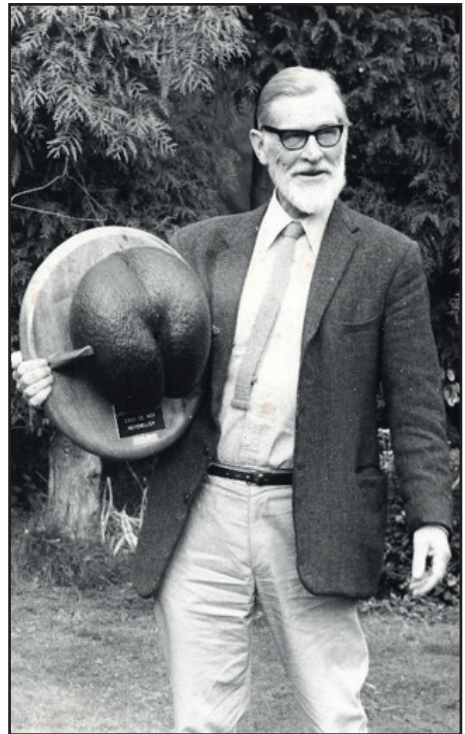
## The hanging, de-hanging and re-hanging of Allan Jackson's Coco De Mer

**Bernard Sparkes, executive manager of the Commercial Horticulture Department at Wye from 1968-1983, recalls an unusual gift given by a respected Wye College lecturer in horticulture.**

When Allan Jackson retired as lecturer in horticulture, members of the Senior Common Room presented him with a fly fishing rod and a double-barrelled 12-bore shotgun – which Allan stated in his speech would remind him of beloved former colleagues every time he pulled the trigger!

In return, Allan presented the Senior Common Room with one of his most prized botanical specimens – a mounted Coco De Mer, which he is holding in the photograph here. Allan asked that the said gift should be hung in the Senior Common Room and taken down and handed round to be handed around over liqueurs after dinner. Eric Maddison, President of the Senior Common Room, graciously accepted this magnificent specimen on behalf of members and it was duly hung.

However, some months later the Coco De Mer had been de-hung – it had vanished! It transpired that the Principal, Harry Darling, had considered it an object not fit to be hung in the Senior Common Room and ordered its removal. It was, of course, not in the power of the Principal to decide on the policy of the Senior Common Room, and Cliff Martindate and I – both members of the SCR committee at the time – approached Eric Maddison, the SCR President, and insisted on him calling an extraordinary meeting to decide the fate of Allan's gift. Following heated debate, the move to re hang the Coco De Mer was carried by a large majority. It was re-hung – but the Principal was not best pleased!



The question now is 'where is this prized and very valuable gift?' If anyone can throw light on its whereabouts, please make contact via the Journal editor!

## Assessing Africa's agricultural needs

Journal editor Martin Rickatson (Wye 1994-97) tells of a recent overseas work visit that took him somewhere a little different to his usual agronomy and farm machinery firm trips within Europe – a journey to Guinea, on Africa's western coast.



In my job as an agricultural journalist working mainly on arable and farm machinery topics, overseas travel is a regular occurrence, but something which I don't take for granted – the chance to see how farming works in other countries is one I have rarely passed up, and the opportunity to tell farmers at home about what I have seen through the pages of the ag press means work and pleasure are one and the same. But while I have been lucky enough

*Typical Guinean countryside*

to take the odd trip to the US, China, the Middle East and Asia, Africa is somewhere I knew little of, until the chance to tour a small western part of it came up in 2022 courtesy of the British Guild of Agricultural Journalists and its counterpart in Guinea.

African agriculture's challenges are easy to misinterpret. Green and fertile with plentiful rainfall. Not the first words you might expect





*Guinean N'Dama cattle*

describing western Africa. Yet unless you've been lucky enough to visit, your perception may be one of a dry, dusty and difficult-to-farm region. The truth, though, is very different. Perhaps the 'only' thing holding back the region's countries from being self-sufficient, and potentially world market players – at least in terms of regional staple crops – is investment in storage, processing and transport infrastructure.

In Guinea, the country's agriculture requires further funding and training, including in optimum use of machinery, and Guinean farming is largely subsistence in nature. Yet many ingredients for successful agricultural production are already present, needing largely only that infrastructure investment to unlock its potential.

Guinea's agriculture has struggled with the economic uncertainty that has come with regular political upheaval, which has perhaps put off investors. One of the biggest issues is lack of processing capacity, compounded

by poor roads that hinder rapid transport of produce to factories, wholesalers and retailers.

This is largely why, while 80% of the population works in agriculture, most are subsistence producers, and while there are a few 100-200ha farms, most comprise less than 5ha, serving families and localities. As such, while Guinea grows significant areas of staple crops such as rice and pineapples, it is a net food importer, bringing in large amounts of those crops and others in ready-to-consume form, even though it produces the 'raw materials'. And with only around half Guinea's potential arable land currently utilised, and just 10% in regular, annual cultivation, there is huge scope for agricultural development.

In May 2022, the government announced a Fonds de Developpement Agricole programme to provide funding for farmers wishing to invest in infrastructure and mechanisation, and doubled agricultural budget funding in 2022.

## Agronomy advice and supplies

Turning that into practical funding has begun with the government’s National Agricultural Development Policy (NADP) to improve productivity and international competitiveness. Under this, farmer advisory services have been developed, and research enhanced into agronomy for crops such as rice, via breeding stations and agronomist education. Similar investment, often supported by foreign investment, has been made into encouraging cash crop production of other crops that grow well in Guinea’s climate, including cotton, rubber, palm oil, coffee, bananas, mangoes, pineapples, avocados, tomatoes and potatoes, with government support including bulk purchases of equipment such as tractors and implements.

Private enterprises, though, are also a

significant supplier to Guinea’s farmers, particularly for inputs such as seed and fertiliser. Agronomy supply firms such as Entreprise Tidiane Agriculture (ETA) import and distribute products from global suppliers. Founded in 1997 by Amadou Tidiane Diallo, the company operates across Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia, employing 25 advisers and agronomists.

“Product supply is controlled by government, which also helps train agronomists and fund research, but farmers make their own investment choices,” explained Mr Diallo.

“We have a full input offering, with partners such as Netafim for irrigation equipment and Technisem for seeds.

