

# Landmark

Issue 16 | 2017



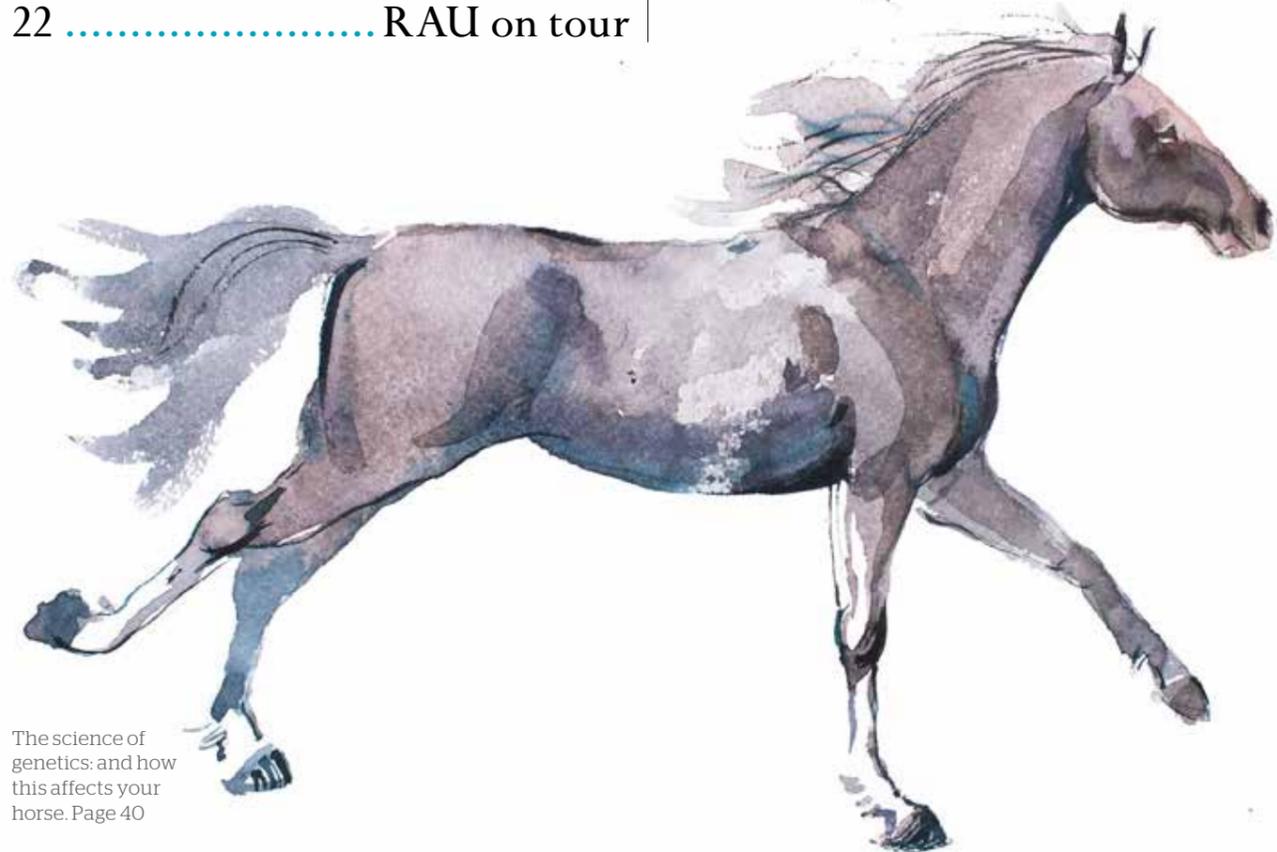
Showcasing 10 years  
of enterprise  
Convocation  
celebrations  
Agritech innovation  
Student success

Royal  
Agricultural  
University  
Cirencester



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The science of genetics: and how this affects your horse. Page 40

# Welcome to Landmark 2017

I am pleased to introduce the 2017 edition of Landmark magazine, which is a little later than usual because of what has been a packed year here at the Royal Agricultural University.

This has included my arrival in the Alumni and Development Office. I was first introduced to the Royal Agricultural University in July 2015, joining the team on an ad hoc basis to provide short term support and advice on projects. I was soon hooked, falling in love with the campus, the people and the mission of the RAU. Fast forward to September 2016 and, just a few weeks after the arrival of our new Vice-Chancellor, I became the full-time Head of Development and Alumni Relations.

And what an exciting time to join the RAU family! Part of my mission has been (and will continue to be) to get out and about and talk to our alumni on a one-to-one basis, across the UK.

This, to be perfectly honest, has not been an arduous task as I am very much enjoying the opportunity to meet alumni and friends of the RAU in a wide range of places and locations: I never know whether I will be in an office, on a farm or estate, walking a racecourse or sitting in a coffee shop in London, reflecting the many wide and varied careers and lifestyles of our wonderful alumni network.

The RAU is growing, developing and changing to best fit the needs and challenges of land-based industries of today and tomorrow, and we also want to make sure we are best serving the needs of our students and of the wider sector. Over the coming months, we



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will be reaching out to you in a number of ways to ask for your help. The Vice-Chancellor has written to ask you for your help, support and advice as we tackle these challenges.

As well as seeking your help to make the University a leader for the industry, we will be making some changes to Landmark for next year. You will find a copy of the Landmark survey enclosed, which you can return by post, or email your thoughts to [alumni@rau.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@rau.ac.uk) with the subject "Landmark Survey".

During 2018, you will find us at various shows and events across the UK: our new events calendar for the year will be published in the Spring.

I am so looking forward to meeting many more alumni and friends of the RAU and talking to you about what we can achieve together. ■

**Hannah Langford**  
Head of Development  
and Alumni Relations

## Update Your Details

Due to changes in data protection, we need to make sure we have up to date contact details for you. Please either complete the enclosed form and post it back to us or go online to let us know how you prefer to hear from us in the future at [www.rau.ac.uk/alumni](http://www.rau.ac.uk/alumni) ■

# Vice-Chancellor's message to alumni

**Welcome to the 2017 edition of Landmark. I hope you enjoy reading about the many and varied achievements of the RAU community over the last 12 months.**

During these, my first twelve months in post, I have learnt a great deal about the RAU and have started to understand the challenges and opportunities that face this unique institution. I now understand far better why 'Ciren' is held in such affection by current students, staff and alumni and consider myself to be very fortunate to have been given the opportunity to lead the RAU through the next, critical, chapter in its history.

As always graduation was the formal highlight of the academic year. It is always wonderful to join students and their families, staff, Governors and alumni for a very special day. Graduation marks the beginning of a new relationship between the RAU and its graduates as they become members of the famous RAU Alumni.

A less colourful, but scarcely less significant, highlight of the year was to be awarded a Silver Standard in the new Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) in recognition of our high-quality teaching and learning outcomes for students. The ongoing major review of our curriculum (both what we teach and how we teach it) will ensure that teaching quality continues to improve in delivery and relevance. The first significant change has been the introduction of semesters from October 2017. This has been welcomed by students and will help bring about rapid improvements in their experience.

Other highlights for me include the Schools Farm Network Education Alliance (SFNEA) Conference and the Harnhill opening. The SFNEA conference brought together teachers and pupils from across the UK and hopefully will



“Enterprise and entrepreneurship has long been a hall mark of RAU students and graduates, and is more vibrant than ever before.”

help encourage students from more diverse backgrounds to apply to the RAU as lack of diversity in our student population remains a major problem. Adam Henson of Countryfile gave an inspiring talk at the conference and the same day he opened five new 'Farm491' workshops at Harnhill. These will provide developing Agri-tech organisations with vital space to research, test and refine their ideas for the benefit of the agri-food industries. Farm491 is an exciting, game changing project that is helping to put RAU on the map as a Centre of Innovation in the sector.

Enterprise and entrepreneurship has long been a hall mark of RAU students and graduates, and is more vibrant than ever before. Over the last ten years, with the steady growth of support through the Student Entrepreneurs Society, and the continued success of the Grand Idea "Dragons' Den"- style business competition, we are becoming increasingly recognised as leading the way for student entrepreneurship in UK Universities.

All this positive news contrasts with our shock and sadness at the deaths of Professor John Alliston and Professor Paul Davies. John and Paul were part of the bedrock and the fabric of the RAU and we have lost dear friends and colleagues. At the start of this academic year we also mourned the tragic death of Jonathan Hulley, a member of the student community with an infectious love of life (and cricket!). The way staff and students supported each other during these difficult times was very moving and testament to the strength of our community spirit.

While this edition of Landmark shows that there is much to celebrate about life at the RAU, the organisation faces many challenges. When I wrote to you soon after I took up my position just over a year ago I explained that my biggest challenge is to define the role, relevance and "USP" of the RAU in an uncertain world where

the political context changes rapidly.

The present pace of unprecedented change in world affairs brings opportunities and challenges. The UK's decision to leave the European Union will have a profound effect on the economy, increase global uncertainty and potentially change the face of UK Agriculture. Food security is a major global challenge with the politics surrounding it fundamentally altering the relationships between the rural and urban worlds. Technology is having a major impact on farming, land management and the food supply chain. Increased productivity and efficiency must be balanced with the need for sustainability and increased benefits for the social and physical environment.

The Higher Education sector in the UK is also going through a period of major scrutiny and change. The shift from a government-funded Higher Education sector to one in which student fees are now the biggest share of university income has led to a competitive environment for students, fundamentally changing student expectations and questioning by politicians the role of universities and what they can and should contribute to Society. Next year universities will also be part of a new regulatory framework when the Higher Education Council for England is replaced by the Office for Students.

Despite these uncertainties, in my opinion there has never been a more important time for the RAU with its unusual position of having a long standing traditional role and being a new University. The RAC, as it was then, was founded in 1845 to educate those who had to face the challenge of feeding Britain at the time of the industrial revolution. The current challenges of global food security, climate change and Brexit provide a new opportunity for the RAU, as it now is, to establish a niche of knowledge creation and exchange working closely with industry and government.

The main challenge the RAU faces is one of financial sustainability. We are currently too small to be financially viable and need to increase our student numbers by at least 300 to 1500 over the next three years (for comparison Harper Adams University now have -5,000

“Now, as we seek to make the RAU a central part of the changes in world agri-food and land-based industries, we need to draw on your expertise in order to help us shape our path.”

students). This is necessary to generate the income necessary to invest in improving the student experience (delivery of new industry-relevant courses; better teaching facilities, new and more academic staff etc.) and maintenance of a large estate which has suffered from many years of underinvestment.

To grow we need to first develop a compelling vision of what we want to grow into, a realistic strategic plan of how to get there and a strong business plan of how to do so. During 2016-17 we have embarked on a process of developing our strategic priorities covering the next five years. Our current five year goal is for the RAU to become a leading, specialist HEI, focused on the land and food-supply sectors, partnering expertly with UK and overseas businesses, and with schools and colleges. Our shorter, longer and distance programmes will attract a diverse range of learners and the employability and enterprise that they deliver will be held in high regard. Our knowledge hub will help industry navigate change and uncertainty, helping to attract expert staff to RAU and delivering financial benefit.

