

Royal  
Agricultural  
University  
Cirencester



170  
1845-2015

## Landmark

The annual news review of the  
Royal Agricultural University  
Issue 14 2015

*RAU celebrates 170 years  
Shaping our future since 1845*

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## YOUR DETAILS

If you have moved house or job please let us know via the website below or by email: [alumni@rau.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@rau.ac.uk)

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The Royal Agricultural University

## Donor Report and Roll for 2014

Our first donor report and roll has been included as an insert in this 2015 edition of *Landmark*. We'd like to say a very sincere thank you to all of you who have already donated to our Cirencester Fund and report back on the impact it's having.



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Shelly Hampshire  
Editor

Royal  
Agricultural  
University  
Cirencester



## Welcome...

Welcome to the 14th issue of *Landmark*, the annual review of the Royal Agricultural University. Dedicated to celebrating the outstanding achievements of our alumni, students and staff, *Landmark* delivers the latest news from the University, highlights the innovative research and consultancy being undertaken by RAU staff, and showcases the continued success of our graduates throughout the world. There have been lots of exciting developments at the RAU in the past year. In September, the University celebrated the launch of its brand new School of Equine Management and Science with a visit from HRH The Princess Royal, raising the profile of our well-established equine courses and providing a clear identity for our applied equine research. Then, just

two months later, the RAU announced its partnership with Morrisons, leading the way in research and education relating to the food industry. As part of the GFirst Gloucestershire Growth Deal, the University has also been awarded £2.9m government funding, to invest in flexible spaces for agri-tech start-up businesses at its cutting-edge Rural Innovation Centre at Harnhill – opened by Sir John Beddington in March 2014. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this edition of *Landmark*. We value the input of our readers, so please continue to send us your feedback, news and suggestions for stories.

Shelly

[landmark@rau.ac.uk](mailto:landmark@rau.ac.uk)

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## YOUR NETWORK

You can find out about alumni news by visiting the RAU alumni network [alumni.rau.ac.uk](http://alumni.rau.ac.uk) It's now even easier to keep in touch with the University and your friends.

You can modify contact information, manage a personal profile, make online donations to the RAU's fundraising campaign, and view RAU alumni event information.

# Diary dates 2015

**20 – 23 July**

## Royal Welsh Show

Builth Wells, Powys  
Alumni reception **Tuesday 21 July**  
5pm-7pm in the AMC Pavilion  
All welcome but please RSVP to  
[alumni@rau.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@rau.ac.uk)



© Alnwick Castle

**10 September**

## Visit to Alnwick Castle

Northumberland  
Kindly sponsored by Lycetts  
Contact [alumni@rau.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@rau.ac.uk)

**31 July – 2 August**

## CLA Game Fair

Harewood House, Leeds  
Alumni brunch **Friday 31 July**  
9.30am – 11.30am  
Kindly sponsored by Pollock Associates  
All welcome but please RSVP to  
[alumni@rau.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@rau.ac.uk)



**7 – 29 November**

## Telephone Fundraising Campaign

Strength in numbers  
Supporting your RAU through the Cirencester Fund



**Date to be confirmed**

## Annual Bledisloe Memorial Lecture

Royal Agricultural University  
Contact [rsvp@rau.ac.uk](mailto:rsvp@rau.ac.uk)



**13 November**

## Cheltenham Countryside Day

Cheltenham Racecourse  
Alumni drinks reception after last race

# 2016

**4 – 8 May**

## Badminton Horse Trials

Badminton, Gloucestershire



**25 – 26 May**

## Suffolk Show

Trinity Park, Ipswich

**27 May**

## May Ball

Royal Agricultural University



**15 – 16 June**

## Cereals

Chrishall Grange, Cambridgeshire

**29 – 31 July**

## CLA Game Fair

Ragley Hall, Warwickshire

**18 – 21 July**

## Royal Welsh Show

Builth Wells, Powys



**Saturday**

**24 September 2016**

## Alumni Reunion

We are delighted to invite all alumni back to the RAU for an Annual Reunion Dinner

Contact [alumni@rau.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@rau.ac.uk)

Please contact the alumni team for more details about any of these forthcoming events, or if you would like to sponsor an event

[alumni@rau.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@rau.ac.uk)

01285 652531

# Greetings to all alumni



The question you are really asking when you pick up *Landmark*, or any publication from your alma mater, is 'how is the old place doing?' Is it making great strides whilst remaining somewhere that I can remember and identify with? We hope and believe both of these things, as Cirencester, the Royal Ag, the RAU has benefited enormously from that continuous identification and support from the alumni over its 170 years.

It is odd what moving on can mean. For many years the mainstay of the College, as it was then, was the One Year Farming course (OYFC), along with the two year diploma course. Both fell out of favour when degree awarding powers were awarded in the 1990s, but are now a significant, and growing, part of the portfolio. Different people want different opportunities and courses, and under a banner of 'so you want to do agriculture' the RAU now offers a one year course (the OYFC), a two year Foundation Degree, as well as the standard three year undergraduate BSc Honours degree course and a one year Graduate Diploma in Agriculture.

The Royal Agricultural College was founded 170 years ago in Cirencester; indeed for many, the question 'where did you study?' provokes the response 'Cirencester'. Over that time the links between town and gown have been, how should one say, mixed and sometimes more distant than the geography. Now that Cirencester is a university town, and palpably proud of it, we have been working harder at making the connection more obviously and mutually beneficial. Student projects such

as Kemble station garden and the Thistle Patch Park playground in Chesterton have provided a community involvement that has been appreciated. That the university has a significant economic impact on the town is also undeniable – we are working to quantify it – but with the development of more regional autonomy, and the production of Local Plans for development, there are real opportunities to feed the expertise as well as the spending power into the local and regional communities.

