

2019

Suzanna Hext

Suzanna gained a first class honours in Equine Science at the RAU and was just beginning her career when an accident while riding a young horse at home changed her life in 2012.

Suzanna sustained life-changing injuries, spent two years in hospital and had too many operations to count. Proving that nothing can stop passion, drive and determination, she went on to become a triple European Gold medallist in Dressage and has now also become a medallist in the para-swimming team at the 2019 World Championships. Suzanna aims to represent Team GB in both sports at Tokyo 2020.

To represent Britain in one sport is a significant achievement but to excel in two is nothing short of extraordinary.

Levi Roots

The infamous Mr Levi Roots - aka "The Dragon Slayer", "Sauce man" and entrepreneur chef, first shot to fame on BBC2's Dragons' Den. With his spirited "Reggae Reggae Sauce" song he charmed Dragons Peter Jones and Richard Farleigh into investing in his spicy sauce, which was a secret recipe inspired by his grandmother.

With an exclusive launch at Sainsbury's, the sauce flew off the shelves and within a couple of weeks was outselling Heinz Tomato Ketchup. Levi has managed to find time to write several cookbooks. Alongside these, Levi has penned his business guide "You Can Get It If You Really Want". He is a great advocate for small to medium size businesses and is often found mentoring young entrepreneurs. Levi is a judge of the RAU's Grand Idea competition for student entrepreneurs and is a guest speaker at the RAU. Levi makes time to do charitable works all over the country by attending schools, colleges and universities. Levi also attends prisons giving motivational talks where he speaks from the heart about his experiences.

As a licensing brand, Levi has partnered with some of the best names in the food industry and as a result has a wide range of products placed on all our supermarket shelves. He opened his "Rasta'raunt" in December 2015.

More recently, Levi took to acting and has a cameo role in the popular BBC series "Death in Paradise" and has a regular slot on BBC Radio 2. Most recently Levi has signed a deal to have a multi-million-pound feature film made about the story of his life.

Julian Sayers

Julian Sayers graduated from the Royal Agricultural College in 1982 with a Diploma in Rural Estate Management. He has since maintained close links with the University including chairing the Advisory Council for RELM, serving as a Governor for nine years with two years as Vice-Chairman of the Board and then Chairman of the Project Board responsible for the new Alliston Centre.

He joined the firm of Adkin after leaving the RAC and has spent the past 36 years advising farmers and landowners on a wide range of matters relating to the occupation and ownership of rural property. His planning and management expertise associated with a diverse range of projects, including whole farm and estate plans have led to assignments throughout the UK. He also specialises in the promotion and sale of development land, property acquisitions, estate management, agricultural tenancies and tax planning.

He has held senior positions in a number of the country's leading farming and rural organisations including Chairman of the National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs, the RICS Rural Faculty, the Farmers Club, the Oxford Farming Conference and the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution. Last year he served as Master of the Worshipful Company of Farmers and for the past 16 years he has chaired the Defra Tenancy Reform Industry Group.

2017

Mike Tucker

Mike Tucker graduated from the Royal Agricultural College in 1964, with a National Diploma in Agriculture. 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 has competed in top international events in the UK and abroad, and started public commentary in 1969. He made his first equestrian television appearance for the BBC in 1977, and has since covered championships all over the world. Mike recently retired from TV work after 40 years.

Minister Simon Coveney TD Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade

Simon Coveney holds a BSc (Hons) in Agriculture and Land Management from the Royal Agricultural College (1996). Simon was recently appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade with responsibility for Brexit. Previously, he was Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government and before that, Minister for Defence, and Minister for Agriculture, Marine and Food. Simon was elected to the Dáil (Irish Parliament) in 1998.

Christine Cross

A food scientist by background, Christine was a Director with Tesco plc on their Operating Board in a variety of roles (1989–2003). She now runs a retail advisory business focussing on international best practice in customer led business planning and value chain management. She has non-executive Directorships with a number of high profile companies, has sat on the Boards of multiple global retail organisations, and has been Chief Retail Advisor to PricewaterhouseCoopers for the past six years.