As I mentioned in my letter last year, you, the alumni are critical to the process of change required to achieve this aim. You are in the unique position of having experienced an education at the RAU and taken that learning and knowledge out into a wide variety of industries. Now, as we seek to make the RAU a central part of the changes in world agri-food and land-based industries, we need to draw on that expertise in order to help us shape our path. Alumni input into and engagement with the new Corporate Plan, which we intend to launch in May-June 2018, will be critical so if you feel you have experience or opinions that could usefully be incorporated into the plan please contact me via the Alumni Office at [alumni@rau.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@rau.ac.uk).

I am most grateful for all the support you have given me during my first year at the RAU. I look forward to meeting many more of you this academic year as "re-connecting" the RAU with its alumni is one of my priorities as we embark on a period of exciting but necessary change. ■

**Professor Jo Price** Vice-Chancellor

# RAU pays tribute

The University was greatly saddened by the deaths of Professor W. Paul Davies and Professor John Alliston. We pay tribute to these two wonderful men; outstanding academics, loyal and esteemed colleagues, and good friends of all of us here at the University.

## Professor W. Paul Davies

Professor W. Paul Davies died on Thursday 27 October 2016.

Those of you who knew Paul will recall his unbridled passion for crop science. Paul started his agricultural career with a degree in Agricultural Botany from the University College of North Wales, before completing a Masters degree and subsequent PhD in plant pathology.

Paul joined the University as Lecturer and Director of Studies for Agriculture in 1986, after being appointed by the then RAC Principal, Vic Hughes. He had previously lectured in crop science and production at Writtle College and Harper Adams University.

Whilst Paul has had numerous roles at the RAU, eventually becoming Vice-Principal and then Deputy Vice-Chancellor, he always remained true to his roots in crop production. Paul published extensively in pathology, food safety, food security, wheat growth and management, and legumes, and supervised over 25 students who successfully completed their PhDs.

Paul achieved so much during his time here, but his accomplishments have been felt the world over. He became involved in numerous educational development programmes, especially in Malaysia, China, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Honduras, and was instrumental in setting up the African Fellowship Trust, of which he was Chairman.

Paul had many honours bestowed on him during his career, including a variety of Fellowships and awards. He was very proud to be honoured by the RAU as Emeritus Professor on his retirement in August 2016, and was named Outstanding Contribution to



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We will all remember Paul as the highly accomplished agriculturalist that he was, but perhaps most importantly, as a true family man, colleague and friend.”

Food and Farming in Gloucestershire at the Taste of Gloucestershire awards in October 2016.

During a memorial service held in the RAU chapel on 17 November, staff, students, and alumni came together to celebrate Paul's life and his love for the RAU. As we gave thanks to have known Paul, our thoughts and prayers went to his family and loved ones - in particular his wife Janice and his two children, Susie and Nick.

Dr Nicola Cannon, Principal Lecturer in Agronomy, said: "I have had the privilege of knowing Paul since 1993, when he was my PhD supervisor. Like many of Paul's former students, we remained in contact and I was welcomed back to the then Royal Agricultural College as crops lecturer in 2002. Throughout all this time I was struck by his loyalty, professionalism, and kindness."

We will all remember Paul as the highly accomplished agriculturalist that he was, but perhaps most importantly, as a true family man, colleague, and friend. ■

## Professor John Alliston

Professor John Alliston was tragically killed in an accident on 8 June 2017.

John was a lecturer in animal production at the Royal Agricultural College in the 1970s. He returned to the College a few years later to become the Dean of Agriculture, a role he held for 22 years until his retirement five years ago. John is well known by several generations of students, as a result of his long service at Cirencester.

John's death was a shock to our staff and the Cirencester alumni. RAU Vice-Chancellor, Professor Jo Price, captured the feeling of everyone at the University when she said: "John was part of the fabric of the RAU, a valued colleague and a loyal friend, full of enthusiasm and passion for life."

An outpouring of messages from across the globe, from alumni and friends of the University, confirmed John's profound influence on the leaders of agriculture, and the affection and esteem in which he was held.

On 21 July 2017, more than 500 of John's friends, family, and colleagues from the UK agriculture industry came together to celebrate his life, in a party held at the RAU. John's will was explicit that he wanted a party and not a memorial service. The mood was celebratory and many great memories of John were shared; of his disastrous record of car purchases, his distaste of administrative procedures, and of John the loving family man, and John the caring colleague and mentor. Lord Henry Plumb summed up the overwhelming feeling that, as Henry put it, "a man as 'young' as John had been taken from us when he still had so much to offer."

John's most significant achievements were perhaps the work he had done in the latter part of his career and into retirement, leading training and development programmes for professionals in the agricultural industry. These were tremendously popular, and highly regarded courses, in which John drew upon his vast network of colleagues to assemble programmes of inspiring speakers, visits to innovative businesses, and set challenging assignments. What made them really special, however, was John himself; his ability to get the best



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John shaped the shapers of modern British agriculture.”

out of the whole group, to help everyone relax even while being challenged by their peers, and his unwavering belief in everyone's ability. John always found the time for people, to help and to be a mentor, and for that he will always be remembered.

John was awarded the Farmers Weekly Lifetime Achievement Award in 2016, in recognition of his contribution to the industry. Farmers Weekly commented: "Professor John Alliston has shaped the shapers of modern British agriculture. Hundreds of brilliant young farmers and leaders have taken part in courses he has founded and run. They all emerged inspired and excited, going on to even greater achievements."

It is of course tremendously sad to have lost John so suddenly, but we will rejoice in the fact that we knew him, and that he influenced us so profoundly. ■

# Meet the new senior team

**The Senior Management Group is responsible for the implementation and management of the University strategy, and advising Governing Council. We would like to introduce the team, who will provide critical leadership for our wide-ranging, organisational change programme.**

## Julie Walkling

Julie Walkling joins the RAU as our Director of Operations from Anglia Ruskin University where she is currently Director of Student Services and is a member of the senior management team responsible for the Student Experience across the institution. With a track record of strong relationships with the Student Union, Julie has worked across a range of University services at a strategic level and describes herself as being passionate about student success. Her experience spans many areas of University life, but particularly student facing services and she started her early career as manager of the counselling service at the University of North London.

As Director of Operations, Julie will be leading the RAU's Registry and Admissions functions, Student Support, Careers, IT and Library Services, Student Conduct and Health and Safety. Her experience of championing Widening Participation will also be invaluable. Julie's anticipated start date is early January 2018. ■



## Professor Meriel Moore-Colyer R.Anim.Sci., BSc, BHSII, PhD

Professor Meriel Moore-Colyer is Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange at the RAU. With a BSc (Hons) in Agriculture and a PhD in Equine Nutrition, Meriel is well-placed to appreciate and develop the relationship between the land-based industries and is passionate about the translation of research to the end-user.

Throughout her career, Meriel has developed research links between



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commercial companies and academic institutions in the UK, Ireland, and the EU, and has helped launch products and procedures that have made a real impact on horse health and welfare. Meriel regularly lectures at international conferences and industry CPD days across the UK and Europe, and is fostering the development of translational research at the RAU. ■

## Professor David Hopkins BSc, PhD, DSc, CBiol, FIAgrE, FRSB

Professor David Hopkins is International Director at the RAU. He joined the University in October 2014 as Professor of Soil Science and Dean of the School of Agriculture, Food and Environment, returning to Gloucestershire after 30 years working and living mostly in Scotland. Before joining the RAU, he was Head of Life Sciences at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh and Director of Science at the Scottish Crop Research Institute. He has extensive experience of research in soils in both cold (polar) and hot deserts, and dryland agriculture specialising in soil biological processes. He is a past President of the British Society of Soil Science and has extensive teaching, examining, and research experience in the UK and abroad (Australia, New Zealand, and Southern Africa). ■



## Helen Wildman

Helen has joined the RAU as Strategic Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor (administration). Helen will support



a variety of mission critical projects, including Health and Safety.

Helen has held a number of senior posts within the Higher Education sector, most recently as Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of the West of England. Prior to joining the HE sector, Helen completed officer training at The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and professional training with the Royal Army Educational Corps. She spent 23 years in the Army and Ministry of Defence, in a variety of roles, reaching the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. ■

## Chris Dunkley

Chris Dunkley joined the team in October as Director of Business Development and Marketing.

Chris is joining us from Rothamsted, the oldest agricultural research institute in the world where as Enterprise Director he oversaw the significant capital investment into the campus, becoming CEO of the AgriTech innovation campus company, the Rothamsted Research and Enterprise, RoCRE. He also recently led, as Programme Director, the first ever Rothamsted Open Innovation Forum.

Prior to joining Rothamsted, Chris was Head of NPD and Marketing at Ipsos Retail Performance, bringing online analytical products to global markets. Chris was Founding Director of The Sparc Technology Network and Bright Sparc Awards for Technology Led businesses and has a background in technology research related business incubation, running a number of successful incubation and high growth programmes based out of the Open University and Cranfield University.

Chris will be responsible for forging strategic partnerships and developing business on behalf of the University and will manage our broad portfolio of commercial activities to drive income generation. Chris will also be responsible for managing the University's marketing function and for developing and promoting the RAU's brand and profile. ■



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## Susan O'Neill

Susan O'Neill joined the University at the start of this academic year as Director of Finance. Susan has been working as a Finance Director and as part of an executive team for the last 16 years in the housing sector, most recently at Merlin based just outside Bristol and before that at the CHS Group in Cambridge.

Reporting directly to the Vice-Chancellor, and part of the senior leadership team of the University, Susan will play a pivotal leadership role in shaping the financial future of RAU. ■



## Linda Pope

Linda joined the RAU in August as the new Director of Human Resources.

Linda brings over 25 years of extensive HR experience coming from the role of Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development at Aston University in Birmingham. Prior to that, Linda was HR Director at South West One and fulfilled various senior HR roles in both Avon and Somerset and Gloucestershire Police Forces.

Linda will create and deliver a people strategy that will be part of enabling the RAU to achieve its vision and mission. In particular, Linda will focus on leading change and organisational development; attracting, retaining, and developing the right talent and continually enhancing the employment environment here at the University.

Linda will create and deliver a people strategy that will be part of enabling the RAU to achieve its vision and mission. ■



# 10 years of enterprise and entrepreneurship

This year marks the 10-year anniversary of Enterprise at the University. The support started in 2006/7 with the Entrepreneurs society and their Grand Idea competition and since then it has transformed into an award winning, robust and supportive programme open to all students at the University.