We have been working with the Gloucestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) around the provision of incubation space for new businesses related to the rural economy, and general business support. To that end, we have been awarded nearly £3m to develop the Rural Innovation Centre at Harnhill further, and develop too on the main campus. Innovation and enterprise are crucial to the maintenance and development of the rural economy, and a healthy rural economy is in turn crucial to the prosperity of a county like Gloucestershire. The academic partnership that we announced this year with the retailer Morrisons is not unrelated to this agenda. Food is the *raison d'être* of production agriculture, and the opportunities locally, as well as nationally and globally, to develop the food industry is somewhere the RAU has a real role, if not responsibility, to play.

The theme of responsibility often comes across amid the celebrations at the degree Convocation in the summer, and was alluded to by all of the Honorary Fellows last year. Three alumni became Fellows; Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, the MP for South Cotswolds for over 20 years, Henry Cator, amongst other things Chair of the Royal Agricultural Society of England (RASE), and James Townshend, Chief Executive of Velcourt, all provided insight, and role models, for the graduating students. For the second year we held the ceremonies in the cathedralesque Cirencester Parish Church, a magnificent setting that also makes the RAU part of the town furniture.

Back to 2015 and 170 years of age, an impressive achievement by any standards. Traditionally 175 is a 'bigger' number in terms of celebration and we are certainly planning to mark that too, but it would be a shame to miss this milestone. To mark the Queen's Jubilee and university status in

2013 we planted a new avenue of limes to one day match the main drive, and plans for 2015 include a heritage orchard, an outdoor sculpture, and a new line-etching of the iconic building that many identify as the face of the institution. We will be able to offer limited edition prints as a way of raising money for the Cirencester Fund. Watch the alumni newsletter for details – if you don't currently receive it, let us know at [alumni@rau.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@rau.ac.uk).



Mention of the Cirencester Fund allows me the chance to offer our thanks to the many alumni who have contributed to the fund following contact made by current students on the telephone. It is much appreciated, in particular by the students and those who will follow them during the next 170 years. The financial pressure on universities, particularly those that are specialist and relatively small, will, I fear, grow over the next few years. The development of new courses, at home and overseas, and new strands of relevant research, while remaining true to the core business of serving the land-based industries, is crucial for the RAU and is continually happening. Fortunately for those of us involved in such industries, all nine billion of us will have to eat, eat healthily and have a managed land in which to live. I hope you get the feel from this edition of *Landmark* that your institution is in rude health and contributing; it is and there is much to celebrate with you.

Professor Chris Gaskell – Principal, CBE

Royal  
Agricultural  
University  
Cirencester





## Ranked 3rd in UK for graduate employability

# 98%

The Royal Agricultural University (RAU) is thrilled to announce that it is ranked third in the UK for graduate employability. Recent surveys of 2014 graduates have shown that 98.2% of undergraduates in employment or further study within six months.

The statistics reveal that 98.2% of RAU students who graduated in 2014 are now either in work or full-time study. Information from the 2014 full-time UK undergraduates also revealed that the majority (73%) had secured more senior positions, classed as 'professional or managerial roles'.

RAU graduate Jess Sloss, said: "The intimacy the RAU offered was amazing. I knew all of my lecturers and the standards of teaching and support were excellent. Thanks to the stature of the

University and the qualification I earned, I was able to find a fantastic job working as Industry Communications Manager at Red Tractor after graduating."

Postgraduate employability rates at the RAU also remain encouragingly high. The most recent statistics reveal 92.9% are in employment or further study within six months of graduating.

As reported by the Complete University Guide 2016, the RAU ranks in the top 10 in the UK for degree completion, academic spend and facilities spend – recognising its high investment and expenditure per student on staff and student facilities.



## Countryfile debut

Lewis Steer, Rural Land Management student, showcased his business, Lily Warne Wool, on BBC One's *Countryfile* in November 2014. The popular show featured Lewis with Adam Henson at the family farm in Dartmoor, looking at the whole business from farm to yarn. Lily Warne Wool, which Lewis and his mother set up in 2012, create an array of brightly coloured products, from headbands to brooches. *Countryfile* focused on their hand crocheted Remembrance Day poppy, £1 from every poppy sold was donated to the British Legion.

Lewis is a passionate entrepreneur who has engaged with the support available from the RAU Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Programme. He said: "The RAU has helped me grow my business and supported me not only financially through their funding networks, but also through their wealth of contacts.

I would highly recommend the Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Programme to all."

As well as appearing on BBC One's *Countryfile*, Lily Warne Wool has received national coverage in *Country Living* magazine and can be found on the shelves of John Lewis and the National Trust.

# “

**“The RAU has helped me grow my business and supported me not only financially through their funding networks, but also through their wealth of contacts.”**

Lewis Steer



Lewis Steer and his mother with Adam Henson and the poppies



Lewis Steer and Adam Henson

# Celebrating 170 years



*Professor Robert Boutflour, Principal 1931-58*

## Shaping the future

Established in 1845 as the first agricultural institution in the English speaking world, 2015 marks 170 years since the Royal Agricultural College (as it was then known) opened its doors to its first ever cohort of 25 students. The RAU now welcomes 1,200 students each year, and has a powerful network of more than 14,000 alumni worldwide.

To celebrate this anniversary, the University intend to plant a 'Heritage Orchard' of 170 trees to include saplings from HRH The Prince of Wales' collection at Highrove. The Orchard will include 30 varieties marking 30 years of HRH as University President.

In addition, the University has commissioned Graduate Diploma in Agriculture student and sculptor, Will Carr to create a large barley sculpture to be unveiled on campus at the start of term.

The University has also commissioned a high end architectural line-etching of the RAU which will be available for alumni to purchase from September.

There will, no doubt, be plenty of opportunities throughout the year to toast the last 170 years, and raise a glass to the next 170!