2016

Derek Bell MBE

British racing driver Derek Bell studied the One Year Farming short course at the Royal Agricultural University in 1962, and has since enjoyed a successful and diverse career spanning over 40 years.

Derek is considered the greatest Englishman ever to compete in endurance racing. He began racing as an amateur at Goodwood, and won his first race in 1964. He quickly progressed to Formula 3 and then Formula 2; turning professional within three years. Between 1968 and 1974 he competed in 16 Formula 1 Grand Prix, racing for Ferrari, McLaren, Surtees, and Tecno. In 1970, Derek filmed the cult movie 'Le Mans' with Hollywood legend Steve McQueen. Derek's real talent lay with endurance racing, where he has become a legend. He won back-to-back World Sports Car Championship titles in 1985 and 1986, three 24 Hours of Daytona in 1986, 1987, and 1989, and five Le Mans victories in 1975, 1981, 1982, 1986, and 1987. Derek was at his prime during the 1980s and early 1990s, achieving no fewer than 16 victories in the World Endurance Championship and 19 in the IMSA Camel GT Championship. Derek was awarded the MBE for services to motorsport in 1986, and is considered the greatest Englishman ever to compete in endurance racing.

David Fursdon HM Lord Lieutenant of Devon

David Fursdon was a scholar at St John's College, Oxford. He worked for the MOD and the UN, and taught at Blundells School, Tiverton; where he later became Chair of Governors (2000 – 2011), before he studied the Rural Estate Management diploma at the Royal Agricultural University in 1986. David qualified as a rural Chartered Surveyor and became an equity partner in Stags (1994 – 2005), President of the CLA, and then a Commissioner; firstly of the Crown Estate and then of English Heritage. After serving on the Board of the SWRDA, he chaired the South West Board for the London 2012 Olympics. He then chaired the Government's 'Future of Farming' review, Defra's South West Rural and Farming Network, and was on the Board of the Historic Houses Association for nine years. David was a member of the Affordable Rural Housing Commission in 2007, and the Rural Housing Policy Group in 2015. He currently chairs Sir James Dyson's Beeswax Farming company and serves on the Duchy of Cornwall's rural committee. He was High Sheriff of Devon in 2009, and became Lord Lieutenant of Devon in 2015.

Arthur Edward Rory Guinness, 4th Earl of Iveagh, FI, AgrM, DL

Edward Iveagh was educated in Ireland and England, and studied Agriculture and Land Management at the Royal Agricultural University (1992-1993). Edward is custodian of the Elveden Estate in Suffolk, the largest lowland contiguous farm in Britain. The farm produces cereals and field scale vegetables; potatoes, onions, carrots, and parsnips, alongside managing internationally important ecosystems. Innovations within the business include 'instant' ready grown hedging; a feature of outstanding track record in award winning shows at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Regeneration of the built estate has included renovation of a visitors' centre featuring The Courtyard restaurant, a delicatessen-type food shop, a home and garden shop, and a Post Office, alongside the AA award winning, The Elveden Inn. Edward is the Deputy Lieutenant for Suffolk, a Non-Executive Director of the BGL Group; a golfing and leisure business, a trustee of the East Anglian Air Ambulance, and various agricultural charities. Previously an active Crossbencher in the House of Lords, Edward has served as a Rural Board Member of the East of England Development Agency, and Director at East England Tourism.

Peel Holroyd

Peel Holroyd has spent a lifetime in the food and agriculture industry, working variously within academia, industry, and as a consultant. A graduate of Harper Adams University (HAU), Peel was a postgraduate student at the University of Guelph, before lecturing at HAU and then working in industry, most notably with Marks and Spencer plc where he was pivotal in developing traceability in their supply chain, specifically in poultry. In 1990, he established his own consultancy and has continued to make significant contributions to a very wide range of organisations, both within and outside (rugby and cricket to name but two) the industry. Peel has made a major contribution to the RAU through his establishment, and Chairmanship, of the RAC (now RAU) 100 Club in 1999. The club is a forum for the University, both students and staff, to interact with senior members from a wide range of land-based industries. Peel was appointed as Honorary President in 2015, and it continues to flourish as a unique and valued conduit between academia and industry, with the annual lunch as an exemplar of its effectiveness. The award of Membership of the Royal Agricultural University recognises the very significant contribution made to the RAU by Peel Holroyd.