Over the last decade, budding student entrepreneurs have benefitted from the bountiful knowledge and experience of their lecturers, and the strong industry links the University has carefully cultivated over the years. From student societies to organised workshops, business mentoring and awards, the RAU provides students with the opportunity to develop their business ideas and receive tailored support.

## 10th Annual Grand Idea Competition

This year, we celebrated our 10th annual Grand Idea competition with a bumper £10,000 prize pot. On 8 June, students pitched their ideas to an expert panel, before the winner was announced at the awards evening. Congratulations to the 2017 Grand Idea winners Luke Craven (BSc (Hons) International Business Management) and Adam Gray with their business BiJimini - offering eco-friendly cricket 'PowerFlour' which can be used in baking. To celebrate our 10-year anniversary, the winners, Luke Craven and Adam Gray received £10,000 for their business, Bijimini. The cash prize was kindly supported by DCS Group, Christine Cross Ltd, Amersi Foundation, Inclusive Ventures, and Harrison Clark Rickerbys. Also, well done to runner-up Anna Howlett (BSc (Hons) International Equine and Agricultural Business Management) who has received £500 to invest into her business, Anna Howlett Art.

The judges for Grand Idea 2017 included Denys Shortt OBE (Chair), CEO and Founder of DCS Group; Professor Jo Price, RAU Vice-Chancellor; Ian

“ I am delighted to have been involved for all 10 years of the Grand Idea. It is inspiring to meet the students and help them with their business plans and in many cases to launch their careers.

Denys Shortt OBE,  
CEO and Founder  
of DCS Group

”

Wilkinson, Managing Director of Cotswold Seeds; Christine Cross, global retail consultant; and Gillian Higgins, RAU alumna and founder of Horses Inside Out, who gave a speech at the awards evening. We will be inviting an RAU alumnus and previous Grand Idea competitor back to the RAU each year, to add an extra dimension to the panel.

Denys Shortt said: "I am delighted to have been involved for all 10 years of the Grand Idea. It is inspiring to meet the students and help them with their business plans and in many cases to launch their careers. It is a great competition and leads right into the RAU's Farm491 agritech innovation, which provides the physical space and support for these businesses to start their journey."

The RAU has continued to grow its enterprise offering, launching two more awards based on its nationally recognised enterprise model: 'Think it', 'Try it', 'Launch it', 'Grow it'.

The 'Try it' Award winner is Kara Minto-Simpson (MSc Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security) with her business TUB, the low maintenance pot based growing system for the home. Kara has already received £250 of First Steps Funding to test her business idea and prove the concept (a prerequisite to enter this award). The 'Try it' award prize pot of £500 will provide the next step and help her further her business idea.

The 'Think it' Award winner is Harry Devlin (BSc (Hons) International Business Management) and Harry Phipps (BSc (Hons) Bloodstock and Performance Horse Management) with their shoe business Devlin & Phipps, which aims to bring a splash of colour to the shoe industry. ■

## Meet the Grand Idea winners

Over the past 10 years, Grand Idea has received 91 business ideas and enabled many students to launch and grow a successful business. In 2015/6, nine student businesses were launched, thanks to the help and support of the RAU's dedicated Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Programme.

### Grand Idea Winner 2017 Bijimini

**Luke Craven and Adam Gray**  
We would like to extend our warmest congratulations to Luke Craven (BSc International Business Management) who, amongst very intense competition, has just won 1st prize and £10,000 in the RAU 10th Anniversary Grand Idea Awards Competition for his brilliant and innovative idea for a 'Powerflour' made from crickets.

It was when Luke was stuck in traffic behind a live food van that the importance of a sustainable protein source came to him. Since the global population will

have doubled by 2050 and the land available for crops severely depleted - the idea of a new source of food followed quickly behind. With his business partner, Adam Gray, Luke set up Bijimini, which produces a premixed cricket flour which can be used in baking to add protein - and it was with his 'cricket brownies' that they were able to wow the judges of the Grand Idea Competition.

Cricket flour is a cost and energy efficient alternative to traditional protein sources and Luke is proud that Bijimini is the first company in the UK making a finished cricket flour product -

which is hard to distinguish from any other flour you would use in baking. They are also exploring the health food market as cricket protein has proven medical benefits.

Luke says the support he received on the Enterprise Programme was "simply incredible" and since he has only just completed his first year he knows that he will be able to benefit from the ongoing support the programme can offer him. ■

Website [www.bijimini.co.uk](http://www.bijimini.co.uk)  
Twitter [BiJiminiHQ](https://twitter.com/BiJiminiHQ)  
Facebook [BiJimini](https://www.facebook.com/BiJimini)



## Grand Idea Runner Up 2017

Anna Howlett Artwork

### Anna Howlett

Anna Howlett, whose striking drawing adorns the front cover of this magazine, was runner-up in this year's 10th Anniversary Grand Idea Awards, for her entrepreneurial proposal for a wildlife, equestrian and sporting artwork business.

Anna has been surrounded by animals her whole life and has a horse and seven dogs. She says that her mother has a whole drawer full of "smiley-faced" horses that she drew before she could even walk. Originally set upon becoming a vet, her sheer love of horses prompted Anna to study International Equine and Agricultural Business Management at the RAU. Her passion for art however, combined with the entrepreneurial know-how she obtained on the RAU Enterprise Programme, finally convinced her to pursue a career as an artist.

She says: "The Enterprise Programme has been fantastic and



has given me a superb idea of what to expect in business." She aims for a "high amount of realism" and says that her art is "quite intuitive. I want to be able to bring the rural landscape inside the homes of people who appreciate it."

Remarkably, Anna has never had any formal training and is completely self-taught. She uses permanent, light-fast coloured pencils on archival paper and

is currently taking bookings for commissions of pets and wildlife in time for Christmas. Her work helps to support the Rare Breeds Survival Trust and other charities. ■

Website [www.annahowlettartwork.co.uk](http://www.annahowlettartwork.co.uk)

Facebook [www.facebook.com/annahowlettartwork](http://www.facebook.com/annahowlettartwork)

Instagram [@annahowlettartwork](https://www.instagram.com/annahowlettartwork)

Twitter [@annahowlettart](https://twitter.com/annahowlettart)

## Previous Grand Idea winners

### Grand Idea Winner 2015

The Dartmoor Shepherd

#### Lewis Steer

Lewis studied Rural Land Management and International Business Management at the RAU, winning the Grand Idea Competition in 2015 in his second year with his business, Lily Warne Wool. Since then, the story of his success just keeps on evolving! In his third year he was a Student Entrepreneur in Residence and despite not coming from a farming background, then launched an award-winning, second business, The Dartmoor Shepherd - growing a flock of Dartmoor sheep from 60 to almost 400 in little more than a year. These source his gourmet lamb business which supplies local restaurants (and an online meat-box scheme) as well as

quality bespoke sheepskins which are retailed online, at shows and into interior design outlets.

Lewis is one of the last shepherds in the country to farm all three of Dartmoor's native breed long wool sheep - "I saw that the ancient breeds produce two things the modern sheep industry cannot - amazing tasting lamb and sheepskins like no other in the world."

"I am still in contact with the very valuable mentors I worked with as a student on the Enterprise Programme, particularly the legal team. I could not have gone on this incredible journey without them."

Lewis won the Young Agricultural Entrepreneur of the Year in 2016 and has been awarded a Land Rover bursary. His says his greatest highlight was being invited to meet HRH

The Prince of Wales at Clarence House and putting "farmer" under the occupation question on some paperwork for the first time - a dream come true! ■

Website [www.thedartmoorshepherd.co.uk](http://www.thedartmoorshepherd.co.uk)

Twitter [@DartmoorShepherd](https://twitter.com/DartmoorShepherd)

DartmoorShep

Facebook [@thedartmoorshepherd](https://www.facebook.com/thedartmoorshepherd)

Instagram [dartmoorshepherd](https://www.instagram.com/dartmoorshepherd)



## Grand Idea Runner Up 2014

Coppernose

### Liam Derry

Liam studied Agricultural Management at the RAU, with a view to pursuing a career in animal conservation. However, family connections with the US, coupled with the support of "the brilliant RAU Enterprise Programme" helped him to develop a lifelong dream of creating his own business. In February 2014 he had the idea of developing an organic beef jerky product, using only 100% grass fed, ethically sourced British silverside beef. "The US is the snack nation of the world and I wanted to try and reproduce that in the UK."

Liam was runner-up in the RAU Grand Idea Competition in his final year (2014) and supported by

inspirational entrepreneurs such as Levi Roots, created Coppernose which started trading whilst Liam was still studying at the RAU.

Due to the immediate success of Coppernose, he and his brother Daniel decided to join forces and with the help of the RAU were soon trading at some of the most prestigious food festivals in the UK. Flavours now include 'Smoky', 'Garlic and Chilli', 'Teriyaki', and 'Spicy'. They sold out their entire stock in one day at the Cheltenham Food and Drink Festival.

In 2016 Coppernose was awarded Virgin Startup Company status and their products have even been used on a Bear Grylls Survival Race. Liam says "Being an entrepreneur is addictive. I'm really proud of Coppernose and

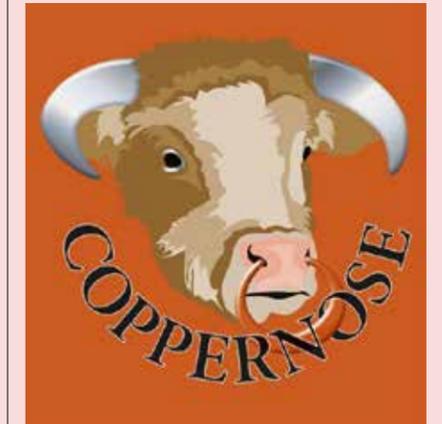
want to see how far it can go." ■

Website [www.coppernose.com](http://www.coppernose.com)

Instagram [coppernose\\_cotswolds\\_jerky](https://www.instagram.com/coppernose_cotswolds_jerky)

Twitter [coppernosejerky](https://twitter.com/coppernosejerky)

Facebook [www.facebook.com/coppernose](http://www.facebook.com/coppernose)



## Grand Idea Runner Up 2013

Beaufort & Blake

### Sam Pullin and Harry Lovell

Since graduating from the RAU, Beaufort & Blake has gone from strength to strength. With its first premises based above a Cirencester pub, the business now operates from Wandsworth, London where it houses its distribution and offices. The brand has developed from its

## BEAUFORT & BLAKE LONDON

original niche idea of reviving the patterned back dress shirt, inspired by the 2012 best of British May Ball, to a full lifestyle clothing brand with a strong focus on casual shirts. The business continues to expand its range, launching a line of swimwear

this summer and intends to extend its shirting knowledge into a range of womenswear for the autumn / winter season. ■

Website [www.beaufortandblake.com](http://www.beaufortandblake.com)

## Grand Idea Runner Up 2016

Horse Logic

### Sharon Smith

Sharon Smith was runner-up in the Grand Idea Competition in 2016. She set up Horse Logic whilst studying at the RAU.