*King George VI and Queen Elizabeth 1946 - 100 years*



*A view of the College c.1860*



*Queen Elizabeth tree planting 1946 - 100 years*





HRH The Prince of Wales visit 1989



Her Majesty The Queen visit  
1996 – 150 years

Credit Doug Fitch



© Central Press Photos Ltd London



HRH The Prince of Wales at  
Convocation 1995 – 150 years

Her Majesty The Queen visit 1963



New Rural Innovation Centre opens for business 2014

Royal  
Agricultural  
University  
Cirencester



170  
1845-2015

Shaping our future since 1845

# What a Grand Idea!

Entrepreneurial students at the Royal Agricultural University have long been setting up their own businesses, with the help and support of dedicated University staff. So much so, that our annual Dragons' Den style business competition, the Grand Idea, is going from strength to strength. We've even launched a Mini Grand Idea version of the competition, for students to submit filmed business pitches of their early stage ideas!

Now in its eighth year, the calibre of entry to the Grand Idea is extremely high. Competition is fierce as participants pitch to an expert panel in a bid to win that all-important £1,000 business funding, plus over £3,000 worth of business support prizes such as legal and accountancy support. This year's competition saw a staggering 15 entries, nine of which are already, or will soon be, trading.

Since its launch in 2008, the competition has received 94 business ideas. Judges have read 70 business plans and external business mentors have given students 420 hours of support. Six of the seven Grand Idea winners went on to launch their businesses, with four already trading.

Professor Kanes Rajah, Dean of the School of Business and Entrepreneurship, said: "As the Grand Idea competition matures it is becoming a testament to the entrepreneurial behaviour of our students as much as it is about innovative ideas and starting an enterprise."

## Did you know?

We offer First Steps Funding to help students, staff and recent alumni (five years) with proof of concept funding of £250 to help them test their business idea. Email [enterprise@rau.ac.uk](mailto:enterprise@rau.ac.uk)

## Meet this enterprising bunch...



Eleanor Sear receives her prize from RAU Principal Professor Chris Gaskell

### Cuprum Elie Sear, 2014 winner

"I came up with the idea as part of my entrepreneurship module in the third year of my degree. I was initially looking at an antimicrobial vet wrap using copper, but having done some market research I found some gaps in the equine market for copper technology.

"Having successfully received First Steps Funding from the University, I entered the Grand Idea competition with my idea for Cuprum. The process was daunting but it was a fantastic opportunity to meet with experts and produce a solid business plan – I had a wonderful mentor who I'm still in touch with. I'd thoroughly recommend it to students thinking of setting up a business.

"A lot of development has taken place since then and I'm excited to finally launch my two products, which are currently being manufactured. Thanks to all of my equine friends for letting me try out my various designs on their horses! My aim is to see Cuprum become a successful business. I have a list of people I'd like to see using my products, so, Zara Phillips, if you're reading this, please call me!"



**"I had a wonderful mentor who I'm still in touch with. I'd thoroughly recommend it to students thinking of setting up a business."**

*Elie Sear, 2014 winner*



Sophie Allsopp

### Sophie and Boo Sophie Allsopp, 2008

"I've always been interested in food and retail. On graduating from the RAU I spent two years running five boutique stores, before realising that food was the route I wanted to take. I launched my business Sophie and Boo in 2009, producing a range of products to be sold directly to delicatessens, but have since branched out into catering.

"I moved to Norfolk 18 months ago and the business has gone from strength to strength. I now work with three venues doing weddings and events, as well as private clients. Sophie and Boo has one full-time member of staff, two freelance chefs, and a large number of freelance front of house and kitchen staff, and last year catered around 50 events. I'm now in the process of opening my very first café this summer which is hugely exciting!

"The Grand Idea competition was a great experience. Writing a business plan and pitching it to well-respected judges gave me the confidence I needed when doing it for real with my catering business. It was good to hear their professional opinions and I was able to take on board lots of their advice.

"I'm honoured to have been asked to come back this year as a judge, and am delighted to be involved in helping up-and-coming entrepreneurs. I'm looking forward to receiving the business plans and offering any help that I can!"

[www.sophieandboo.co.uk](http://www.sophieandboo.co.uk)

## Vermtek Charlie Hancock, 2010 winner

"I've grown up with a passion for the countryside and spent most of my childhood shooting or fishing. Vermtek was initially created as a rural pest control company specialising in rabbits, deer and foxes, but as it grew we diversified into mainstream pest control (rats, mice, cockroaches etc.)"

"I entered the Grand Idea competition primarily because of the help available from business mentors – I'm still in touch with my mentor Denys Shortt today. The competition helped me create a business plan and highlight Vermtek's (and my) strengths and weaknesses. It gave me the ability to create a stable platform to launch the company once I left the RAU."

"Founded in 2008, Vermtek is growing rapidly with turnover increasing each year. The team now consists of more than 130 technicians, 15 biologists, 12 abseilers, and 30 senior account managers. We run a range of contracts, from local bakeries to NHS Trusts, DSC Group, and two Airbus manufacturing sites, and have also just won the Northlink Ferries contract. We're investing in online technology that will improve transparency and the level of service we offer."

"Our aim is to continue to grow and become one of the top 10 largest pest control companies in the UK within 10 years. We are also looking forward to tendering for the RAU in the coming months!"

Denys Shortt, businessman, entrepreneur and founder of the health, beauty and household brands distributor DSC Group Ltd, said: "I first met Charlie Hancock when he entered the Grand Idea competition. His enthusiasm for his business was evident and I have been happy to help and mentor him after he left University to start his business. I believe the Grand Idea was the starting point for his career running his own business."



Charlie Hancock



The RAU has a strong entrepreneurial focus and provides students with the opportunity to develop their own business ideas and receive tailored support. Students can join the Entrepreneurs Society, take part in organised workshops and receive business mentoring through our Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Programme. Our programme provides support at all levels; Think it – have an idea, Try it – prove the concept, Launch it – start your business, Grow it – build your business.