“Fertiliser is the most in-demand crop input, but demand for crop protection products is actually declining steadily. Perhaps because such technology has come later to countries



*An escorted trip in government vehicles to a vegetable farm down a track that would make most UK farm drives look super smooth*





*Visiting a rice breeding research farm*

like Guinea, it's being replaced more quickly too, and we are maybe moving faster than some developed countries to biological crop protection. We are always looking to new countries such as the UK for such products."

## Horticulture thrives

In the Kindia region, on a 10ha fresh produce farm 100 miles from Conakry, the coastal capital, a reliable May to November wet season is central to outdoor vegetable crop success. Yields average 40-50t/ha for cucumbers, 15-16t/ha for peppers and 50-80t/ha for tomatoes, with irrigation during the dry season. Other cropping includes aubergine, okra, watermelon, pineapple and maize.

The business is part of an advice/experience exchange organisation, La Federation des Organisation Paysants Mari, which also involves Entrepise Tidiane Agriculture (ETA). It trials new varieties and husbandry techniques plus crop storage ideas, with a membership of which half is female, and half under 40. Members are invited to

regular open days on member farms, with government backing based on the premise this will encourage interest in new crops, varieties and agronomy strategies, plus better storage and better prices for farmers, for national benefit.

## Plentiful water means rice is key grain

Guinea's most important grain crop is rice, and both the government and farmer groups have a long-term commitment to variety improvement research, with one rice testing and breeding station visited having been established for four decades and produced 40 Guinea-specific varieties. The predominant red soils are high in iron, with excessive plant uptake resulting in leaf narrowing and spotting and stunted growth. Beyond disease resistance and yield, a concerted breeding programme is producing tolerant varieties to reduce the significant variation in national yields from 2-7t/ha, and raise it beyond the typical 5t/ha.

## Longevity is key benefit of low-input livestock

The small, docile N'Dama breed dominates Guinean cattle farming, which is focused mainly on beef. Twenty-five year old third generation farmer Thierno Alseny Diallo runs his small herd of a dozen cattle extensively, alongside a small flock of sheep and herd of goats, both local breeds. Income is supplemented by garden crops including ginger, taro and okra, grown mostly for home use but with surplus sold.

"A cattle breed that thrives in this environment is essential," he says.

"We need one that can be farmed extensively, but which is also easy to handle. A small frame means a small carcass, but these are cattle with a long lifespan – we've no major disease issues, and the cows bear calves well into their teens.

"Grass growth in the dry season is one of our biggest challenges, but moving the cattle to

lower moisture-holding ground helps."

He sells finished cattle to buyers who transport them to Conakry for slaughter, a relatively short distance but a journey made longer by the unmade roads.

"Investment in local slaughterhouses would be very welcome, as would more crossbreeding research to improve performance."

But livestock farming, at least on a breeding level, also takes place in the cities – even the capital. Despite having limited movement and no government support, Mamadou Ramadan Diallo, who lost the use of his legs in an accident, runs a successful business from his modest Conakry home as a rabbit and chick rearer, supported by his family.

"With both livestock types, my focus is on crossbreeding for better performance of the offspring, which are sold on," he explained.

"There are opportunities here for anyone who wants to succeed, and there will always be a need for food."



*Downtown Conakry, the Guinean capital, on an early autumn evening*

## The importance of ag media

With print media production and distribution costly, exacerbated by poor roads, Guinea's agricultural media gets information to farmers largely via radio and online – mobile smartphone ownership is high. Around 35 rural radio stations serve the different dialects across the Guinean countryside – although the official language of Guinea is French, it's less commonly-spoken beyond Conakry, the capital.

Guinea's Association Média et Agriculture pour le Développement Rural (AMEDAR) is chaired by Alpha Ousmane Souaré, organiser of this invitation tour for the British Guild of Agricultural Journalists (BGAJ) and host on website/radio station agriguinee.net of weekly farming news radio programme La Guinée Rurale. Aside from general weekly news, agricultural radio programmes offer advice on tackling issues ranging from crop storage to sourcing poultry feed.

The BGAJ and AMEDAR are both members of the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists, and while operating in very different environments, such organisations' common purpose is promoting proper and accurate reporting of agricultural information and advice to the relevant audiences.

"Websites, social media and radio have proven ideal for getting information to farmers here, and the launch of an agricultural TV programme is planned for 2023," explained M Souaré.

"Over the past decade rural youth interest in agriculture has improved, supported by encouragement to remain in rural areas. We've helped by providing advice through the modern media they use."

## The future?

A visit to the Direction Prefectorale de L'Agriculture, in key inland agricultural region Kindia, provided the chance to learn more about one of the country's leading agricultural training and development facilities – and where government policy is headed.

"This region in particular has great agricultural potential," suggested Abdel Kader Mangué Camara, regional agriculture director.

"A planned government reforestation programme will aid rainfall management, and gradual road improvement may help goods transport, but we have other challenges too.

"More mechanisation is probably Guinea's key need – I think it's more important than greater access to crop protection and fertiliser products or even more productive seed varieties. We cannot maximise output of the crops we have if we cannot plant, treat and harvest them effectively.

"The government has tended to make bulk purchases of tractors, and sell them on to farmers, but we need more training and support to keep them running, and a broader range of implements, plus a trade-up market. In the past those purchases have included European machines from the likes of Massey Ferguson, Universal and Zetor. More recently, Chinese firm Lovol has been a key supplier of combines, with tractors coming from India's Escorts/Farmtrac."

The government has made bulk purchases of machinery such as these Chinese combines, but not invested in training to maintain them

The government has created a US\$2m fund it says last year helped 60 farmers obtain tractors on a 5% down-payment and multi-year pay-off plan. Response has been good, and a similar programme is planned for harvesting equipment. Building a better team of government agricultural advisers, improving access to credit, ensuring growers can get access to crop inputs by encouraging more private sector involvement, and improving storage to cut the 30% of losses reckoned to occur post-harvest, are all said by the country's agriculture minister to be top priorities.