Her passion for horses was evident from the age of three but she was discouraged from pursuing her dream due to the logistics of living in a town. She qualified as a Civil Engineer, spent more than twenty years working for Thames Water and qualified as a trainer - transferrable skills that she was later able to bring to her own business.

Only in her twenties did she buy a horse, return to riding school, qualify as an Instructor for the

British Horse Society and become an Equine Behavioural Consultant. Her own horse became the catalyst for her own subsequent business idea when she started to notice his own separation anxiety and associated behaviours.

She decided to enrol on the MSc in Applied Equine Science at the RAU and became involved with the Enterprise Programme. She says: "When you come to something late, you tend to over-compensate! For me it was all about confidence and ideas and the judges on the Grand Idea Competition gave me those in spades when they suggested looking at nutrition analysis and placing the evaluation monitor on a horse's head. It was the first



time I believed that I'd really got something. The Enterprise Programme was absolutely brilliant."

Sharon is currently evaluating prototypes of her unique electronic equine behaviour definition tool, 'Define', and launched her operation.com pasture optimisation and nutrition website at Badminton. ■

Website [www.horselogic.co.uk](http://www.horselogic.co.uk)  
[www.open-ration.co.uk](http://www.open-ration.co.uk)

## RAU is student recommended

Deciding where to study can be a difficult task. There are so many good universities to choose from, how can you be sure you're making an informed decision? That's where the **Whatuni Student Choice Awards** come in. Voted for by students, for students, the awards rank universities

based on thousands of student reviews. The RAU was honoured to be nominated for four awards in 2017: University of the Year, Job Prospects, Accommodation, and Giving Back. Thank you to all of our students who posted a Whatuni review of the RAU, and helped us to receive national recognition. ■



## Fundraising and volunteering

**Our students came together for RAG (Raise and Give) Week 2017, 5-12 February, and raised more than £20,000 for three very worthwhile causes; Mind, The Farming Community Network, and The High Sheriffs' Fund.**

The RAG team and RAU Students' Union organised a packed schedule of events and activities throughout the week: from the RAG rally, tractor pull, and team sports, to the board games marathon, ramble, and auction, there was something for everyone to get involved in. Lady Bathurst, the High Sheriff of Gloucestershire, attended events throughout the week and could be seen cheering the students on during the gruelling tractor pull. Well done to the RAG team for organising such a fantastic week of fundraising, and thank you to all of the students who took part.

The Student Union are really excited about the year ahead. With a new team in place led by

Chairman, Jack Walton this year promises to be a great year for the Students' Union with lots of different activities planned throughout the coming weeks and months to include Christmas and May Balls.

One of the highlights next year is RAG (Raise and Give) which will see the student and staff body raise thousands of pounds for chosen charities, Great Western Air Ambulance, Farming for City Children, Scrubditch Farm and Holly Tree Foundation.

A new Student Welfare Officer has also joined the team this academic year to support the student body during their time at Cirencester - all adding to an improved student experience. ■

## Student-led campus market

The RAU has set up a student-led campus market showcasing local suppliers, sustainable street food, and student and alumni businesses, thanks to funding from the NUS Student Eats project. The first market was held on 25 May 2017, and they will continue to be held termly. The Soil Association provided students with training on how to run a market, and those involved gained practical experience; from event organisation to working with producers to creating a marketing plan.

Robyn Hogg (FdSc Business and Enterprise) and Michael Brown (FdSc Agriculture and Farm Management) have been instrumental in getting the project up and running. They said: "We're really excited to be leading on the Campus Market project as it's a unique opportunity to practically learn about event management and marketing. It will be great for students and staff to sample products from local producers, as well as student and alumni businesses."

If you are interested in having a trade stand at any of our future markets, please email [sustainability@rau.ac.uk](mailto:sustainability@rau.ac.uk) ■

## Student achievements

### World class shooting

Jack Fairclough (BSc (Hons) Real Estate) became the United Kingdom Olympic Skeet under 21 Champion on 10 April 2017, when he won the gold medal and the title at the competition held at the National Clay Centre in Bisley, Surrey. He also won the silver medal in the senior category. In the latest publication of the Great Britain Olympic Skeet rankings, Jack is British number one in the under 21 category, and is ranked second overall in the entire country.

Jack said: "I represented Great Britain at the World Cup in Mexico. I was the second youngest competitor in the men's Olympic skeet, and narrowly missed the final by two clays. It was a great experience and I'm looking forward to representing Great Britain at the European Championships in Baku, Azerbaijan in the summer." ■



### From polo to pounding the streets

Oliver Pritchard (FdSc Agriculture and Farm Management) played for Ireland in the SUPA Tri-nations on 18 March. Oliver said: "I had a fantastic weekend, the atmosphere was amazing. We beat Scotland but narrowly lost to England, who scored in the last minute. Second place is still great. The tournament gave me the opportunity play polo with some incredible people."

Oliver ran the New York Marathon on 6 November 2016, to raise money for The Elizabeth Foundation. Oliver raised £415 for the Foundation; the preschool nursery he attended. ■

“ I represented Great Britain at the World Cup in Mexico where I was the second youngest competitor there in the men's Olympic Skeet. ”



### NFU Bursary awarded

Sebastian Murray (left) and Nicholas Moss (right), postgraduate MBA Advanced Farm Management students, have received the Centenary Award from the NFU Mutual Charitable Trust. The judging panel looked for applicants who were not only excellent academic performers, but were also passionate about making a difference to agriculture. Nicholas and Sebastian were two of only three students from across the UK to have been chosen for the award in 2016. ■

# Teaching and learning at the RAU



The Royal Agricultural University is celebrating in having been awarded Silver rating in the UK's national Teaching Excellence Framework.

The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) was introduced recently by the Government in the Higher Education and Research Act (2017) to promote the importance of undergraduate teaching. Traditionally, research has been the only performance indicator for higher education institutes. It has long been the case that research intensive universities have topped the UK universities ratings, but the TEF provides a welcome focus on university teaching and student outcomes. The TEF recognises three grades; gold, silver, and bronze, with a 'provisional' grading for institutions without sufficient data. Silver rating places the RAU in a position alongside many, and better than some very prestigious UK universities much larger than the RAU.

Speaking about the TEF and how education at the RAU is changing, RAU Vice-Chancellor Professor Jo Price said: "I am delighted that the Royal Agricultural University has been granted this Silver Award; it is testimony to the hard work of our students and staff, working together to ensure excellent outcomes and ultimately, employment levels that are significantly above the sector average. Our aim must



be to continue to work together towards achieving the Gold Award in future TEF assessments. Ensuring that teaching at the RAU is of the highest quality,

and that all our students have an outstanding experience, will remain a key priority for the University as we develop our new strategy." ■

## Baa-riliant lambing weekend

The University is pleased to report that our second annual lambing weekend (11 - 12 March) was an overwhelming success. We welcomed more than 1,000 people to our Harnhill Manor Farm, and raised £1,200 for Macmillan Cancer Support. ■



# Students team up with the High Sheriff to put fresh produce on the menu

Students from the Royal Agricultural University have joined forces with the High Sheriff of Gloucestershire to put home grown vegetables on the tables of female prisoners in the county.

With pitchforks, trowels, and spades at the ready, students have been allocated a plot of land at HMP Eastwood Park, near Wotton-Under-Edge, to create an allotment and teach the inmates how to grow their own produce.

Lady Bathurst said: 'I've spent a great deal of time at Eastwood Park during my year as High Sheriff, working on various projects. I've discovered the food budget per prisoner is less than £2 a day for three meals, and this means the ladies diets are limited and tend to contain a lot of carbohydrates. Discussing this with the prisoners, they've told me they would love to be able to help themselves by growing their own fruit and vegetables. The nutrition would help them gain a better outlook on life, teach them more about home grown foods, and hopefully they'll take that knowledge with them into the future.'

'It is wonderful that the RAU students want to support the High



“  
The food budget per prisoner is less than £2 per day.  
”

Sheriff Fund in a practical way, and I'm so grateful to the students for getting involved in this community project with such energy, enthusiasm and a willingness to help with such an important project.'

Students are ready to start building the raised beds, so they can begin planting in the New Year. All of the resources have been kindly donated by Dobbies in Cirencester.

### Industry recognised prizes

Our real estate and rural land management courses utilise case study based learning, allowing our students to gain real life experience of situations encountered by chartered surveyors in practice. This means that our students are industry ready when applying for graduate careers.

Congratulations to:

**Angus Hamilton** and **Hannah Darpoe** (MSc Rural Estate Management) for winning the Savills and Saffery Champness estate and tax planning coursework prize.

**Tom Hayes** (BSc (Hons) Rural Land Management) for being awarded first place in the Dalcour Maclaren prize for the

Compulsory Purchase module. Well done to **Harry Histed** and **Fergus Berger** who came joint second place.

**Molly Williams** (BSc (Hons) Real Estate) for winning the Fox Grant prize for the best marketing report. Molly was awarded a week of work experience and a bottle of champagne. ■





## May Ball

May Ball 2017 was a great success. The David Bowie themed party was attended by over 1,300 students and friends, who enjoyed a beautiful sunny evening and partied into the early hours of the

morning. Musical performances by California Screaming, Utah Saints, and our very own DJ STB, and a merry go round, face painting, and a photo booth, made for a fantastic fun-filled evening. ■



## Ambassador for equine

Philippa Glanville, BSc (Hons) Rural Land Management student, has been appointed as a student ambassador for Exeter Racecourse. Philippa explains:

"I applied for the position because, as an amateur jockey, I'm already involved in the racing industry and wanted to experience this as a potential career. Exeter is my local national hunt track, so it's a fantastic opportunity to see behind the scenes whilst developing contacts for the future. During my time at Exeter Racecourse I will be taking part in a number of placement days, ranging from Cheltenham Racecourse to the Racenews office in London. As a second year, it's time to start thinking about graduation, and beyond." ■



## Students in the stocks

The RAU Students' Union rolled up their sleeves and had great fun manning the stocks at Cirencester's first modern day Fleece Fair on May Day (1 May 2017). Students happily obliged as members of the public hurled wet sponges at them, and volunteered to take families on a hare spotting tractor tour. The Fleece Fair was hosted by Cirencester Town Council, in partnership with Abbey 900, to celebrate the history of the wool trade in the newly regenerated Market Place. We're pleased to hear that it will become an annual event! ■

## Taking on the Cereals Challenge

Well done Team RAU for placing third in the Hutchinsons and Velcourt Cereals Challenge 2017. Emma Cox, Hannah Clarke, Flora Georgie, and Eilish Currie, BSc (Hons) Agriculture students, entered the competition, which involved growing a crop of spring feed barley and justifying input decisions. The winner was announced at Cereals on 14 June 2017.