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

## Celebrating students' Grand Ideas!

The University celebrated a bumper crop of entrepreneurial talent at its Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Programme Awards in June 2015. Lewis Steer was named Grand Idea champion for his business Lily Warne Wool. He received £1,000 to invest in his business, plus a host of in-kind prizes. Runners up Theo Wasserberg (Tahouts Clothing) and James Miller (JRM Agricultural Services) received £250 to invest in their businesses.

This year's awards were designed to reflect and recognise success at the 'Think it', 'Try it' and 'Launch it' stages

of business development. Kathryn Chipperfield won the 'Think it' Mini Grand Idea competition with her business idea

for seaweed farming, and Lucy Howarth and Lucinda Sturla from Unmentionables were the 'Try it' First Steps Champions.



Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Programme 2015



## Alumni buzzing with Beehive Challenge

Former students Alistair Hunter Blair, Tom Hughes and Emma Dennis travelled to the Nou Forest in Tanzania last October to build as many Langstroth beehives as possible in two and a half days. The innovative Beehive Challenge, organised by Farm Africa, saw the self-proclaimed 'Bee Team' work with local carpenters to produce a staggering 58 beehives.

When they're not building beehives, Emma Dennis works as an agronomist at Agrii and Tom and Alistair are both farmers. Alistair featured on Channel 4's *First Time Farmers* series last autumn.

Emma said: "The Beehive Challenge was certainly a challenge. Seeing the enthusiasm, happiness and heartfelt appreciation that comes from giving people another way of living was the most rewarding experience I've ever had. It's a memory that I will never forget."

As well as the initial challenge, the team have pledged to raise £50,000 to further support the work of Farm Africa.



Tom, Emma and Alistair take on the Beehive Challenge



**"Seeing the enthusiasm, happiness and heartfelt appreciation that comes from giving people another way of living was the most rewarding experience I've ever had."**

Emma Dennis



## Three generations at the RAU

Corrine Wickham, Dr Meriel Moore-Colyer, Charlotte Wickham, Professor Paul Davies, Andrew Wickham, ADE Mure and Professor Kanesh Rajah

On Saturday 24 January 2015, three generations of RAU students posed for a photo in front of the iconic Royal Agricultural University building.

Charlotte Wickham (third from left) is a current RAU student in her first year of BSc (Hons) Real Estate, her father Andrew Wickham (third from right) studied Rural Estate Management at the RAU from 1984-7, and her grandfather Alexander David Evelyn Mure (second from right) came to the then College in 1935-8 and also studied Rural Estate Management.

After leaving the RAU in 1938, ADE Mure (known as David) went to Petworth Estate to train as a land agent before going to War in 1939. At a sprightly 98 years of age this was his first return visit to Cirencester, he remembered some of the buildings but many weren't here back in the 1930s!

Now that his granddaughter Charlotte is studying at the University it was an excellent opportunity to visit.



## Powerful words

Tim Melville-Ross CBE, Chairman of HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England), and Lord Hastings of Scarisbrick CBE, Member of the House of Lords, were both keynote speakers at the RAU's annual Inclusivity, Equality and Diversity Conference in October 2014.

Tim Melville-Ross explained why inclusivity, equality and diversity have always played an important part in all aspects of his career. He advocated embracing individuals and their unique skills to build a better and more inclusive society, together. Lord Hastings of Scarisbrick, who has incorporated diversity into all he has done, captivated the packed lecture theatre with his inspirational words and witty anecdotes.



*Tim Melville-Ross CBE*



*Lord Hastings of Scarisbrick CBE*



The RAU was delighted to welcome Dr Jean Venables CBE, Chief Executive of the UK Association of Drainage Authorities, to present its annual Cator lecture on 31 October 2014. During her presentation 'Flood Risk Management: How can we improve effectiveness?' she addressed a plethora of water management issues and cited key factors; maintenance, policy, funding, legislation, planning and partnerships.

Dr Venables discussed the issue of river maintenance and stressed its direct relationship with policy; Defra

measure maintenance needs in terms of benefit cost calculation. Funding and legislation were also hot topics. Current flood risk prevention funding streams include environmental legislation and other budget constraints. Dr Venables expressed the need for investment in infrastructure, as well as revenue for maintenance. It was concluded that forming partnerships between all vested parties; Environmental Agency, Local Authorities, Drainage Boards etc. is key to delivering effective water management systems.

An article from the  
Royal Agricultural  
College Journal, 1963

## Pet hates

The following list of pet hates may be of interest to anybody who has such things but on meeting them as they occur, shrugs his (or her) shoulders and thinks 'Oh I wish somebody would do something about it,' as indeed we all do.

The following were compiled within only a few weeks: tiny handkerchiefs, gates that need lifting to shut, clocks that don't tell the correct time, door bells that don't work or you can't hear, weak laces, inaccessible fuse boxes, mirrors not head height or that reflect a light when looked into, foot paths of unnecessary length, shop assistants that don't know what they are talking about, having to wait for a radio, T.V. or gramophone to warm up, objects appearing distorted when looked at through a window, small pieces of soap, incorrect figures on a radio tuning scale, cars that rattle, coin machines that continually reject your money, shops that can't or won't change money, short beds, insufficient hot water for a bath, cold radiators, shirts that rip when put on in a hurry, full or insufficient litter bins, petrol gauges that don't work, halfpennies, cold gravy, traffic lights that you have to stop at in the middle of the night without a car in sight, slow bath plugs and of course dull and boring articles that are much longer than they should be.

**KAC Vinycomb**



## Taking the plunge

Brave staff and students took the plunge and abseiled down the iconic RAU tower in March 2015, raising more than £1,000 for the local Gloucestershire branch of ABF The Soldiers' Charity.

Sarah Tennant-Bell, Student Support Services Manager, said: "This is such an exciting event for our students and staff, no one's ever had the chance to abseil down the RAU tower before! We're raising funds for a very worthwhile cause, ABF The Soldiers' Charity supports soldiers, former soldiers and their families that have been affected by conflict. It was great to see so much support for those that took on the challenge



and we're thrilled to have raised more than £1,000 for the charity!"