This article was first published in Farmers Guardian

## Book release

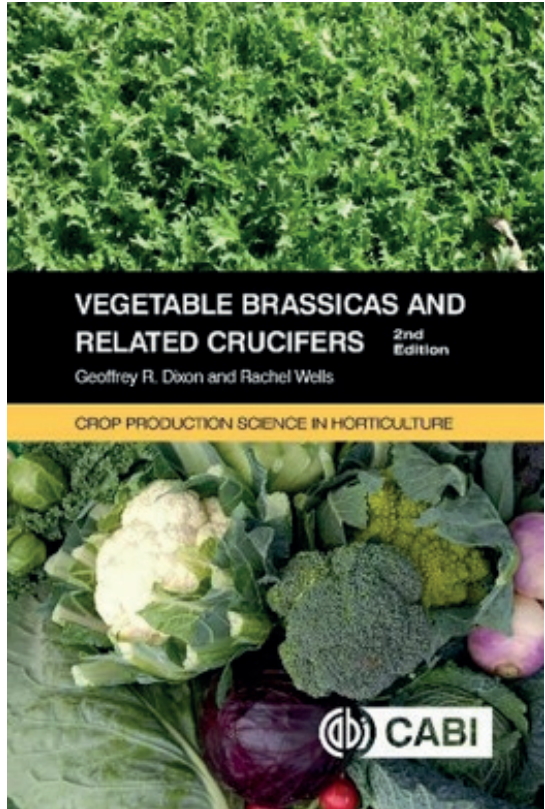
**Prof Geoff Dixon (Wye 1962-68) has co-written – with Rachel Wells of the John Innes Centre, Norwich – a revised second edition of 'Vegetable Brassicas and Related Crucifers'.**

In its promotion summary of the book's contents, publisher CABI says:

The Brassica genus contains diverse and economically important species and crops, for example, Brassica oleracea including cauliflower to kohlrabi, B.rapa including pak choi to mizuna, and aquatic crucifers such as watercress. These provide humankind with huge diversities of foods, promoting health and well-being.

This substantially expanded second edition reflects the significant advances in knowledge of plant breeding and crop production which have occurred since publication of the original book in 2006. Embracing new Brassicaceae research and concepts of sustainable and automated crop production, topics include:

- Brassica evolution and transcontinental spread as the basis for crop breeding
- Gene-editing, rapid sequencing, genetic markers and linkage mapping to enable efficient plant breeding
- Seed development, F1 cultivars and rapid maturing crops for profitable cropping
- Environmental impacts on pests, pathogens, crop reliability and quality
- Soil health and fertility as agronomic principles
- Environmental sustainability, biocontrol and integrated pest management



- Vegetable brassicas as nutrient-rich foods for optimal health benefits

An invaluable resource for all those involved in Brassica production, this is essential reading for researchers and students in horticulture and plant science, growers, producers, consultants and industry advisers.



## Book review

**Michael Payne (Wye 1978-81) analyses a new book, 'Discovering Roman Wye', written by one of the College's foremost soils lecturers, Dr. Paul Burnham.**

Paul Burnham needs no introduction among Wye College students who took land-based courses. His latest work brings together much of the available research relating to the area around the parish, from the late Iron Age and the Roman occupation to the time it was first documented as a royal estate of the Kingdom of Kent in 762AD.

By describing finds such as a silver coin of the Cantiaci circa AD 40, discovered as recently as 1991, to the various archaeological excavations over the past century, the buildings, the people, and their circumstances are brought to life. Indeed, Wye's importance in an established iron smelting area, together with its fertile land

quite probably led to it becoming a Roman imperial estate.

Dr. Burnham's geological and soil science background comes to the fore. Together with his background and interest in local history he is ideally placed to interpret the archaeological evidence. With his ability he clearly articulates and explains the background and circumstances that lead to his conclusions.

Published by Wye Historical Society 2023

Paperback £7.00 + postage. Available from Wye Heritage.





## Brook Rural Museum: a hidden gem

David Caffall (Wye 1970-73) profiles a spot well worth exploring for those visiting the area around Wye.

(Photographs: Doug Harman)



Just a few miles away from Wye College in the village of Brook lies a real gem – a treasure trove of agricultural history which extends back 700 years, yet contains artefacts which some of us may recall from our youth. Let me explain...

It was a casual conversation with Alan Rogers (known to many of us as a former Wye College lecturer) which alerted me to this fascinating place. The museum includes a majestic 14<sup>th</sup> century manorial barn, full of agricultural implements ranging from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the 1960s (think haywains and wooden ploughs rather than grey Fergies). It is not inconceivable that some of the massive oak beams holding up the tiled roof could have been repurposed and may therefore be a thousand years old.

A short walk across the grass from the barn is an early 19<sup>th</sup> century oast house with much of the associated equipment

still in place. You can even see a hessian Wye College hop pocket. The oast provides a unique experience and it feels rather like entering in the morning after the final drying session of the season. Those who like a Chaucerian belly laugh (*that's about 99% of your Wye readership, Mr Editor*) can chuckle at the description of the strongly laxative effects of the workers breathing in the sulphur fumes!

The museum is a stunning place to visit for its architecture alone, but to ex-Wye people it has an important story which is relevant to all of us. Just after the war, Wye College took charge of a definitive collection of rural bygones which had been established in the 1930s, and this was then stored at Coldharbour Farm. Subsequently, in 1957, Wye College purchased Court Lodge Farm at Brook, and thus became the owner of this stunning collection of buildings. In due



course the rural collection was relocated there.

Fast forward to 1996, and possibly guessing what was coming down the track, a group of far-sighted Wye people set up a Trust which purchased the museum site from the College and has continued to be the custodian of these exhibits. One of the prime movers was Tom Hill, a real gentleman who strove manfully to educate generations of undergraduates in 'Botany 1'. I am delighted to report that Tom is still with us, and living in East Kent. He would despair that I still get xylem and phloem muddled up.

Today the Trust has been updated and over the years the visitor facilities have been improved. These now include a disabled toilet and a small kitchen. The 1930s stables contain a small meeting room, which is available for hire.

The museum has an excellent website at [www.brookruralmuseum.org.uk](http://www.brookruralmuseum.org.uk), and is open most summer weekend afternoons. The entrance fee is a modest fiver; the volunteer staff are friendly and informative. I can thoroughly recommend a visit.



# The return of Wye College treasures

Efforts to secure the custodianship of significant Wye College artefacts, in particular the portraits of former College principals, are beginning to bear fruit.

The persistence of Petey Alliston, daughter of former Wye College principal Professor Ian Lucas, in securing the custodianship of the official College portrait of her father, have resulted in the return by Imperial College of the painting.