The team were up against stiff competition from Askham Bryan College, Nottingham Trent University, Writtle University College, Hartpury College, Harper Adams University, and Riseholme College, and should be very pleased with the result. ■



## New SU minibus

In November 2016, the Development Office ran a telethon to raise money to help support student life at the RAU. Thanks to the generosity of our alumni, we're pleased to announce that we have raised enough money to buy a minibus for the Students' Union. This will be used to help run night time services to keep students safe, to help our sports team get to away fixtures, and to run weekend trips such as visits to cultural attractions. ■



## RAU films

Have you seen our films yet? Covering each of the subject areas on offer here at the RAU, they have been designed to engage with prospective students, and show them what it's like to study at the Royal Agricultural University. Starring some of our very enthusiastic and eloquent students, please do watch and share our videos!

Visit [www.rau.ac.uk/films](http://www.rau.ac.uk/films) ■



## Equine study trip to Europe

**Peter Morris, Equine Development Consultant and Jo Charles, Senior Equine Lecturer together with 26 students from the third year of the International Equine and Agricultural Business Management course have just returned from a two-week study trip to Germany and France.**

Peter says: "There is no doubt that the study trip never fails to amaze you. The trip consisted of visits to the best of the German and French industries accompanied by some incredibly informative presentations. The aim is to see the countries' respective equine industries and to identify and understand their strengths. There is no doubt that visiting a diverse range of equine-related businesses connected with racing and sports horses gives the students a chance to see what they learn in-class in action but also to consider possible careers.

The trip took the group from the headquarters of German Racing in Koln to the French Stud, Haras Du Bonneval owned by HH the Aga Khan. Near Munster we saw an example of free-stabling where the horses with the use of transponders are able to dictate when they eat as well as control their access to pastures. Nothing could have prepared us for the sight of the feral horses belonging to Hertzog Van Croy whose son has just completed the postgraduate rural land management course



at the RAU. Students were able to observe at close hand the herd of 400 Dülmen ponies, the only native pony breed in Germany. The ponies have been living in a natural environment for centuries

on Herr Von Croy's estate. Herr Van Croy spoke with extensive knowledge and passion about the legacy his family has preserved by allowing the herd to populate their land.

Before the group returned home they had the opportunity to meet with RAU alumnus, Simon Grieves who spoke to the students before competing on the cross-country day at Le Lion D'Angers. Simon talked about his preparation for the competition and his career. Certainly, everyone involved will have memories of the trip that will stay with them forever." ■

# Your green RAU

You may have noticed that the RAU has achieved a number of environmental accolades in recent years; The Guardian University Award for Sustainability 2016, two Green Gown Awards 2016, top university for carbon reduction in relation to income, and ranked 16th in the People and Planet University League. But what does this mean for our students?

We take a look at how our students have become involved with, and passionate about, sustainability over the past year.

### Top 10 for Carbon Reduction

In October 2017, the RAU received a Brite Green Top 10 University Carbon Reduction Award for its efforts in reducing carbon emissions. The University Carbon Report shows universities in England have achieved their best year-on-year reduction in carbon emissions to date.

### Environmental Society

The RAU EnviroSoc has been holding a range of events, from wildflower planting to socials and film nights, for students to get involved in. The society's collaboration with Cirencester and District Beekeepers has proved particularly popular, with students keen to try their hand at beekeeping.

Colin Javens (MSc Rural Tourism Management) said: "It's been great to explore my interest in beekeeping through the training with Cirencester and District Beekeepers. I'm looking forward to working with the university to site a natural beehive on campus this summer."

### Green Impact

RAU staff have been taking part in the NUS Green Impact scheme and committing to make simple changes to help the environment. Students project assistants signed up to support the departments taking part, and gained valuable leadership and communication skills. They also

“Students are able to use the campus as a ‘living lab’, and complete their dissertation based on the University’s ongoing environmental management work.”

had the opportunity to take part in environmental auditor training; a fantastic skill to add to the CV.

Emma Martin (BSc (Hons) International Business Management) said: "I really enjoyed taking part in Green Impact. It gave me the opportunity to be creative, make positive changes, and develop my leadership skills. I would like to work in a conservation organisation when I graduate, and the skills I have gained will be invaluable."

The RAU was awarded one gold, two silver, four bronze, and six special awards in the NUS Green Impact scheme 2017, with 70 students and members of staff getting involved.

### Environmental dissertations

Students are able to use the campus as a 'living lab', and complete their dissertation based on the University's ongoing environmental management work. Students can work with the sustainability team on a range of projects, including; biodiversity on campus, the effectiveness of sustainability reporting for businesses, and environmental behaviours.

Aislyn Firth (BSc (Hons) Rural Land Management) conducted her dissertation on the recycling behaviours of students in RAU halls of residence, using information and data from the sustainability team. Aislyn said: "It's been really exciting to use a project on-campus as the basis to my dissertation. I'm able to apply my interests to a real-life problem, which will help my career after university." ■

# RAU on tour

Students at the Royal Agricultural University have the opportunity to go on a wide range of trips and visits, to enrich their experience and put the lessons they've learnt into practice. Here are just a few study trips our students have enjoyed over the past 12 months.



Above: Kentucky study trip 2017.  
Main: Bulgaria study trip, February 2017. Inset Right: Namibia Ecology Tour 2017.

## Cantering to Kentucky

In April 2017, BSc (Hons) International Equine and Agricultural Business Management students went on a study tour to Kentucky. They took part in lectures on the USA horse industry at the University of Louisville, watched a demo, visited Morgan Horse Show Centre, Keenland auction, and Kentucky Horse Park Secretariat Centre, spent a morning at Churchill Downs Racecourse, and explored a 19th century mansion in Kentuckiana. Students also visited the KESMARC equine rehabilitation centre.

## Discovering Namibia

BSc (Hons) Countryside Management (top-up) students have been on an ecology study tour to Namibia (April 2017). Students worked alongside international researchers at the prestigious Gobabeb Research, and the Training Centre in the Namib desert, to conduct research projects on

mammals, invertebrates, birds, bats, vegetation-soil-livestock interactions, desert 'fairy circles', and the Welwitschia mirabilis plant. Students also learned about conservation issues with the Namibia Nature Foundation, the Erindi Game Reserve, and the National Botanic Garden.

## Bulgaria study trip

At the end of February, a group of 32 students on the Entrepreneur in Action module went on a four day study tour to Bulgaria. The students visited three leading wineries; Magura, Damianitza, and Neragora, an organic export orientated fruit producing company called MKD Ltd, and a bio-farm called Livadi. The students learned first-hand how entrepreneurship is shaping Bulgarian agriculture, met with leading entrepreneurs, and visited the ancient Magura caves. Following the trip, the students prepared group presentations for their module assessment.

“ Students worked alongside international researchers and learned about conservation issues. ”



## Orkney study trip

Foundation Degree Environmental Conservation and Heritage Management students spent a week in Orkney (March 2017) studying the rich history of the islands, from neolithic burial chambers and stones circles, through to viking settlements, and iron-age brochs, and all the way through to naval base and defences of the twentieth century. Students gained a deep understanding of the changes over time, as well as the modern day challenges of conserving and managing of these sites. ■



# Congratulations class of 2017

The RAU celebrated student success at three graduation ceremonies in Cirencester Parish Church on 20 July 2017.

Students were awarded degrees and diplomas from the RAU in three services: Ceremony for Real Estate, Rural Land Management, and Environment; Ceremony for Business and Entrepreneurship, Equine Management and Science, and Food Supply and Management; and Ceremony for Agriculture; Each year, the University awards Honorary Fellowships to people who have made significant contributions to agriculture and the related land-based industries. In 2017, Fellowships were awarded to: Mike Tucker, Farmer / Equestrian Commentator and Consultant; and

Minister Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade. Christine Cross, PLC and private company director, was also awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the RAU in absentia.

During the ceremony, two special awards were presented to staff from the Royal Agricultural University. The James Buckman Presentation Cup was awarded to Mike Draper, Lecturer in Crop Production Technology and Management, in recognition of excellence in education. The Professor W Paul Davies Award was presented to Sarah Tennant-Bell for developing student potential. ■



“ As an RAU graduate you have much to offer – knowledge about your subject, readiness to contribute to and enjoy the world of work, and an ability to be a valuable part of society. ”





## Prize winners evening

On 19 July, the University held a special prize winners' awards evening to celebrate outstanding student achievement. The Vice-Chancellor Professor Jo Price presented students with awards and prizes, to thundering applause and cheers from friends and family. A further prize winners' award evening was held on 26 October, to celebrate the success of first and second year students.

Thank you for those who have sponsored prizes for their incredibly generous support. ■



# RAU in the media



## Any Questions?

The University was delighted to host an episode of BBC Radio 4's *Any Questions* on 7 April, chaired by RAU alumnus Jonathan Dimbleby. Live on national radio, the audience fired their questions to the political panel: Margot James, Minister for Small Business; Barry Gardiner, Shadow International Trade Secretary; Leanne Wood, Leader of Plaid Cymru; and Jonathan Arnott, Chairman of UKIP.

Jonathan Dimbleby, who graduated from the University in 1965, delighted the audience with an anecdote: it was during his time at the RAU that he wrote his first ever article, and he was thrilled to win the student journalism competition - until he discovered that he was the only one to enter!

The RAU also hosted an episode

“ Jonathan Dimbleby, who graduated from the University in 1965, delighted the packed audience with an anecdote about writing his first ever article whilst studying at the RAU.

”

of BBC Radio 4's *Kitchen Cabinet* on 25 January, and *Gardeners' Question Time* on 20 April. ■

## RAU in *The Times*

Our Vice-Chancellor Professor Jo Price featured in *The Saturday Times* earlier this month (2 Sept), and on BBC Radio Gloucestershire (11 Sept). The interviews highlighted the importance of encouraging bright young people from all backgrounds to consider a career in agriculture, food, and the related land-based sector. She spoke of our commitment to widening participation and enabling access to higher education for all and noted the positive shift we're beginning to see in this area. ■



## Countryfile celebrates the Women's Land Army

Female agriculture students featured in a special episode of BBC *Countryfile* in May 2017, celebrating the Women's Land Army and exploring the role of women in modern farming. Mila Gordon-Creed, Florence Giles, Philippa Evans, Christina Rose, and Alexandra Dunn all starred in the episode, which focused on the role of women in farming; both past and future. They met with Elizabeth Henderson from Chipping Norton, who joined the WLA during World War Two and has been farming ever since, and spoke about the advances in agriculture over the past half a century - focusing on mechanical weeding versus traditional hoeing and drone technology - and the bright opportunities ahead. ■



“ They met with Elizabeth Henderson from Chipping Norton, who joined the WLA during World War Two and has been farming ever since.