The RAU tower abseil was run with the help of Aardvark Endeavours and ABF The Soldiers' Charity.



## Thousands raised during RAG Week

RAG Week (Raise and Give) is a tradition at the RAU, which gives students the opportunity to come together and raise money for some fantastic charities. This year's fundraising events were organised by the RAG Team and RAU Students' Union (RAUSU) to raise money for R.A.B.I., The Willow Trust and the Chesterton Project.

RAG Week kicked off with the RAG Auction which raised a staggering £5,485. Auction lots varied from a week's holiday in Italy to one of the last RAC signs – which sold for £520! Enthusiastic students turned up in force to pull the tractor from Cirencester town centre all the way back



to the University, and the RAG shoot was a competitive affair. The RAG Gala Dinner included another hugely successful auction which raised a further £3,000.

Millie Mantle, RAUSU Chairman, said: "I have been at the University for five years now and this is one of the most successful and well received weeks we've ever had."



**RAG Week 2015 raised a staggering £16,362 for three very worthwhile charities. A massive well done to everyone involved!**



## NEW Rural Tourism course

An innovative new Masters degree in Rural Tourism Management has been launched by the School of Business and Entrepreneurship for 2015 entry, which will prepare graduates for one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. Students will gain a thorough understanding of the political, economic and social frameworks underpinning the developing industry, and its role as an agent for cultural change and sustainable development.

To find out more or apply, visit [www.rau.ac.uk/rtm](http://www.rau.ac.uk/rtm)



## Professional training

The RAU offers a number of high quality courses, which can be tailored to suit the needs of a business at all levels. The professional training department collaborate with the University's many national and international specialist academic networks, bringing high profile relevant experts to the training programmes. As well as bespoke training, the professional training department deliver courses in: Leadership and Management, Business and the Environment, Business Management, Insight into Agriculture, Environmental Management and Legislation, Estate Management and Wayleave Officer training.

### John Edgar Trust Management Development Scheme

A residential course in rural business management designed to enable an individual to become a powerful asset to their business and through that, to the industry as a whole. The next course will be delivered in 2016/17.



John Edgar Trust Management Development Scheme 2015

### Worshipful Company of Farmers (WCF) Advanced Agricultural Business Management Programme

Delivered annually on behalf of the WCF, this course aims to help the individual operate most effectively within their business. The application deadline for the next course is 31 August 2015.

### The Institute of Agricultural Management Leadership Development Programme

A residential course aimed at individuals undertaking an influential role within the agri-food sector. The next course will run in February, March and April 2016. The application deadline is 31 July 2015.

For further information, please contact [professional.training@rau.ac.uk](mailto:professional.training@rau.ac.uk)



# International Real Estate Masters launched with Indian university

The School of Real Estate and Land Management (RELM) has formed a partnership with Manav Rachna University (MRU) and Manav Rachna International University (MRIU) in India, and is delighted to offer postgraduate students at MRU and MRIU the chance to study in the UK for one semester and earn a Postgraduate Certificate.

The University's relationship with MRU and MRIU will develop further as plans to launch a joint MSc/MBA in Real Estate progress. The two year International Real Estate programme will allow students to study for a RICS accredited MSc in the UK followed by an MBA in India. This opportunity is perfect for those seeking a career within the global real estate industry.

Professor Ali Parsa, Dean of the School of RELM, said: "With the launch of this programme, the School of Real Estate and Land Management and the RAU would be training an elite who will play a strategic role in the leadership of the real estate industry in India."



**"The RAU would be training an elite who will play a strategic role in the leadership of the real estate industry in India."**

*Professor Ali Parsa*

The School offers a portfolio of undergraduate and postgraduate courses and PhD research in real estate, international real estate and rural land management. The RAU has a long-standing association with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors who have been accrediting our courses since the 1930s.



## Next Bishop of Gloucester is announced at the RAU

The Rural Innovation Centre played host to a very special announcement in March 2015, as Her Majesty the Queen appointed the Venerable Rachel Treweek, Archdeacon of Hackney in the Diocese of London, as the next Bishop of Gloucester. She will be the first female Diocesan Bishop in the Church of England following legislation passed last year enabling women as Bishops.

Following the announcement, Rachel Treweek said: "It is an immense joy and

privilege to be appointed as the Bishop of Gloucester. I am surprised and, I have to admit, even a little daunted by the prospect, but my overwhelming feeling is one of excitement to be coming to join with others in sharing the love of Jesus Christ with the people of this Diocese."

The Venerable Rachel Treweek will be formally enthroned at Gloucester Cathedral later this year.



*The Venerable Rachel Treweek, the next Bishop of Gloucester*



## Dual CMI qualification for business graduates

Students studying in the School of Business and Entrepreneurship (SBE) will receive a dual qualification from the Chartered Management Institute (CMI). Upon graduation, undergraduate business management students will collect their BSc Honours degree and also be awarded the Level 6 Certificate in Management and Leadership from the CMI.

Professor Kanes Rajah, Dean of the SBE, said: "This is a watershed moment for the students and graduates of the SBE. It is also confirmation that we are producing graduates who are highly employable. Our graduates are enterprising and entrepreneurial and we are preparing them well for managerial and senior leadership roles. This is what the RAU experience is all about."

## Standing against domestic abuse



RAU students were pictured wearing purple T-shirts sporting the words 'real men support an end to domestic abuse', as part of the Gloucestershire Take a Stand campaign (25 November – 10 December 2014).

A purple ribbon was tied to a tree at the University campus to demonstrate its commitment to the cause, and staff and students took part in a 'Walk a Mile' awareness event on campus.