Petey, aware that her mother Helen treasured the portrait, read up about the current governing regime at Imperial and wrote directly to the retiring President of Imperial College, Professor Alice Gast, explaining its background and requesting possession of the portrait, which had no contemporary significance for Imperial, in time for Helen's 100th birthday. Not only did Alice Gast grant this request, but she had Imperial send the portrait to Petey by courier.

Professor Ian Albert McKenzie Lucas CBE, who served as Principal at Wye College from 1977 to 1988, is pictured here with his oil portrait by artist Andrew Festing on the occasion of his wife Helen's birthday celebration in March 2022.

This portrait, and those of others since, have been granted to their subjects by Imperial College thanks to Petey's initiative. Upon first investigation in 2009, it was discovered Imperial College's 'treasures policy' for possessions it has inherited through mergers is divided into:

- 'core items: those which have a direct relationship with the academic work of the College and/or have a significant historical connection with the College;
- non-core items: those which have no significant association with the College and have no reputational interest.'

It was assumed, at that time, that the portraits were classified as 'core items', as



*Professor Ian Lucas with his Wye College portrait*

family approaches to Imperial for relatives' portraits had been refused.

Since Petey's achievement, Professor John Prescott now has his portrait, and the Wain family have Professor Louis Wain's portrait, while the portrait of Reg Older, former Chair of Governors at Wye College, is arriving imminently with the Older family. The securing for his family of the portrait of Dunstan Skilbeck is in process.



## Co-ordinating the cohort

David Caffall writes on behalf of behalf of Martin Attwood, Bob Berry, Dorothy Fairburn, Chris and Peter Hoey, Susie Quan-Taylor and Richard Rix, all Wye 1970-73 students, who last year organised a 50-years-since-graduation event...



"I went to an Agricola Club event, but sadly there was hardly anyone else there from my era". How often I have heard this in recent years!

A couple of years ago, about a dozen of the 1970-73 vintage met to share memories of Kevin Witherby, who sadly passed away with cancer during the covid time. Several of us had not met for almost 50 years, but time rolled away in an instant, and the event was enjoyed by all.

We resolved there and then that this would not be a one-off, so when a follow-up was mooted, someone said: "Why don't we try to invite ALL of our year next time?" We formed a small steering group, and in December 2022 started the process of tracking everyone down.

We began with a list of everyone who graduated in 1973, plus several ex-colleagues who had disappointed the examiners along the way. We expected that the Agricola Club list of members would give us a flying start, but disappointingly this only yielded about 20 contact details – some of which were sadly out of date.

We then contacted those who had been identified, outlining our plans for a meet up in summer 2023 and asking for expressions of interest, plus help with tracing others on our list. It was exciting to see the numbers steadily grow, and we eventually made contact with all but 12 people out of 98. A final throw of the dice was to write to addresses from a 1972 Roll of Members, which miraculously provided 6 missing names. It was sobering, however, to note



that 13 of our year were sadly no longer with us.

Discussions took place as to where and when to meet. The overwhelming preference was for drinks and lunch in the Wye area on a weekday in June (thus avoiding weekends, family holidays with grandchildren etc). Obviously, the College was unavailable, but the Rural Museum at Brook (600 yards from the sadly now-defunct Honest Miller of happy memory) provided a stunning and appropriate setting. (See elsewhere in this edition of 'Wye' for David's article on the museum – Ed)

Thus it was that 55 of us, plus 31 spouses/partners (of whom nine were ex-Wye from other years) and a small number of invited guests met on June 28<sup>th</sup>, a sunny Kentish day. We had been anxious in case of rain, but Brook village hall – just a four minute stroll away, was an inexpensive insurance policy, and its adjoining sports field provided an ideal setting for tables and a hog roast. We had requested that people might like to bring memorabilia, and the collection of photos, letters, scarves, gowns (soup-stained of course) and even a tortoise-emblazoned sweat shirt provided a fascinating diversion all afternoon.

It was universally agreed that the atmosphere was absolutely magical. People were in tears of sheer delight at rekindling old acquaintances, laughter rang out continuously, and we eventually had

to shoo the survivors away at 5.30pm. Our committee were absolutely thrilled with what was achieved, and the post-event comments were both gratifying and humbling.

May I finish this article with some comments – and an offer? This event was not designed to compete with any Agricola Club gathering, but clearly it gave immense pleasure to many people. Furthermore, we have now created a template for other year groups to use, and we would be more than delighted to make this available.

As my mother used to say: "I want to meet old friends at least one more time – and NOT at a funeral".





## The 2023 Agricola Club Annual Dinner

Michael Payne (Wye 1978-81) reports on events at the 2023 Agricola Club Dinner, held at the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester.



Our biennial dinner, last year held on Saturday 2nd September, saw a return to Cirencester and the Royal Agricultural University (RAU), formerly the Royal Agricultural College, one of Wye's rivals on the rugby field.

On a lovely September evening, we enjoyed a drinks reception on the lawn at the back of the college, followed by a 'black-tie' dinner for 96 at three long tables in the main dining room. We ranged from the most 'senior' alumnus, who started at Wye in 1959, to 'youngsters' from the 1990s. It was good to see many new faces who may have missed out on previous Agricola events, and we hope they will join us on future occasions. The loyal toast was proposed by our President, Paul Webster, and both our outgoing chair, Jane Reynolds, and newly-appointed chair, Michael Payne, also spoke.

Those present included David Leaver (and his wife, Sally) who was Principal and Chief Executive of the Royal Agricultural College

from 2002 until retiring 2007, at a time when the RAC was a university college teaching its own degrees. David told me that his time at Cirencester proved challenging, as he inherited significant administrative and financial problems, resulting from reductions in student numbers over a number of years, as the College had moved from being a privately-funded institution to becoming part of the public sector from 2001. When David left in 2007, the College was in much better order, and with an ongoing growth in student numbers, it was well placed to bid for full university status, which was achieved in 2013.

David was not the first senior staff member from Wye to become Principal at Cirencester. Professor Malcolm J.R. Dunstan, who had been the Principal at Wye (then the South-Eastern Agricultural College) for twenty years, moved to the RAC to become Principal from 1922 to 1927. Graduates of Wye have also become staff members at



Cirencester including the present Professor in Agriculture, Nicola Cannon.

The RAU also has strong connections with the Bathurst family, dating back to 1845, with the granting of a lease for the land on which the College was built. The present Earl, the 9<sup>th</sup>, who is a Vice President of the RAU, is a former student of Wye, and we much appreciated him attending our AGM and dinner, followed by an invitation to a farm walk on the Sunday morning around the Bathurst estate.