”

## BBC Farming Today brought to you from the RAU

BBC Radio Four's *Farming Today* have recorded several episodes with staff and students of the RAU over the past 12 months. Sybil Ruscoe visited the University in October 2016 to find out about crop science research in the UK. She visited again in March 2017, to speak to agriculture students to discuss their aspirations during *Careers Week* on *Farming Today*. ■



## Farm491 agritech hub

We are pleased to offer Farm491, our agritech business incubator, which provides a range of facilities to support businesses and promote technology within this rapidly developing sector. Farm491 enables agritech innovators to grow their business in a flexible, modern, and affordable working environment. Farm491 members benefit from access to expert advisers, mentors, and a strong network of industry contacts, including other Farm491 members.

Farm491 has been making excellent progress over the last 12 months. We are already supporting

a diverse range of agritech businesses; from land mapping, meat certification, and grain trading, to drone technology, mobile apps, and digital machinery trading. With further investment secured, we now enter the next stage of growth. Farm491 will become a thought leader for agribusiness and look to support a host of people and innovations within the sector.

Our Farm491 project was initially allocated £2.9million of funding from the Gloucestershire

Growth Deal, and in 2017 a further £550,000 of EU funds. Currently based in the Enterprise Centre on campus, Farm491 will move into the Cirencester Growth Hub at the RAU in 2018, providing a one-stop shop for start-up and developing businesses.

The Farm491 team will be heading to The Farm Business Innovation at the NEC (8 - 9 November) and

Croptec (29 - 30 November) later this year - do come and say hello if you're passing! ■



## Workshop launch

On Friday 30 June 2017, we were delighted to open five workshops at Harnhill Manor Farm, alongside our existing Rural Innovation Centre. The workshops were officially opened by TV Presenter and local rare breeds farmer, Adam Henson. They will provide developing agritech organisations

and Farm491 members with vital space to research, test, and refine their ideas for the benefit of the wider agricultural and food production industries. Farm491 member Multibox, the UK's first insect farm run by James Wright (Graduate Diploma in Agriculture), has already moved in. ■



## New Cirencester Growth Hub

The University is pleased to have secured £1.25 million funding from the GFirst LEP (Gloucestershire's Local Enterprise Partnership) for the new Cirencester Growth Hub based on campus at the RAU. The Growth Hub will

strengthen the Gloucestershire economy by providing personalised support to businesses of all types and sizes within the region, to accelerate their growth and realise their full potential. It will build on the RAU's existing areas

of expertise by supporting businesses working in agri-technology or based in rural environments. Work is now underway, and the Cirencester Growth Hub is due for completion in 2018. ■

## Calf rearing research

In January 2017, the RAU embarked on a new venture in partnership with Buitelaar Production Ltd and Synergy Farm Health Vets, rearing dairy bull calves. The University has established a trial unit at Harnhill Manor Farm which will focus specifically on the calf rearing stage, viewed as the most critical part of the dairy beef supply chain.

The aim is to develop a blueprint which: optimises the critical function of milk feeding to solids; examines physiology, growth, and development; and produces a body of information for calf rearers.

This project is focusing on nutrition, growth, health management, and a reduction of antibiotics, by measuring; weight gain, feed conversion, the cost of gain, medicines used, and the health of the calf. It is envisaged that this will enable better efficiency, lower the cost of production, and attract more young people into the industry. Additionally, it will streamline production and enable a more consistent product.

The RAU received the first batch of 50 dairy bull calves



in January. Following 12 weeks of rearing, the calves were moved from Harnhill Farm to a Buitelaar finishing unit (7 April 2017). The calves were on the unit for a total of 79 days, five days short of the standard rearing period in the UK, and

reached their average rearing weight of 140kg on 31 March. The RAU reared another batch and are on the fourth week of the third batch of 80 and are doing well. The last two batches are under research trial looking to reduce antibiotic usage. ■

## The rolling Cotswold Hills

The Royal Agricultural University is delighted to launch its very own, award-winning white wine, Cotswold Hills Dry White 2016, just in time for Christmas!

Cotswold Hills has already received a Bronze Award in the prestigious International Wine & Spirit Competition 2017, which receives entries from over 80 countries and is judged by a panel of wine experts.

Master of Wine Susan McCraith, who has chaired the UK Wine Competition and is a former RAU lecturer, has been instrumental in managing the RAU wine project. Susan commented:

"I'm so pleased with our wine and the fact that it has won a prestigious award in our first vintage. It is dry, youthful, and zesty at this stage, with peachy fruit and a hint of blossom and tropical notes. It has a lovely balance of acidity, and will be perfect for Christmas. I'm proud of what the team has achieved. Tom Overbury, RAU Farms Director, and Tony Norris have worked hard to bring this project to fruition."

The RAU took over the tenancy of the 2.6 hectare vineyard just outside Cirencester, near Down Ampney, in spring 2016. Planted in 2010 on a south facing slope near Harnhill Manor Farm, the large plot encompasses 40 rows of vines, most of which are the Ortega grape variety with a couple of rows each of Seyval Blanc, Bacchus, and Chardonnay. This mix is perfect to make a still dry white wine.

In October 2016, the ripe grapes were handpicked by students and transported to the winery near Shepton Mallet, where they were crushed and vinified by RAU alumnus Steve Brooksbank. Over the winter, the wine was clarified, fined, and filtered, prior to being bottled on 27 March 2017.

Students involved in the Enterprise Programme helped to develop the marketing strategy for the wine, and the label design. The RAU's main building is depicted in a traditional design that reflects the values of the student body.

The new vineyard gives students



**Our Cotswold Hills Dry White 2016 received a Bronze Award at the International Wine and Spirit Competition 2017.**



on the food and business courses first-hand experience of the wine production process; from grape to bottle. They are able to gain an insight into the finances, marketing, quality assurance, and general management of wine production. In addition, students studying environmental, agricultural, and land management degrees will be able to utilise the vineyard and its surroundings to support their studies. ■

**We have 3,000 bottles of Cotswold Hills dry white wine (12% alcohol) available for £13.95 a bottle. Visit [shop.rac.ac.uk](http://shop.rac.ac.uk) to get yours.**

### Did you know?

*Our wine MBA students did a site visit and assignment on the potential of this field a few years before the grapes were planted.*

## School Farms Network Education Alliance Conference

**'Bright young people are the future of the agriculture and food production industries'. That was the take home message at the inaugural School Farms Network Education Alliance Conference (SFNEA) held at the Royal Agricultural University, 30 June - 1 July 2017.**

The SFNEA is a partnership between the Royal Agricultural University, Applied Inspiration, and the School Farms Network, with the support of the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens.

Attended by 100 teachers, students, and education practitioners from across the UK, the SFNEA Conference was a golden opportunity for those passionate about school-based farm learning and developing pathways to higher education to come together and share knowledge and expertise.

The keynote speech was delivered by Adam Henson, TV presenter and Director of Cotswold Farm Park. Adam declared that

'bright young people are the future of the agri-food and land-based sector', and highlighted that we need to 'get young people excited about the vast career opportunities available to them.' ■



## Raising aspirations

Over the past few years, the RAU has been working hard to increase its provision of widening participation activities. These activities are aimed at students who may not have had family experience of Higher Education, and come from areas where fewer than expected young people go on to university. The RAU works

with students as young as 12 to raise their aspirations, awareness, achievement, access, and affordability of Higher Education (the 5A's). As a result, we have delivered 200 activities in more than 40 partner schools across the country, engaging with 2,000+ students.

This work we do is targeted, to

make sure that those that need the help the most get it. We work with the same students each year, to help break down any barriers to enable them to progress in their studies. Activities include visits to schools, taster days at the University, meet and greet with student ambassadors, and mentoring programmes. ■

## SFNEA awards

On Friday evening, we held the inaugural SFNEA Gala Awards Dinner to celebrate the very best of school farms. The awards were presented to the winners and runners-up by Adam Henson. Well done to Brockhill Park Performing Arts College for winning Best School Farm of the Year 2017.

RAU Vice-Chancellor Professor Jo Price said: "Congratulations to all of the winners, runners-up, and finalists. The standard across all categories was incredibly high. We are so impressed by the achievements of all of the schools, teachers, and their students. Without all of your hard work, passion, and dedication, none

of this would be possible - and for that, we sincerely thank you."

"The conference was a wonderful opportunity to meet staff and pupils from schools in the School Farms Network, and to exchange knowledge, hear success stories, and discuss the challenges and opportunities ahead." ■

# Mechanical Weeding LIVE

CREDIT: CHARLOTTE ECCLES PHOTOGRAPHY



Top: Nick August, Liz Bowles, Dr Nicola Cannon, Tom Overbury, and John Pawsey. Right: Dr Karen Rial-Lovera and Liz Bowles



Farmers were advised to 'create a weeding strategy which responds to the challenges that arise' at Mechanical Weeding LIVE, which was attended by more than 100 farmers and students. The Royal Agricultural University teamed up with Innovative Farmers to hold the interactive weeding comparison event at Harnhill Manor Farm on Tuesday 9 May 2017.

The University has been carrying out a comprehensive weeding comparison at Harnhill, to assess different methods of non-chemical weeding. During Mechanical Weeding LIVE, farmers took part in a farm walk to see four different approaches to mechanical weeding. They were able to view the impact of one or two weeding on the winter wheat crop, and evaluate the effectiveness of the weed control.

The machinery included; OPICO, TRP, Garford, and CombCut. Whilst

“  
A flexible strategy which responds to the weed challenges that arise is the prudent course of action.  
”

it was a challenge to evaluate the machines from one pass only, it was clear that a combination of one or more treatments is required to achieve the most effective weeding. A flexible strategy which responds to the weed challenges that arise is the prudent course of action. This should include actions in pre drilling and seed bed preparation designed to minimise the presence of viable weed seed.

Mechanical Weeding LIVE also included a series of informative talks on the methods and challenges of non-chemical weed control. Thank you to Liz Bowles, Head of Food and Farming at Innovative Farmers; Tom Overbury, RAU Farms Director; Dr Nicola Cannon, RAU Principal Lecturer in Agronomy; Nick August, Director of August Farms Ltd; and John Pawsey, Shimpling Park Farm.

We are pleased to be working with Combcut, Garford, OPICO, Spearhead, and TRP. ■



# University news

## Jenny Phelps MBE

Jenny Phelps, Lecturer at the RAU and Gloucestershire Farming and Wildlife Advisory Groups' Senior Farm Conservation Adviser, has been awarded an MBE for 'Engaging Communities in the Protection of the Environment'.

Jenny, who is also an RAU graduate with a Diploma in Agriculture (1982), has over 30 years' experience in facilitating environmental delivery with farmers and landowners and communities in Gloucestershire, specialising in developing a simple Integrated Local Delivery (ILD) framework for helping communities become resilient to climate change.