The 16 day Gloucestershire Take a Stand campaign promoted a zero tolerance approach to domestic abuse,

sexual violence and other related issues. Organisations, groups and communities across the county joined forces to take action.

To find out more, visit [www.glostakeastand.com](http://www.glostakeastand.com)





# RAU in the headlines

The Royal Agricultural University frequently features in national and specialist media for its cutting-edge research and ongoing investment in the future of agriculture and the related land-based industries. Here are just some of the stories to hit the headlines in the past year.



HRH The Princess Royal at SEMS launch event

## New Equine School

HRH The Princess Royal officially opened the RAU's new School of Equine Management and Science (SEMS) on 15 September 2014, at a conference on 'Education, Research and the Horse Industry for the 21st Century'. HRH The Princess Royal expressed her keen interest in equine management and welfare and congratulated the University on its portfolio of relevant equine degrees. Chaired by Mike Tucker, well-known equestrian television commentator and Chair of the SEMS Advisory Board, the conference included a presentation by Tim Hadaway, FEI Director of Games and Championships. The creation of the new School is an exciting development that will provide a clear identity for our research

specialisms in nutrition, genetics, and health and welfare, and further enhance our USP in applied equine research.

Covered by *Times Higher Education*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *BBC Farming Today*.



HRH The Princess Royal with RAU Principal Professor Chris Gaskell

## DairyCo video

Adam Henson, popular television presenter and industry advocate, paid a visit to the University and spent time filming with dedicated dairy farming students, Joe Wheeler and Emily Edwards. In the video, filmed by DairyCo at the University's Rural Innovation Centre at Harnhill Farm, the students discuss their motivations, the modern-day skills required, and how they're championing the industry as an exciting and rewarding career choice. The face of farming is constantly evolving, and although it's one of our oldest industries, dairy farming has never been more appealing to such a broad range of people from all walks of life. The total number of students enrolled at the RAU has increased by 49% in the last five years alone, which shows the growing interest in being part of the industry which enables our national food chain to flourish.

Covered by *The Daily Telegraph*. Search 'dairy farming students are the future' on YouTube to watch the video.



Adam Henson with PhD students Emily and Joe

## Morrisons partnership

The RAU and food retailer Morrisons have launched an education and research based partnership which will benefit the wider farming industry. The long-term partnership will develop education, research projects and training initiatives. Each partner will benefit from the expertise and understanding of the other, and the partnership has the potential through its work to inform and benefit the agricultural and food production industries across the whole food chain. The partnership will provide the students and staff with a valuable insight into the commercial realities of the food supply chain, and Morrisons will benefit by having access to the research expertise of the RAU and working

closely with knowledgeable graduates in agriculture, food and related subjects.

Covered by *Times Higher Education* and *Farmers Guardian*.



*Cllr Clive Bennett, Professor Chris Gaskell, Martyn Jones and Cllr Joe Harris*

## £2.9m Gloucestershire Growth Deal

The University has secured £2.9m to support agri-tech businesses and start-ups and promote innovation as part of the GFirstLEP Gloucestershire Growth Deal. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has confirmed a total of £77.5m investment into Gloucestershire. The RAU will invest in flexible innovation spaces designed to support rural and agri-tech start-up businesses from the earliest stages. These spaces will consist of superfast broadband, intellectual

incubation space, meeting rooms, product development and testing space, and support facilities. Entrepreneurs will have access to the University's considerable enterprise expertise, as well as the vast network of investor and industry contacts that have been cultivated through the RAU's international reputation.

Covered by the BBC, live from the House of Commons.

## Business and food MBAs

The University offers a series of specialist MBA degrees in the food and drink industry which have recently received national press coverage, as the demand for such courses sees institutions like the School of Business and Entrepreneurship (SBE) extend their scope and increase their intake. Professor Kanes Rajah, Dean of the SBE, explains how the rise of new consuming and producing regions and the dramatically changing nature of the food chain are both key factors behind their increase in

popularity. Markets have become global, farms are bigger, and technology and trade are transforming farming and food manufacturing. The RAU offers MBAs in International Food and Agribusiness, and Advanced Farm Management.

Covered by *The Times* and *Financial Times*.



*Alan Hughes, inventor of the Badger Beater*

## Reducing the spread of bTB

The RAU completed a three month trial at Harnhill Farm assessing the effectiveness of the Badger Beater feeder, made by Rumenco Ltd, in preventing badger access to mineral licks. The Badger Beater holds Rumevite blocks, buckets and tubs off the ground at 1m high; the DEFRA recommended badger-proof feeding height, to reduce badger contact with the mineral lick. The trials demonstrated that there were no successful attempts from badgers to access the mineral lick held by the Badger Beater, whilst badgers were seen to access the contents of a conventional mineral lick bucket. The study concludes that the use of the Badger Beater is likely to prevent badgers from accessing the contents of a mineral lick, and thus potentially reduce the spread of Bovine Tuberculosis.

Covered by *Farmers Guardian*, *Farmers Weekly*, *Farming Life* and *Veterinary Record*.

# From grain to loaf at Big Feastival



© Oxford Mail

Schoolchildren plant wheat for Big Feastival 2015

Building on the success of last year's inaugural RAU Potato Patch at the Big Feastival, local schoolchildren from Kingham and Bledington primary schools have planted wheat, rye and spelt that will be ready to harvest at this year's festival, taking place from 28 – 30 August 2015.

The Big Feastival will have a flour mill onsite for the RAU Wheat Project. Festival-goers will be encouraged to harvest their own wheat, rye or spelt from the crops planted with the RAU. They will then mill it into flour with FWP Matthews Millers, before joining the team from Hobbs House Bakery to make their very own dough and produce wonderful flat bread creations.

Alex James said: "Last year's Potato Patch was a huge success. We grow as many different things as we can here on the

farm but wheat is Britain's great staple and it's lovely to think seeds planted by the children today on the farm will be turned into delicious breads at the Big Feastival."