The estate, covering some 15,000 acres, comprises a mix of property, parkland and farming on some 8,000 acres. For our visit, we started at the dairy unit where the Earl and his farm manager, Mike Patch, explained that the dairy herd of 350 (previously 900) are kept on zero-grazing methods. On a warm, sunny morning this raised a few questions from the alumni and we had a



lively discussion on the pros and cons of zero grazing. We were also shown the biogas plant which, together with solar panels on the dairy roof, produces significant electricity.

The milk production sits alongside large-scale conventional arable farming, of which 215 acres are grassland with organic status. With appropriate crop rotations combined with the use of biosolids as a soil conditioner, the Estate aims to ensure that conservation and farming go hand-in-hand with a long-term focus. Diversification has included working up a development plan in conjunction with the local authority for 2,350 new homes, of which 30% will be 'affordable' housing.

At the end of the farm visit, a few of us migrated to the Cirencester Polo Club (which is part of the estate) and continued our discussions with Lord Bathurst over a few beers. An excellent weekend blessed by good weather.



## Wye Rustics' Cricket Tour 2023

Another season of on- and off-pitch fun and frolics for the Wye graduates and coerced cricketing companions that make up the Wye Rustics is detailed here in typically comic fashion by erstwhile correspondent Dickon Turner...

### Kilmington, Sunday 9th July 2023

The highway authorities were keen to prevent the Wye Rustics entering the West Country by closing the M3 and A303, but it allowed the woolly mammoths of the tour to blow the dust off their antique road atlases, and find alternative routes to the Old Inn at Kilmington. The Otter ale was almost as refreshing as finding four keen young rookies amongst the assembled tourists. Two of the freshers were Wye College bloodstock, namely Richard Pool's son Zak (immediately referred to as "Paddling") and Ed Pigott who had prised father Ian out of 25 years retirement (from an era when his baggy whites were all the rage).

It was the Pigotts who opened the innings but the Pools who made the bigger splash.

Paddling stroked an eye-watering 55 from just 22 deliveries, while, by comparison, his father crawled to 68. Martin Hole's replacement hip had ensured he could walk with renewed vigour, both to and from the wicket – out for a duck. The other rookies, Aussie Jack 'Q' Quatermaine and Cambridge's Sam Thain, shared a rapid partnership of 70 to help Rustics to 292-9 from their 35 overs.

In reply, George Weston warmed up with a 12-ball first over, providing a boost to Kilmington's chase, but the Pools continued to dominate proceedings. Father dropped multiple chances at slip, one off his son's bowling, before Zak bounced out the dangerous Rocket, caught at the second



*A delivery from Ed Pigott crashes into the stumps watched by (from left) Squire, Craze Snr and Hole*



attempt by Q at deep fine leg. Pigott junior spun an off break through an open gate to claim his first scalp, as the visitors cruised to victory by 50 runs with Charlie Squire the unlikely destroyer of the tail.

The resourcefulness of senior Rustics produced an excellent BBQ back at the tour HQ, namely the Harepath Retreat above Seaton with its majestic views towards the Jurassic coast. The tour had moved a week

later but the Accommodation Manager, John Dinnis, was on the ball and block booked the venue for the correct days. Unfortunately, he had forgotten the revised dates when arranging his family holiday, resulting in an awkward clash in the Dinnis diary and (for the sake of his marriage) his absence from the tour party.

## Shobrooke Park Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023

As the Rustics set off for the afternoon match, they learned that heavy overnight rain had left the Shobrooke pitch unplayable, and they got no further than a par three golf course at Salcombe Regis. Even the more agricultural golfers found the 'course' more akin to an area of rough pasture that was stabbed randomly with nine flags. When a spell of heavy rain relented to a thick coastal fog, these flags became hidden from view,

as did any other group of vulnerable golfers. Having survived this sporting debacle, some of the rookies were then treated to the delights of a tour around the nearby donkey sanctuary. If they were concerned by this strange initiation to a cricket tour, they will have been reassured by the attractions of the Eyre Court public house, particularly the Avocet ale (which slurred into 'Ocelot' and then 'Lancelot' as darkness fell).



*Hole swings into the fog*



## Devon Dumplings Tuesday 11th July 2023

As the tourists journeyed to Exeter for the annual showdown with the Dumplings squad of semi-professionals, Hole decided it would be wise to follow Turner's mid-life crisis BMW to the county ground. When Turner made an unexpected detour into Honiton, and parked outside a nail bar, Hole became perplexed. The when three young ladies disembarked from the vehicle, he realised that he may have followed the wrong car.

Fortunately, the Rustics had allowed plenty of time to find the venue; sufficient for Dinnis's son-in-law (elect), Jack Griffiths, to recruit two Exeter Uni contemporaries and ensure none of the mammoths had to endure a full day of exercise. Spirits were lifted further when skipper Micro Craze won the toss and chose to bowl on a green wicket beneath overcast skies. To make full use of the conditions, Jupton was asked to continue his fine form from the weekend (a seven-wicket haul that he mentioned with

monotonous regularity). In the 22<sup>nd</sup> over, Dumplings were 67 without loss and Jupton had failed to collect a wicket in nine overs of endeavour. It was left to Griffiths to make the breakthrough when he shocked the opening batsman with a perfectly-aimed yorker amid an array of friendly long hops.

After going to lunch at 131-1, Dumplings lost two quick wickets to the lively pace of Thain, but Aussie all-rounder Geraghty completed an eye-catching century and the Dumplings made a sporting declaration on 239 for 5.

The Rustic response was hampered by the early loss of skipper Craze, acrobatically caught by the keeper just 95 runs short of his customary century. Weston steadied the ship with solid defence interspersed with precise cover drives, while Waldock's trade-mark swivel pull was supplemented by an uncharacteristic lofted extra cover drive. Regular wickets either side of the tea interval saw the tourists slip to 105 for 6



*The fit young team of Rustics who took to the field...*



...and the relieved woolly mammoths who had the day off (Neild, Holborn, Craze A, Hole and Pool)

before an aggressive counter offensive by all-rounders Upton and Thain may have caused the Dimplings to question the generosity of their declaration. As Upton stroked his way to a half century, Thain lit up the gloomy skies with three huge sixes, the last of which was proclaimed to be the first time a right-handed batsman had cleared the roof of the new pavilion.