Jenny said: "When I started my career as a conservation shepherdess for a wildlife trust, I discovered a great divide between the worlds of conservation and farming, and I've spent the last 30 years trying to bring them back together. In environmental delivery, local farming knowledge is often undervalued, and the complexity of governance from many different organisations was often



conflicting and confusing for land owners and local communities. The ILD framework was developed to try and solve this by valuing local knowledge and joining everything up at a local level, enabling farmers, communities, and partners to look after the piece of the world they care about in a strategic way that benefits everyone." ■

## Fine food from the county will now be served up at the University

The RAU is to become first university in the UK to become Provenance Champion. What that means is the university will be publishing and certifying the provenance of their entire food supply chain through what is called the 'Happerley Verification System' which aims to validate and trace food provenance for producer and consumer alike.

Teresa North, Commercial Services Director at the RAU said: "Our students are the farmers, agricultural scientists



and food producers of the future and we positively reinforce the great contribution integrity

and authenticity has in the outstanding food we produce here in the UK." ■

## Land values

The RAU was commended at the 2017 Royal Town Planning Institute's (RTPI) Awards for Research Excellence on 12 September, named runner-up for the Academic Award. The Viability in the Planning System research, commissioned by a consortium of London Boroughs and carried out in partnership with the University of Reading, University of Kingston, and Ramidus Consulting, found that interpretation of recent changes to the planning system have had a significant, negative impact on affordable housing provision in London, through unintentionally inflating land values. ■



## Des celebrates 40 years at the RAU

Des Willoughby, Head Groundsman and Gardener, is celebrating 40 years at the RAU.

Des started at the then Royal Agricultural College on 1 September 1977. He was interviewed by the bursar Mr Jacobs, who was so impressed with Des that he had him start the very next day.

Fast forward 40 years and Des is an integral part of the RAU community. He can be seen out and about around campus, always ready with a cheery smile and a friendly greeting for all.

Des started as a grounds labourer, and gradually worked his way up to Head Groundsman, a

role he's held for the past 16 years.

Des does a fantastic job of keeping the RAU grounds immaculate. He is full of praise for his loyal and dedicated team, who work tirelessly to maintain the 25 acres and prepare them for RAU events.

Des has met lots of people during his 40-year career, but the pinnacle must be meeting Her Majesty the Queen of England - twice! The first occasion was in 1996 when HM The Queen visited the RAU, a tree was planted, and tea and cake was enjoyed by all. The second occasion was more recently, at Queen Elizabeth's 90th birthday garden party at



Buckingham Palace last summer (2016) - to which Des was specially invited in recognition of his service at the RAU. ■

## Providing access

Dr John Conway, RAU Disability Officer, is a member of the Disabled Student Sector Leadership Group, convened by the Department of Education, which has published a report providing best practice guidance to help universities, colleges, and independent higher education providers support

their disabled students. On 26 January, Dr Conway spoke at the Westminster Higher Education Forum conference about how the RAU supports disabled students, and on 5 April he provided a training session for the Office of the Independent Adjudicator on the issues facing disabled students. ■





## Superdry founder in Q&A with RAU students

Staff and students at the Royal Agricultural University (RAU) were delighted to welcome Julian Dunkerton, founder of Superdry and CEO of the SuperGroup, for a Q&A session last week (16 November) in celebration of Global Entrepreneurship Week.

In an interactive Q&A session, Laura Marshall, third year BSc (Hons) International Business Management (Food & Agri-business) student and President of the Enterprise Society, posed questions from the students. Julian captivated the packed audience of 160 students and staff with his cutting edge insights about what it takes to be an entrepreneur.

He talked about the challenges of starting a new business, how the iconic global brand Superdry was born (co-founded with designer James Holder in 2003), the way in which his ever-expanding portfolio of businesses (which includes the Soho Coffee Company and Cult Clothing) has developed, as well as the personal rewards gained from the freedom of 'being in control of your own destiny'.

Julian also emphasised the importance of loving what you do, never chasing money for money's sake, self-discipline, thinking long-term, and keeping up with developments. One key message was the importance of finding a gap in the market and always considering the consumer perspective. ■



## Bovine TB paper

Dr Rhiannon Naylor, Senior Lecturer in Rural Land Use and Management, worked with colleagues at the Countryside and Community Research Institute and Cardiff University to publish a paper in the Land Use Policy journal. The paper is a full research article linked to the recently completed project on badger vaccination. This social science study aimed to assess the level of farmer confidence in the use of vaccination before, during, and after vaccine deployment, and was part of the Government's Bovine TB Badger Vaccine Deployment Project. The research aimed to identify motivators and barriers that could influence the future use of TB vaccines. ■

Above: Dr Rhiannon Naylor on BBC Countryfile discussing biosecurity and Bovine TB.

## RAU hosts European veterinary conference

The RAU hosted the European Society of Veterinary and Comparative Nutrition Congress (ESVCN), Thursday 21 - Saturday 23 September 2017.

The ESVCN Congress 2017 brought together industry professionals, vets, and academics from across the nutrition discipline, for a series of talks on key areas of equine and animal nutrition. Delegates had the opportunity to participate in a series of dynamic discussions on the nutrition of species across the animal kingdom. It provided those interested in the feeding and management of horses to come together and exchange



knowledge and translate research findings into practice.

Dr Meriel Moore-Colyer, Director of Research at the RAU, said: "We're very pleased to have been hosting this international conference, especially as this is the first time that it's been held in UK. The ESVCN Congress will enable knowledge exchange between practitioners and researchers within nutrition, and we're very excited to be a part of this. We had a very stimulating conference, and relished the opportunity to work together

towards our common goal to improve nutrition across all species."

The RAU offers a number of undergraduate equine courses: BSc (Hons) Applied Equine Science and Business, BSc (Hons) Bloodstock and Performance Management, and BSc (Hons) International Equine and Agricultural Business Management, as well as postgraduate research opportunities within a number of areas of equine science, including genetics, behaviour, and nutrition. The RAU is also launching a new Foundation Degree in Animal Science for 2018 entry. ■

## Bon voyage Vic Hughes

Former Principal, Vic Hughes moved from his home in Coates to be nearer his family in Tenby, Pembrokeshire this month, where we wish him many long and happy years.

As many of you will know, Vic Hughes first came to Cirencester as a lecturer in animal husbandry in 1950, was Farms Director from 1960 until 1978, when he became RAC Principal until his retirement in 1990. ■



## Beyond food security

MSc International Rural Development and MSc Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security students held the 18th IRD-SAFS Seminar themed 'Beyond Food Security to Nutrition Security' on 22 March, which was attended by 60 people. The aim was to educate the general public on the importance of food and nutrition security. The

seminar featured a range of speakers who focused on food nutrition, and how to ensure that nutrition security is achieved at a household, national, and global levels. The IRD-SAFS seminar was organised by Aditi Mali, Christian Appiah-Num, Ireti Balogun, Sun Zhe, Wonder Buwerimwe, Fredrick Iroque and Delta Ebogomo. ■



One of the seminar's organisers, Wonder Buwerimwe.

# RAU comments



## The science of genetics: and how this affects your horse

Dr Andrew Hemmings

Over the past decade, the science of genetics has become increasingly prominent in our everyday lives. With a plethora of companies offering to provide detailed information on human disease susceptibility to anyone who can provide a hair sample, how do these genetic advances affect the equine industry?

The equine genome was sequenced in 2007, and commercial exploitation has since boomed. Founded by world-leading geneticist and RAU advisory council member Dr Emmeline Hill, Equinome is an organisation which supplies the racing industry with genetic data, to strategically inform breeding and training decisions.

The most famous innovation has been the Speed Gene test, which has identified two sequence variants of this gene. We have discovered that horses with the 'CC' variant typically have enhanced muscle development and excel in shorter sprint races, while 'TT' horses tend to have leaner muscle and are typically long distance athletes.

Armed with the results of the Speed Gene test, trainers can make better informed decisions when deciding which races to enter, and breeders can produce foals that better correspond to industry demands. For example, in the US where shorter races are the norm, selecting primarily CC foals would be best practice.

Whilst some parts of the UK thoroughbred industry still have reservations, it is clear that the strategic application of genomic data has the potential

to reduce one of the main issues facing the industry - the overproduction of mediocre animals.

Furthermore, with ongoing RAU research into the genetics of temperament and cognition, genetic prediction technology has the potential to extend towards the selection of equine athletes with behavioural characteristics better matched to the demands of the competition environment. ■

## Minimum energy efficiency standards 'one year away'

Sam Parkes

We are now less than one year away from the 2015 Energy Efficiency Regulations coming into force on 6 April 2018, which will make it unlawful to grant a new lease for a property with an energy performance certificate (EPC) rating of less than E. Most surveyors and rural land managers have been aware of the coming legislation for some time, but the uncertainty surrounding its implementation and the specific exemptions has caused many to hold off taking action.

However, with the Department for Communities and Local Government estimating that 20-25% of residential and commercial property fall below the standards; indeed many traditional properties in the rural sector will not meet the new standards, owners and managing agents are running out of time to identify and address improvements to be made.

While there is still some ambiguity surrounding exemptions for Listed Buildings, one thing we do know for certain is that the administration burden for let property is set to increase; supporting

documentation for any exemption will need to be renewed every five years.

Whilst initially the standards will apply to newly let property, they will extend to all privately rented residential property from 2020, and all commercial property from 2023. Furthermore, it is likely that the minimum energy efficiency standard is likely to rise above the minimum EPC rating of E, as the Secretary of State reviews the position every five years.

For now, landlords would be wise to carry out assessments of their properties to investigate which improvements will be required to raise energy efficiency of those buildings, whilst considering whether any exemptions will apply. It would be prudent to consider implementing a schedule of works to improve any buildings that fall within rating E, and possibly D, given likely future intentions to raise standards. ■

## Natural flood defences: a part of the solution?

Dr Ian Grange

Flooding has been a major issue in many parts of the country in recent years. Few people in the South West will forget the 2013-14 winter floods of the Somerset Levels, with Cumbria being hit more recently. Record breaking rainfall events are now being regularly reported, and the Met Office has predicted winter monthly rainfall to be 20-30% higher than recent past extremes. Despite flood defences being bolstered in reaction to such events, a 2016 Government review highlighted key components of our infrastructure; roads, bridges, railways, and utilities, which remain vulnerable.

The question is, how we should attempt to mitigate against such rapidly increasing flood events?

Current defence strategies range from major permanent defences, including the iconic Thames Barrier, through to temporary defences, such as impermeable free-standing barriers designed to protect locally important infrastructure. While these engineered hard flood defences can resolve problems in a reactionary way, they do not offer a long-term solution.

Fortunately, natural flood defences are starting to play a key role within the Government's 25 year plan for the environment, emphasising the importance of integrating catchment level projects. Manipulating the upper catchments to 'slow the flow' has already been shown to have positive results in restricting the progress of water through the catchment. A key example of this is the Stroud Rural Sustainable Drainage project. The RAU has been working in partnership with Stroud District Council, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, and the Miserden Estate to establish 'leaky dams' in the Frome Valley.