Visit the Big Feastival website to find out more and buy tickets.



**"Last year's Potato Patch was a huge success."**

*Alex James*



RAU entrepreneurs at Big Feastival 2014



Dr Nicola Cannon and Jamie Oliver at the RAU Potato Patch 2014



Schoolchildren plant potatoes for Big Feastival 2014

**Alex James is a musician and songwriter, best known as the bassist of the band Blur. He co-hosts the annual Big Feastival, a food and music festival, on his farm in Kingham, Oxfordshire, with Jamie Oliver.**

## BUSC/BUSA Yachting Championships

Students involved in the Royal Agricultural University's yacht club took part in the BUCS/BUSA Yachting Championships.

As their first time competing in this event the team put in a solid performance, more than holding their own on upwind legs against the top competitors.

At the end of the regatta the team met HRH The Princess Royal, who was pleasantly surprised to find her near neighbours out on the water competing against the reigning British Yachting Champions, Southampton.



RAU yacht club with HRH The Princess Royal



## Students raise £4k for Watershed RDA

Students and staff from the Royal Agricultural University visited the home of Watershed Riding for the Disabled Association in Coates in June 2015, to present a cheque worth £4,000. Equine students at the University organised a fundraising event on 14 March, hosted by Longdole Polo Club, and despite the bitter cold raised a fantastic amount of

money for the local charity. The day was a huge success with Pony Club mounted games, an RDA demonstration, and an equestrian celebrity polo match in the arena featuring well known eventing riders including Olympian, Mary King MBE.

The cheque was gratefully received by Pam Farnsworth, Chairman of the branch. She said: "We were thrilled to receive such a large sum and would like to thank both the staff and students from the Royal Agricultural University. The students were so professional and their efforts will make a big contribution to our much needed facilities."

The Watershed RDA has plans in place for new washing facilities, therapy and a tearoom.



RAU staff and students present cheque to RDA in Coates

## Bledisloe lecture success

Professor Charles Godfray CBE FRS, Director of the Oxford Martin School at Oxford University, spoke about 'Badgers, bees and biodiversity – is it possible to resolve contentious issues in the countryside?' at the annual Bledisloe Memorial Lecture in November 2014.

Addressing a packed auditorium of students, staff, and industry experts, Professor Godfray highlighted the increasingly important relationship between science and policy. He discussed badgers and Bovine Tuberculosis (bTB) and touched upon the immense complexity of the disease. Professor Godfray went on to advocate the value of biosecurity, and discuss neonicotinoid insecticides and the dramatic decline in pollinators, such as the honeybee.

Introduced in 1959, the Bledisloe Memorial Lecture commemorates Viscount Bledisloe, who studied at the Royal Agricultural College (as was) in 1894. The RAU was particularly pleased to be joined by Lord Bledisloe, the great grandson of Viscount Bledisloe.



RAU Principal Professor Chris Gaskell with Professor Charles Godfray

## Sahara trek for graduate



Hannah Lawrence, former agricultural student, will be trekking across the Sahara Desert in November to raise £1,600 for the Addington Fund; which supports farming families experiencing financial hardship. Hannah is a Farm Business Manager working with dairy farmers across the UK. She has taken part in many different sporting events over the years.

Hannah said: "I'm extremely passionate about agriculture, and working in the field I come across

some very difficult situations. It's our responsibility to support those in crisis and secure the future of agriculture for the next generation."

If you would like to donate, please visit Hannah's fundraising page <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/HannahLawrence3>



*Kenneth and George Russell*

**Born in 1948, three years after his father Kenneth Russell arrived in Cirencester, George Russell shares his memories of growing up in Dairy Cottage at the end of the main drive.**

Dairy Cottage was always busy. My Mother would wash eggs from the deep litter unit at Field Barn and then jump into Father's ex-army jeep to hunt down another hand milker for the evening session. I clearly remember mother dressing up as Little Bo Peep for one May Ball, with a pet lamb in tow! I also have a black thorn walking stick given to father by Lord Porchester inscribed 'With Much Appreciation'. I often wondered about the significance of this, until I was reliably informed that Lord Porchester was tapping his stick during one of Father's

# Memories of Dairy Cottage

## George Russell

1967, Short course

farm walks! This did not go down too well with Kenneth Russell, so the Black Thorn walking stick was by way of an apology!

Post 1945 were important years for farming families. Father often remarked that the students were very keen to learn and get back to farming after losing those years to the War. In 1955, pastures new called and Father left the Royal to take up the post as Principal of Askham Bryan York. A position he held for two and a half years before returning south as Principal of Shuttleworth in Bedfordshire. In 1966/67 he took on the tenancy of Middle Farm Bedford, where I farm today.

I returned to Cirencester in 1966 as a pre-college student and spent 12 months with Ted and Jane Woodhouse of Field Farm in Ewen – they were close family friends as Ted and Bobby had been in the War together. Ted kept us entertained at the meal table with stories of ploughing up permanent pasture for the war effort and the allocation of steel wheeled tractors to the local farmers.

1967 turned out to be a major turning point for me. Father and I enjoyed our first harvest together at Middle Farm, but before managing to get to work together more closely he died in the December. On Father's death, the Radio Four Farming Programme, presented by Mike Clarke, ran a tribute to Father and announced when introducing me that 'a Russell without milk takes some swallowing'. At 51 years old he had given his life to agricultural education and hands on farming, but he had also instilled in me a lifelong love of farming and the thrill and enjoyment of competition.

It's now more than 60 years since Kenneth Russell established the Steadings Herd with 'Bobby' Boutflour – famous for the 2,000 gallon average of cows named Bluebell, Buttercup and Beauty. Looking back, this was a prime example of a small family farm with 23 milking cows being hand milked three times a day – pioneering how to make money from cows on a limited acreage. As a boy young as I was, I could not fail to notice the size of these cows' udders!