The introduction of the pacy Geraghty to the bowling attack had instant reward as he induced an edge from the bat of Thain. Soon after he clean bowled Jupton and, with his next two deliveries dismissed Super-Josh

Holmes and Tom Anderson for golden ducks to win the match with a hattrick.

The Rustic youth spent the evening entertaining the locals in the clubs of Exeter. As the live streaming of their worm dance went viral, Neild was driving the mammoths the wrong way up a Seaton one-way street and parking directly outside the police station. A few beers later and the seniors were also excited by a worm – a glow worm which was lighting their walk home. The use of a torch revealed it was a piece of silver paper reflecting the shimmering moon.

## Beaminster Wednesday 12th July 2023

The threat of rain resulted in this historic fixture being shortened to a T20 with the home team batting first. Anticipating his knees could cope with 20 overs crouching behind the stumps, Pinney donned the wicket keeping gloves. The ball was soon whizzing past his outstretched arms as Super Josh's errant radar resulted in 12 wides from his first two overs. Pinney then lost track of a top-edged pull, leaving the catch to cover point only for the ball to descend inches from his head. A stumping chance also went begging when he took three attempts to break the wicket by which time the stranded batsman had ambled back to his crease. Moments later he made amends

by executing a much sharper stumping off the accurate Anderson, who, in partnership with spin twin Craze, shared four wickets for eight runs from five miserly overs. Mid-way through their innings, Beaminster had been cruising at 77 for 1, but the precision of the spinners helped restrict them to 131 for 7 at the close.

It is always reassuring to see the evergreen Tom Atkinson opening the Rustic innings and, in partnership with the truly youthful Weston, they moved the score steadily to 35 in the sixth over when Weston was bowled. The measured approach to the run-chase was shattered by the arrival of Sam Thain. He stroked a couple of fours to get



*Atkinson demonstrates a classic cover drive, with the mighty Thain watching from the other end.*

his range, then blitzed the outer reaches of the recreation ground with a barrage of mighty strikes, taking breathers while the search parties retrieved the red missiles from the gardens and hedgerows. Of his 16 scoring shots, precisely half were sixes including four maximums from the 15<sup>th</sup> over to win the game at a canter. Rustic batsmen have put West Country bowlers to the sword on previous occasions, but Thain's 68 not out took savagery to a whole new level. Atkinson's unbeaten 41 was docile by comparison but circumspectly effective.

Despite the brevity of the match, skipper Anderson ensured all the Rustics participated with either the bat, the ball or, memorably, with the keeping gloves. He duly received the Pinney Memorial Cup after Holborn, demonstrating a hitherto unknown aptitude for safe breaking, had jimmied his way into the Beaminster trophy cabinet as the generous hosts were treating the tourists to a post-match barbeque.

A tour that was threatened by the weather all week provided three fine matches played in excellent spirit, even if lacking the thrilling finishes of past years. With more talented youngsters joining the party, and administrative roles being passed down a generation, the herd of Rustics that was once

threatened by extinction can be expected to roam the verdant cricket grounds of the west country for many years to come.



*Anderson receives the trophy from Pinney*

## The Tour Party

**Ex Wye College:** Simon Richardson (1971-74), Peter Holborn (1974-75), Tom Atkinson (1979-82), Andrew Craze (1982-85), Martin Hole (1982-85), Dickon Turner (1982-85), Charlie Squire (1987-90), Richard Pool (1992-95), Ian Piggott (1989-92)

**Wye College Progeny:** Robert Pinney, Robert Craze, Zak Pool, Ed Piggott

**Honoured Guests:** Chris Neild, Ryan Waldock, Josh Holmes, Jack Upton, Jack Griffiths, Tom Anderson, George Weston, James Stacy-Marks, Sam Thain, Jack Quartermain, Ollie Swann, James Murtagh

## Statistics

Rustics	292 for 9	R Pool 63, Z Pool 55, J Quartermain 42*, S Thain 33.
Kilmington	239 all out	C Squire 1.2-0-8-2, Z Pool 7-2-27-2, G Weston 6-0-54-2
Rustics won by	53 runs	

Rustics v Shobrooke Park      Match abandoned

Dumplings	239 for 5 dec	S Thain 6-1-29-2,
Rustics	182 all out	J Upton 51, G Weston 35, S Thain 31.
Dumplings won by	57 runs	

Beaminster	131 for 7	T Anderson 2-1-1-2 R Craze 3-0-7-2 J Upton 4-2-16-2,
Rustics	137 for 1	S Thain 68*, T Atkinson 41*
Rustics won by	9 wickets	



## 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](mailto:secretary@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk)





# Wye College Agricola Club Summer Hog Roast 2024

***Agricola Club Summer Hog Roast***

***Saturday, June 29<sup>th</sup> 2024***

***12 noon***

***Wold Top Brewery***

***Hunmanby Grange***

***Wold Newton***

***DRIFFIELD***

***E Yorks***

***YO25 3HS***

***By kind invitation of Tom Mellor (Wye 1978-81) and his family***

**Tom writes:**

I'm a third-generation farmer on a Yorkshire Wolds arable farm of 233ha. I attended Wye from 1978 to 1981, where I met my late wife Gill Duckworth. We married in 1983, and she then developed a garden around the farmstead which was featured on BBC Gardener's World in 2002 and which was open under the National Garden Scheme for over 25 years. In 2003, in response to falling commodity prices and having assessed our local resources (which includes a farm-based water supply), we set up Wold Top Brewery to add value to our production of malting barley. In 2007 we added a packaging (bottling) facility, aptly named Agricola Bottling, where we not only bottle our own beer but contract-package for other breweries. After a series of expansions to the original brew plant in 2011 and 2013, we installed a new brewery on the farm which not only produces beer for both ourselves and others, but also makes a wash which can then be distilled and aged as whisky. The Spirit of Yorkshire distillery started laying down casks of spirit in May 2016 and is now producing Yorkshire's first single malt whisky, Filey Bay. The distillery is situated three miles away in Hunmanby, and incorporates a coffee shop and retail outlet. We employ around 45 people.