2015

Lord Plumb

Bledisloe Medal

Lord (Henry) Plumb, British farmer, former President of the National Farmers Union, and European Parliamentarian, has achieved worldwide recognition in the field of agriculture and politics. Born in 1925, he was 15 years-old when World War II broke out and his father took him out of school to help on the mixed family farm in Coleshill, Warwickshire, which he later took over when his dad died in 1952.

Managing 121 hectares, Henry Plumb developed the drive and passion that would serve him well throughout his career. He joined the Young Farmers Club at Coleshill, where he met and married his wife Marjorie, and became active in the National Farmers Union. He was elected NFU Vice-President in 1964, promoted to Deputy President in 1966, and became President in 1970. He was knighted in 1973.

Over the next nine years he oversaw and negotiated Britain's place in the Common Agricultural Policy and ensured proper support for British agriculture. Sir Henry has been a strong advocate of the pro-market campaign, stressing that Britain no longer had the economic power to deliver cheap food.

When his presidency at the NFU came to an end, Sir Henry entered European politics. He was elected MEP (Member of the European Parliament) for the Cotswolds in 1979, travelling widely and developing a deeper understanding of the agricultural industry. He became President of the European Parliament in 1987, the first and only Briton to hold the post.

Lord Plumb joined the House of Lords in 1987, and remains an active peer to this day. In 2012, he established the Henry Plumb Foundation to provide funding and financial backing for young people with ideas and enthusiasm, wishing to forge a career in agriculture.

Tim Hadaway

Tim Hadaway graduated from the Royal Agricultural University in 1995, having studied a BSc in International Agriculture and Equine Business Management, and has a wealth of experience in the equestrian sports world.

Tim Hadaway worked as Director of the Blair Castle International Horse Trials, managing and developing Scotland's leading three-day event and country fair, before joining British Eventing in 2002. As Sports and Technical Manager, Tim was responsible for the day-to-day management of eventing in Britain; 150 national and international events. He later founded Tim Hadaway Ltd, offering consultancy services across equestrian sport and the associated industry, working in particular for the British Equestrian Federation and Bramham International Horse Trials.

In 2008, Tim Hadaway took on the challenge of a lifetime. He joined the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) as Equestrian Sports Manager and is widely credited for success of the equestrian competitions.

Once the Games had drawn to a close, Tim joined the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) as Director of the newly created Games and Championships Department and is responsible for advising Organising Committees of future Olympic, Paralympic and FEI World Equestrian Game, ensuring that all FEI technical requirements are delivered. He's currently working with the team in Rio preparing for the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games, as well as on preparations for Tokyo 2020 and the FEI World Equestrian Game 2018 in Canada.

Tim Lawson, FRICS, MRAC

Tim Lawson worked on the Duke of Beaufort's Badminton Estate before attending at the Royal Agricultural College. He graduated in 1965 from the BSc (Hons) Rural Land Management course and was awarded the Harker Silver Medal for best student in rural estate management. He has three sons, all of whom attended the RAU and are now working at Knight Frank and Savills.

Tim joined Bidwells in Cambridge in 1965 and in 1972 became the Administrative Partner. He was made the Senior Partner in 1980. Tim saw rapid expansion in the firm over the next ten years, growing from 11 professionals (in 1965) to more than 250 by 1990 – many of whom graduated from the RAC and went on to become Equity Partners in the firm.

Tim was elected a QA of the Chartered Land Agents Society in 1967, an Associate of the Chartered Auctioneers and of the RICS in 1970, and became a Fellow of the RICS in 1974.

Tim retired from Bidwells in 2002, but remained much involved in the RAU and property affairs for a number of Trusts, Charities and families in the Cambridge area, perhaps most notably the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and the world renowned Papworth Hospital.

Tim Lawson was the '1964 leaver' to join the RACA committee, later taking on roles of secretariat and treasurer. He became a Governor of the College in 1988, and retained the position until he retired in December 2008. Tim sat on almost all of the sub-committees of the Main Board and was one of the founding Trustees of the RAC Pension & Life Assurance Scheme.