Early indications show that there has been substantial reductions in peak lower catchment water levels.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is currently learning from such examples, and is developing guidelines to better inform farmers, landowners, utility companies, and conservation organisations to manage our environment through the incentivised payment for ecosystem services scheme. ■

## Brexit: What does the future hold for UK agriculture?

Chris Brough

Article 50 has been triggered, and the starting gun has been fired on a two year timetable that will set the framework for the UK's new place in the global political, economic, and social landscape. For agriculture and food production in particular, this creates a huge amount of uncertainty. What sort of deal we will get from the EU, and how will this impact UK businesses in the years to come?

The negotiations have started, and while many issues remain unresolved, there are a few things we do know. The UK Government has promised to honour direct payments to farmers until 2020, and HM Treasury has agreed to honour payments made under agri-environment schemes signed pre-Brexit. Beyond this, there is no formal commitment to continue supporting farmers post Brexit 2019.

Assuming a deal, transitional arrangements for the use of EU labour by UK businesses seem likely. This would be welcomed by businesses reliant on seasonal migrant labour in horticulture, but would not answer the issue of permanent EU labour used in the dairy industry. Clearly, a new government EU immigration policy is required, which recognises the needs of different sectors of the economy.

On the other hand, if we have no deal, the UK will default to trading with the EU and the rest of the world on World Trade Organisation terms, which means tariffs on exports and imports. Trade is important to UK agriculture - 38% of our sheep and lamb meat are exported to the EU - and while tariffs would be a bad thing, at least they are a known quantity. Outside of the EU and the single market, the UK would need to secure mutual recognition agreements for all of its trade goods.

In the negotiations still to come, we will see how the UK's trade deal with the EU is progressing and at what cost, how the immigration policy is being shaped and the reality of access to EU labour, and most importantly, how much continued support for agriculture there is in Westminster. ■

# Alumni news

We hold a packed programme of events and activities throughout the year. Please do get involved, and suggest some new ones - we're always open to ideas.

## Alumni visit Lowther Castle

40 alumni and guests were made very welcome by all those at Lowther Castle, when the University visited in October. Invited guests had a very informative private tour of Lowther Castle and its ancient and splendid garden which have undergone a transformation, the ruins looked fabulous in the autumn light.

Jim Lowther spoke to alumni about the journey and plans for the castle and gardens, enabling a huge number of visitors to enjoy the spectacular surroundings.

We are very grateful to Lowther Castle and Gardens and our sponsors Lycetts for making this visit possible.

It is always a pleasure to see both familiar and new faces at our alumni events and we look forward to seeing you at the ones arranged for the future. For further information contact [alumni@rau.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@rau.ac.uk). ■



## Breaks and B&B

Fancy a short break? 'Why not come back and visit us?'

The Royal Agricultural University is a perfect base for exploring the Cotswolds. Situated on the outskirts of the Roman market town of Cirencester, with Bath, Cheltenham, Bristol and Oxford within easy reach for superb sightseeing and shopping.

Set in the picturesque grounds of the University, Quality in Tourism 3 star rated en-suite double, twin and single bedrooms are available all year round. Breakfast is included in the servery and dinner and a packed lunch can be provided on request. For more information, or to book your short stay contact [bedandbreakfast@rau.ac.uk](mailto:bedandbreakfast@rau.ac.uk) ■



## Forde Abbey

We were delighted to see 50 alumnae at our Forde Abbey Estate visit in Dorset on Monday 6 June 2016, home of RAU alumni Julian and Alice Kennard (RELM1990). An enjoyable day was spent looking at the former Cistercian abbey, fruit farm, Ruby Red Devon's, and the goat enterprise. ■



## Annual reunion dinner

We held our first annual reunion dinner on 24 September 2016, which was attended by over 80 alumni from across the decades. The evening started with drinks in the Tithe Barn, followed by a delicious dinner in the main dining room. Alumnus and former Governor Mike Tucker gave an amusing and informative after dinner speech.

Last month over 50 alumni joined us for dinner and drinks at the annual Reunion Dinner. This year we moved to the Kenneth Russell Room for the delicious three course dinner and had the new and the old come together; speaking was the legendary raconteur, Ron Coaten and recently graduated entrepreneur, James Wright. We'd like to thank them both for their informative and entertaining speeches.



It was wonderful to see so many of you come back for your 10th, 30th, 50th and even a 60th

graduation anniversary with the celebratory drinking going on to the early hours!

We'd also like to thank Paul Short for his winning bid on the campus painting; auctioned by Ron Coaten and kindly donated by Mrs Coad.

Thank you to all those who came back to visit us we hope you had a memorable and enjoyable evening!

For further details or to register your interest, contact [alumni@rau.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@rau.ac.uk) ■

## A show-stopping summer

The RAU attended many summer shows this year including Royal Cornwall Show, Badminton Horse Trials, Cereals, Royal Welsh and Countryfile Live - it was great to see so many alumni!

### Big Festival 2017

RAU staff and students had a fantastic time running the Vegetable Patch at The Big Festival over the August Bank Holiday (25-27 August). Families and children were able to pick

their own home-grown carrots, courgettes, beetroot, and herbs, before baking some savoury falafel or some sweet muffins with Nailsworth Hobbs House Bakery in the NEFF Little Kitchen.

Our ever-popular Entrepreneurs' Pavilion was also on site, giving RAU students and graduates the opportunity to sell their products, build brand awareness, and gain valuable market research. ■



### Countryfile Live

Back in August, the University attended BBC Countryfile Live 2017 in Blenheim Palace's beautiful parkland. The show welcomed over 120,000 visitors through its gates over 4 days and the RAU was delighted to be part of it meeting with a huge number of students, alumni, friends and supporters. ■



### Mike Tucker retires from the BBC

Mike Tucker has retired from the BBC, where he's been their equestrian commentator for the past 40 years. Mike joined the BBC in 1977, and took over as lead equestrian commentator in 1992. He worked for the BBC at six Olympic Games, with London a particular highlight. Mike's final event was the Badminton Horse Trials 2017, where he provided sterling commentary. Mike Tucker is the voice of equestrian sport, and

Top: A special presentation at Badminton Horse Trials 2017. Pictured left to right: Lord Vestey, President of Olympia; Mike Tucker, the Duchess of Cornwall; Lizzie Bunn, Director of Hickstead; Elizabeth Inman, Director of Burghley Horse Trials; and Hugh Thomas, Director of the Badminton Horse Trials.

will be sorely missed.

Mike spent two years at the Royal Agricultural College, and graduated with a National Diploma Agriculture in 1964. He has since been on the RAU's Board of Governors, and is Chairman of the advisory council for the Centre of Equine Management and Science. Mike was awarded an Honorary Fellowship at Convocation 2017 (20 July) in recognition of his contribution to the equine industry. ■

### Badminton Horse Trials

The RAU attended the Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials (3-7 May) and had a fantastic time meeting new faces over the five days, and catching up with some familiar ones at our alumni reception on Saturday 6 May - including legendary BBC Commentator, Mike Tucker.

Peter Morris, Lecturer in Equine Business, was responsible for the media management of the event.

He said: "Working on Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials is always great fun and always a challenge. My role is to ensure that the media get the material they want and to facilitate the press conferences each evening. It is a privilege to work with the best. I also take the opportunity to get some students to come along and help me. It is great experience for them as well."

Well done to RAU alumnus Ben Way, who finished 43rd at Badminton Horse Trials on Galley Light. ■



# Your weddings

## Laura and Philip

Laura Thompson (BSc (Hons) Rural Land Management, 2010) married Philip Weston on Saturday 5 November 2016 in Hartwell, Northamptonshire. ■

## Andrew and Rachel

Andrew Woollacott and Rachel Miles both studied BSc (Hons) Rural Land Management (2008) at the Royal Agricultural University, and met at the Beagles Hunt Ball in their first year. They have been together ever since and finally tied the knot on Saturday 10 September 2016 at Rachel's family farm in Suffolk. They had a huge Cirencester contingent on the day, and it was the perfect weekend, followed by a two week honeymoon in Dubai and Mauritius. They now live in Devon where they work as Land Agents, Andrew for Savills and Rachel for Stags. ■

## Lucy and James

Lucy Hiorns (BSc (Hons) International Food and Agribusiness, 2011) married James Walters on Saturday 8 October 2016 in Barford Church, near Warwick, before heading back to the marquee at Lucy's parents' home for an evening of eating, drinking, and dancing. Their wedding was bathed in beautiful autumn sunshine, and they made the most of the time of year with white pumpkin table decorations and lots of local seasonal food. They had a brilliant day and a wonderful honeymoon in South Africa and Mauritius. Lucy and James met 13 years ago through Young Farmers. ■

## Ruth and Ben

Ruth Newton (BSc (Hon) Property Agency and Marketing, 2009) and Ben Pilbeam (BSc (Hons) Rural Land Management, 2011) were married at

Clockwise from top left: Andrew Woollacott and Rachel Miles; Ruth Newton and Ben Pilbeam; Imogen de Lavis and Logan McKelvie; Laura Thompson and Philip Weston; Verena Elspeth Crawley Smith and Robert Bowyer; Lucy Hiorns and James Walters. .

St James Church in Iddesleigh, Devon on the Saturday 17 September 2016. The reception was held in a marquee at Ruth's parents' house. They were joined by 150 guests, including 50 from Cirencester, before jetting off to Langkawi for their honeymoon. ■

## Verena and Robert

Verena Elspeth Crawley Smith (BSc (Hons) Equine Management, 2015) married Robert Bowyer (BSc (Hons) Rural Land Management, 2015) on Saturday 22 April 2017. The ceremony was held in St John the Baptist, Healaugh, followed by the reception at Verena's family home in Healaugh, North Yorkshire. The Bride and Groom left by tandem in the early evening. The day was filled with laughter, old friends reconnecting, and a lot of sunshine - an excellent start to married life. The happy couple enjoyed their honeymoon in Masai Mara, Kenya. Robert is a land agent at Carter Jonas in Kendal, and Verena is studying to become a BHS Intermediate Instructor. ■

## Imogen and Logan

Imogen de Lavis and Logan McKelvie were married recently in Wanaka, New Zealand.

Imogen holds a First Class Hons BSc in Equine Science from the Royal Agricultural University in Cirencester. She is currently a third-year student of Veterinary Science at the University of Liverpool.

Logan is currently working as the Manager of the Outdoor Education Centre in Arthur's Pass, New Zealand and is a member of the NZ Land Search and Rescue team.

Imogen and Logan were married in an outdoor ceremony overlooking the Remarkables range at the Criffel Station Woolshed by celebrant, George Konia, followed by dinner and dancing in the Woolshed. ■



PHOTO: ANDY BROWN PHOTOGRAPHY



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