The next generation is also heavily involved, with one daughter and her husband running Wold Top and Agricola whilst the other, after spending ten years in brand development in London, is now the marketing director at Spirit of Yorkshire. All the barley used in both operations is grown on our ring-fenced farm and malted locally by Muntons in Bridlington, with whom we deal directly. For the last five years we have adopted an approach of no-till (non-inversion) practices and make full use of cover crops between successive barley crops, both for fertiliser reduction and carbon/ nitrogen capture."

***This should be a really interesting visit since lunch will be served in the foyer of the brewery! Tom is happy to conduct a short farm walk and it is hoped we will be able to wander around the garden which for many years was part of the NGS Scheme.***

**Please ask if you need help finding accommodation – there are various local hostelryes and the towns of Scarborough, Filey and Bridlington are not far away.**

# Summer Hog Roast Application Form

Cost: £30/head

Includes hog roast, salads, pudding, tea/coffee and free bar

If you wish to attend, please contact Jane Reynolds on [info@janesgardendesign.com](mailto:info@janesgardendesign.com) with the following information:

Name(s):

.....  
.....  
.....

Years at Wye:

.....  
.....

Email address:

.....

Any dietary requirements:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Payment can be made online to:

Wye College Agricola Club

Sort code: 30-90-28

Account number: 00028380

IBAN info available for those coming from abroad – please ask

If preferred, please contact Jane Reynolds at The Pent, Postling, Hythe CT21 4EY, sending all details plus a cheque payable to Wye College Agricola Club

Please make sure that you have given Jane all your details BEFORE paying!

## Wye College logo clothing order form

ITEM	Colour	Size	Price	
<b>Hoodie</b>				
 		Navy <input type="checkbox"/> Grey <input type="checkbox"/>	XS S M L XL 2XL 3XL	<b>£22.75</b>
<b>Polo Shirt</b>				
 		Navy <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/>	XS S M L XL 2XL 3XL	<b>£14.35</b>
<b>Body Warmer</b>				
		Navy <input type="checkbox"/>	XS S M L XL 2XL 3XL	<b>£25.15</b>
<b>Sweat Shirt</b>				
 		Navy <input type="checkbox"/> Grey <input type="checkbox"/>	XS S M L XL 2XL 3XL	<b>£20.35</b>

Total order, add £5.00 for delivery

Delivery address:

E-Mail address

Phone contact:

Please complete and e-mail to: [secretary@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk](mailto:secretary@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk)



# Wye College Agricola Club

## Application for Membership

### Applicant

Surname/family name .....

First name .....

Permanent address .....

.....

.....

.....

Post Code .....

Telephone .....

Email .....

### Applicant's academic details

Graduate / M.Sc. / PhD / Staff (*please delete as appropriate*)

Year of entry .....

Year of leaving .....

Degree course (*Dept. if PhD or staff*) .....

### Declaration

I offer myself for election to the Agricola Club and agree to abide by the Club Regulations (copy available from the Hon. Sec), I authorise the Club to hold my details on the Club database and to publish my name, postal address and email address in the Journal.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Membership payment of a one off payment of £50.00 to achieve life membership will complete the joining process.

Payment can be made by BACS: Sort Code 30-90-28, Account Number 00028380

**Please return to:** James Trounce, Hon. Sec., Wye College Agricola Club, 32 Mill Lane, Attleborough, Norfolk, NR17 2NL. [secretary@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk](mailto:secretary@wyeagricolaclub.org.uk)



**Wye College Agricola Club**

**Accounts**

**for the year ended 31 July 2023**

## Wye College Agricola Club

### Accounts

for the year ended 31 July 2023

	Page
Accountants' report	1
Income and expenditure account	2
Balance sheet	3
Notes to the accounts	4

---

## Wye College Agricola Club

### Accountants' report

In accordance with the engagement letter dated 20 March 2023 we have compiled the financial statements of Wye College Agricola Club for the year ended 31 July 2023 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](http://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](http://icaew.com/compilation). To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the members of Wye College Agricola Club for our work, or for this report.

You have approved the financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2023 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.

**I Morris FCA**

**Chavereys Limited**  
Chartered accountants

Faversham  
Date:

## Wye College Agricola Club

Income and expenditure account  
for the year ended 31 July 2023

	2023		2022	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Income</b>				
Sale of ties, prints etc.		-		365
Subscriptions		1,600		1,610
Donations		-		42
Annual dinner		7,134		5,001
Hog roast		-		5,670
Memorial Fund journal contribution		18,000		25,000
		<u>26,734</u>		<u>37,687</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Opening stock	444		751	
Purchases of ties, etc.	-		-	
Closing stock	<u>(444)</u>		<u>(444)</u>	
		-		306
Annual dinner	7,700		5,292	
Hog roast	-		2,519	
Wye Journal	11,907		23,495	
Website expenses	166		238	
Meetings, expenses and secretarial	1,323		2,075	
Gift to outgoing officer	-		-	
Insurance	-		378	
Subscriptions TAA, Heritage	180		205	
Accountancy	324		318	
		<u>21,600</u>		<u>34,519</u>
		<u>21,600</u>		<u>34,825</u>
<b>Net surplus</b>		<u>5,134</u>		<u>231</u>

## Wye College Agricola Club

### Balance sheet as at 31 July 2023

	2023		2022	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Current assets</b>				
Lloyds Bank	10,458		3,942	
Stocks	444		444	
Debtors	18,000		-	
Prepayments	-		-	
		<u>28,902</u>		<u>4,386</u>
<b>Current liabilities</b>				
Creditors	(19,382)		-	
Accruals	(300)		(300)	
		<u>(19,682)</u>		<u>(300)</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		<u>9,220</u>		<u>4,086</u>
<b>Accumulated funds</b>				
Opening reserves		4,086		1,225
Surplus for the year		5,134		2,861
<b>Accumulated reserves</b>		<u>9,220</u>		<u>4,086</u>

We approve the accounts set out on pages to disclosing a net surplus of £5134 and we confirm that we have made available all relevant records and information for their purpose.