2014

Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP MRAC FRICS

Geoffrey Clifton-Brown graduated from the Royal Agricultural College in 1975 having studied land agency. He joined the Property Services Agency as a Chartered Surveyor, later becoming an investment analyst surveyor. In 1992, Geoffrey was elected Conservative MP for Cirencester and Tewkesbury, and is now a Vice-Chairman of the Conservative Party; Chairman of the Conservative Party International Office; Vice-President of the Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists, and a Freeman of the City of London. Geoffrey actively supported the granting of degree-awarding powers to the RAC by the Privy Council, and more recently the granting by government of university title.

Henry Cator OBE, FRICS, DL, MRAC

Henry Cator qualified from the RAC in 1978 having completed the Diploma in Rural Estate Management, and has worked as a land agent for over 30 years in Norfolk where he was born and raised. A Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, he is currently Chairman of the Royal Agricultural Society of England and Chairman of the Association of Drainage Authorities and Broads Internal Drainage Board. He was Chairman of the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association for 10 years and President in 2009; he served as High Sheriff of Norfolk in 2012. Henry Cator was awarded the OBE in 2008 for services to the community in Norfolk.

James Townshend MRAC

James Townshend studied farm business at the RAC, graduating from the well-known Diploma in Advanced Farm Management programme in 1975. He subsequently joined the land agency profession before joining Velcourt in 1978, where he is now both Chairman and Velcourt Group Chief Executive. James is a member of the UK Government steering groups for 'sustainable agriculture and food innovation', the Global Food Security Strategy Advisory Board and Agri-Tech Leadership Council. In 2012, James Townshend was appointed Business Ambassador for the UK's Food and Agricultural Industries by the Prime Minister.

2013

The Rt Hon the Lord Cameron of Dillington

Lord Cameron is a landowner, farmer and politician. A graduate of Oxford, where he read modern history, Ewen Cameron later studied Rural Estate Management at the RAC. He became a Fellow of RICS in 1992 and the Royal Agricultural Societies in 1996, and was appointed Chairman of the Countryside Agency in 1990, later becoming President of the Country Land and Business Association (1995-1997). Ewen was appointed the Prime Minister's Rural Advocate in 2000, and since 2009 has chaired the All Party Parliamentary Group on Agriculture and Food, and continues to chair the Government's Global Food Security Programme Steering Group. Ewen Cameron was knighted in 2003 and became a Life Peer in 2004.

Simon F Pott FRICS, FRAgS, FinstcPD, MRAC

Simon Pott is a land agent and auctioneer who has made an enormous contribution to his profession, the RAU, and to numerous charitable organisations. Simon Pott studied Rural Estate Management at the RAC, winning the Harker Medal, and was also Chairman of the Student Union; he has subsequently worked as a chartered surveyor, land agent and auctioneer from his base in Suffolk, leading the profession as Head of the Rural Practice Division in 1988 and as President of RICS in 1995. For his alma mater, the RAU, he has chaired the Alumni Association, been a member of Governing Council and Chairman of Governors, and is now Vice-President.

David Campbell OBE MSC MRAC

A former student, David Campbell studied on the Diploma in Agriculture. Subsequently becoming a journalist at Farmers Weekly, David later worked for OXFAM as Field Director in South and East Asia and Director in East Africa. David later co-founded and then became Executive Director of FARM-Africa. David was appointed a Visiting Fellow of the RAC in 2001, and helped establish the Africa Fellowship Trust (AFT) charity in 2006, that has since supported 68 Africa Fellows for postgraduate study and professional development at Cirencester and subsequently in South Africa. David Campbell has been Chief Executive and a Trustee of AFT since its inception. In 2000, David Campbell was awarded an OBE for 'services to African farming'.

Joe Henson MBE

Joe Henson was always interested in farming - and later became a committed countryman. He joined the Diploma in Agriculture course in 1952 at the RAC. In 1962 Joe took the tenancy of Bemborough Farm near Guiting Power, which he later developed into the UK's first farm park - the Cotswold Farm Park - which opened in 1971. Following a national conference on farm animals facing extinction, organised by the Rare Breeds Survival Task Force in 1971, the Rare Breeds Survival Trust was established and Joe became the Founding Chairman. Joe has devoted his life to conservation and to the breeding of rare at-risk farm animal species.

2012

Dai Barling MSc

Dai Barling joined the Royal Agricultural College in 1946 as a Lecturer in Agricultural Botany, retiring in 1989 after 43 years of a distinguished teaching and research role. Dai contributed a number of significant research papers on grassland ecology and development of cereal crops, which were published in several notable journals. In 1963 Dai Barling was appointed to the expert panel for breeders rights under the Plant Varieties and Seeds Act 1963, on which Dai continued until 1994. Towards the end of his distinguished career at the college Dai Barling was awarded in 1991 the RASE Medal for 'distinction in the science and practice of teaching' and the Summers Award from the National Farmers' Union in 1993 for 'outstanding contributions to the agricultural industry'.

Kenneth R McDiarmid FRICS MRAC

Kenneth McDiarmid studied Rural Estate Management at the RAC and on graduating in 1969, joined the Englefield Estate as a student assistant. He succeeded to the Resident Agent's position in 1980, retiring in July 2012, during which time Englefield has become an exemplar estate with successful agricultural, forestry, residential and commercial property enterprises.

Ken has achieved a widespread reputation as a prominent rural surveyor, and for his involvement in numerous organisations including the RICS Rural Appointments Board. Ken has assisted many people and organisations in his career, including the students and staff of the College, where his support, wisdom and counsel has been of immense value.

2010

Sir Henry Elwes

Sir Henry Elwes was appointed as Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire in 1992 after many previous years of service to the County in local government. His support for the county has been unstinting, and across a wide portfolio of charitable, farming and educational organisations, and his immense contribution was recognised by a knighthood in 2009. An alumnus of the RAC, he has been responsible for the family estate at Colebourne for many years, and has combined his civic responsibilities with its management and development.

2006

Sir Michael Angus

Sir Michael Angus became Chairman of Governors at the Royal Agricultural College in 1991, bringing an eminence and achievement to the post during his fourteen years as chairman which is unsurpassed. Sir Michael Angus was a captain of industry with many distinguished appointments; Chairman of Unilever, Chairman of Whitbread, Chairman of Boots, Deputy Chairman of British Airways, Deputy Chairman of NatWest Bank, and President of the Confederation of British Industry. He also served as Chairman of The Leverhulme Trust and a Deputy Lieutenant for Gloucestershire, and was knighted in 1990 for his services to industry.

1999

The Lord Derek Barber of Tewkesbury

Lord Barber was a student of the College and was awarded the Ducie Gold Medal for the best student in Practical Agriculture in 1938. He became a District Advisory Officer and subsequently County Agricultural Advisor for Gloucestershire in the National Agricultural Advisory Service, he was Chairman of the Countryside Commission and later became Crown Commissioner. He was awarded the Bledisloe Gold Medal from the College in 1965 and the RASE Gold Medal in 1991.

Henry Fell

Henry Fell is a first generation farmer. He attended the College after the Second World War and was a Haygarth Gold Medal Winner. He was a member of College academic staff before developing his own farming interests. Among many other positions, he has been Selector and Trustee of the Nuffield Farming Scholarship Trust and a Council Member of the RASE. He was awarded a CBE in 1995 for his services to agriculture.

Derek Pearce

Derek Pearce was founder member and first National Chairman of the Farm Management Association. He has been associated with the Royal Agricultural College for over 50 years, as a student, as a Governor and more latterly as Chairman of the School of Business Advisory Council. He is a member of the Council of the University of East Anglia and teaches Agribusiness at that University. He has been influential as a farmer, a consultant and as an author.

Roger Sayce

Roger Sayce was for more than 30 years a leading member of the land management profession and at his retirement in 1980 held the post of Chief Surveyor in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and Director of the Land Service of ADAS. A graduate and winner of the Harker Silver Medal of the College, Roger served as a Governor from 1974 to 1988 and is the author of the definitive history of the College published in 1992.