These accounts were approved on

*C P Course*

**C P Course**

**Treasurer**

(for and on behalf of the committee)



## **Wye College Agricola Club**

### **Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 July 2023**

#### **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 2023**

## **Agricola Club Memorial Fund**

### **Charity information**

**Trustees** C P Course  
Prof. J P G Webster  
C Reynolds (appointed 30 September 2022)  
Prof. J D Leaver (resigned 14 April 2023)  
Mrs J Oakes (resigned 30 September 2022)

**Treasurer** C P Course

**Charity number** 307896

**Registered office** Heathpatch Ltd  
Dairy Farm Office  
Dairy Road  
Semer  
Ipswich  
IP7 6RA

**Accountants** Chavereys Limited  
The Goods Shed  
Faversham  
Kent  
ME13 8GD

**Agricola Club Memorial Fund**

	Page
<b>Accountants' report</b>	1
<b>Income and expenditure account</b>	2
<b>Statement of assets and liabilities</b>	3
<b>Notes to the accounts</b>	5

## **Agricola Club Memorial Fund**

### **Accountants' report**

In accordance with the engagement letter dated 20 March 2024 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](http://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 2023 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.

### **I Morris FCA**

**Chavereys Limited**  
Chartered Accountants

Faversham  
Date:



## Agricola Club Memorial Fund

### Income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 July 2023

	Note	£	2023 £	£	2022 £
<b>Income</b>					
Dividends received		15,762		14,130	
Donations		-		-	
			<b>15,762</b>		<b>14,130</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Student / member awards		-		-	
Support of Wye College Agricola Club		18,000		25,000	
Governance expenses		3,566		3,882	
			<b>(21,566)</b>		<b>(28,882)</b>
<b>Net deficit for the year</b>			<b>(5,804)</b>		<b>(14,752)</b>
<b>Retained surplus brought forward</b>			<b>475,687</b>		<b>512,517</b>
			<b>469,883</b>		<b>497,765</b>
Net (decrease)/increase in value of investments			<b>(4,183)</b>		<b>(22,079)</b>
<b>Retained surplus carried forward</b>			<b>465,700</b>		<b>475,687</b>

**All receipts are unrestricted funds**

**Agricola Club Memorial Fund****Statement of assets and liabilities  
as at 31 July 2023**

	2023	2022
	£	£
<b>Cash funds</b>		
Current account	2,601	1,318
Cash held by broker - Portfolio 1	11,728	8,891
Cash held by broker - Portfolio 2	38,078	30,124
<b>Investment assets</b>		
2,052.00 Charifund Income Units	29,508	30,866
897.09 BlackRock European Income Units	32,806	28,649
<b>Portfolio 1</b>		
846.42 Rathbone Income Units	7,121	7,135
2,248.85 Artemis Income Fund Class R	4,948	4,954
88.00 Veritas Global Equity Income GBP Class A	20,020	18,512
51.35 Fidelity Cash W (inc)	76	51
10,000.00 Threadneedle High Yield Bond clas I	3,660	3,691
21,079.87 ARC TIME Commercial Long Income D (Inc)	18,727	21,470
1,746.00 Aberforth Smaller Companies (ASL)	22,244	22,087
5,514.41 VT Gravis Clean Energy Income C (Inc)	7,022	9,041
3,092.96 BNY Mellon Global Emerging Mkt Fund Inst. W(Inc)	7,157	6,973
458.71 Ninety One UK Special Situations B (Acc)	7,280	6,236
	<u>98,255</u>	<u>100,150</u>
<b>Portfolio 2</b>		
814.42 Fidelity Asia A (Acc)	12,151	12,347
15,493.63 Invesco Monthly Income Plus Fund	14,112	14,869
44,344.32 M & G Global High Yield Bond X Class	17,436	17,920
352.56 Fidelity Cash W (inc)	451	353
45,000.00 Threadneedle High Yield Bond Class	16,470	16,610
4,722.00 Murray Income Trust (MUT)	40,680	41,176
1,862.00 Aberforth Smaller Companies (ASL)	23,722	23,554
6,586.15 Stewart investors Asia Pacific Leaders Class A	57,031	58,008
22,484.83 ARC TIME Commercial Long Income D (Inc)	19,976	22,901
14,147.86 ARC TIME Freehold Income Auth. H (Inc)	31,018	31,458
14,859.43 BNY Mellon Global Income (Inc)	38,177	36,996
	<u>271,224</u>	<u>276,189</u>
<b>Less accruals</b>		
Creditors	(18,000)	-
Accountancy	(500)	(500)
	<u>(18,500)</u>	<u>(500)</u>
	<u><u>465,700</u></u>	<u><u>475,687</u></u>

## **Agricola Club Memorial Fund**

### **Statement of assets and liabilities as at 31 July 2023**

We approve the accounts set out on pages 2 to 5 disclosing a net deficit of £5804 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 2023**

#### **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.

**Wye College Agricola Club  
Committee Members 2024-2025**

<b>Elected</b>	<b>Retires</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Name and address</b>	<b>Tel no</b>
2023	2026	President & ACMF Trustee	Prof Paul Webster 25, Chequers Park, Wye, Ashford, Kent, TN25 5BB	01233 812786 07950 822869
2021	2024	Chair	Mr Michael Payne 37 Maltings Close, Hadlow, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 0EQ	01732 852187 07485 727997
2023	2026	Vice- Chair	Mr Malcolm Alexander, 28 Friars Stile Road, Richmond, Surrey TW10 6NE	0208 940 8078 07860 503053
2023	2026	Secretary	Mr James Trounce 32 Mill Lane, Besthorpe, Attleborough, Norfolk NR17 2NL	01953 455997 07969 499173
2023	2026	Treasurer	Mr Charles Course Whitehouse Farm, Whatfield, Ipswich, Suffolk IP7 6LL	01449 744685 07889 218590
2022	2025	Journal editor	Mr Martin Rickatson Tall Trees, Church Road, Garboldisham, Diss, Norfolk IP22 2SE	01379 730227 07595 031217
2021	2024		Prof Chris Baines 28 Parkdale West, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV1 4TE	07736 409924
2021	2024		Prof Geoff Dixon Hill Rising, Horncastles Lane, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 6BH	01935 812010 07774 628641
2023	2026		Mr John Magnay 17 Akii Bua Rd, Nakasero, PO Box 32041, Kampala, Uganda	
2021	2024		Mrs Jane Reynolds The Pent, Postling, Hythe, Kent CT21 4EY	
2021	2024		Mr Gary Saunders Elms Cottage, Hinxhill, Ashford, Kent TN25 5NT	
2022	2025		Mr David Simmons Whithill House, Brogdale Rd, Ospringe, Faversham, Kent ME13 0DN	
Co- opted			Miss Dorothy Fairburn Middle Cottage, Cowesby, Thirsh, N Yorks YO7 2JL	