## British strongman competitor launches gym



*British strongman competitor Laurence Shahleai with RAU students*

The RAU's brand new fitness centre was officially opened in February 2015 with a special visit from British Strongman competitor, Laurence Shahleai. The new gym was opened by RAU Principal, Professor Chris Gaskell and attended by Forest Green Rovers players and RAU sports captains. A friendly game of squash was played between the Principal and Graham Barton, Director of Estates.

Professor Chris Gaskell said: "We had a fantastic morning launching our brand new fitness centre, a special thanks to Laurence Shahleai and the Forest Green Rovers players for coming along and supporting us. It was great to see so many representatives from the RAU sports teams, who will be able to make good use of these new and improved gym facilities."

## Just Kidding star on BBC *Chefs on Trial*

Lizzie Dyer, RAU graduate and founder of Just Kidding, featured on BBC Two's *Chefs on Trial* in April 2015. *Chefs on Trial* follows Alex Polizzi as she takes on the challenge of finding a head chef for the Miners Arms pub in the Forest of Dean. Lizzie can be seen discussing goat meat and the different cuts available as the chefs compete to create a high quality, tasty goat dish.

Lizzie said: "I'm excited and proud to see our product being showcased on national television. Our kid meat is being used for the challenge to decide which chef will make it through to the final. We were filmed at the farm and I was invited to give my expert opinion on the chefs' dishes."

Lizzie Dyer set up Just Kidding, purveyor of quality Cotswold kid meat in 2013. In 2014, she received a gold star at the Great Taste Awards and won the Young Farmer category at the Taste of Gloucestershire Awards.



“

**"I'm excited and proud to see our product being showcased on national television."**

*Lizzie Dyer*

## Students present research to Defra

Rural Land Management students presented their dissertations to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in July 2014, as part of ongoing research around Bovine Tuberculosis (bTB) and its control.

Jacquetta Whyatt Watts, Chelsea Hayward and Camilla Shipley accompanied Dr Rhiannon Naylor to Westminster to present their findings relating to badger vaccination, risk-based trading and bTB control strategy to Defra policy makers; who were very interested in the results.

Dr Rhiannon Naylor, Lecturer in Rural Land Use and Management at the RAU, works as a Social Research Fellow at Defra. She said: "This was an excellent opportunity for the students and it was great to see knowledge exchange between the University and Defra. We hope to continue this in the future."

The control of bTB is a key concern within agriculture, which has spread dramatically in recent years having huge financial and emotional impacts on farmers. Addressing this issue is a priority area for the University; Dr Naylor is currently leading on research which focuses on demonstrating the practicality and effectiveness of bTB biosecurity measures.

“

**"This was an excellent opportunity for the students and it was great to see knowledge exchange between the University and Defra."**

*Dr Rhiannon Naylor*



*Chelsea Hayward, Camilla Shipley and Jacquetta Whyatt Watts present to Defra*

# Celebrating graduation in the heart of Cirencester



Hundreds of students graduated from the University at Convocation on 29 and 30 July 2014. Three joyous ceremonies were held at Cirencester Parish Church, the perfect backdrop for the traditional services, followed by a drinks reception at the University campus. The RAU had recently celebrated a year since it was awarded full university status (April 2013) and Cirencester became a 'university town', so it was fitting that the event was held in the town itself. For the first time ever, a big screen was set up in the church foyer for members of the public to watch the Convocation services.

Honorary Fellowships are awarded each year to people who have made a significant contribution to those areas of life in which the University provides education and research. This year, Fellowships were awarded to Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP, Henry Cator OBE, FRICS, DL, and James Townshend.



*Professor Kanes Rajah, Professor Chris Gaskell, Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, Jeremy Lewis Chairman of Governors and Dr Meriel Moore-Colyer*

The Fellows addressed the graduands as they prepared to go forth into the world. Henry Cator addressed students at the RELM ceremony and stressed the importance of land management and their duty of care towards the environment and for the future. Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP addressed business and equine students and spoke about the importance of science, innovation and technology in driving the industry forwards. James Townshend addressed agriculture and food students and discussed the value of people and the skills they can bring to a business.

RAU Principal, Professor Chris Gaskell CBE congratulated the students on their hard work and excellent results; with more First Class and Upper Second Class (2.1) degrees achieved than ever before. He spoke about the fantastic employability of RAU graduates, and wished them every success for the future. Professor Gaskell then expressed his pride

in the RAU alumni, and urged them to keep in touch with one another and the University through the alumni network.

Graduates were joined by their friends and family and special guests from the town, including the Mayor of Cirencester, Councillor Joe Harris, and the High Sherriff of Gloucestershire, Mr Thomas Frost.

We welcome the Class of 2014 to the 14,000 strong RAU alumni network!



*The academic procession at Cirencester Parish Church*





## Eat Wild feature on Channel 4's *First Time Farmers*

Eat Wild food business, set up in 2010 by RAU alumnus Calum Thompson and his brother William, was featured on Channel 4's *First Time Farmers* in autumn 2014. The programme followed the brothers on their journey to bring sustainably sourced wild meat and game to the nations' tables, and the highs and lows of setting up their own restaurant, Eat Wild based in Cirencester, last year.

The brothers decided to take part in the programme to further their mission of portraying game and field sports in a positive light. The show featured the boys going out shooting, foraging and fishing before going on to butcher what they had caught and selling it at farmers' markets

from their mobile catering van. They certainly demonstrated their passion for fresh, local produce, which has been carried forward into their restaurant.

Visit [www.eat-wild.co.uk](http://www.eat-wild.co.uk)



William Thompson and Calum Thompson

## Your stories

We are always interested in hearing your news. If you would like to suggest a feature or be included in *Landmark*, please email [landmark@rau.ac.uk](mailto:landmark@rau.ac.uk)

Eat Wild opened the doors of their new restaurant to the homeless on Christmas Eve, and invited them in for a traditional festive feast with all the trimmings. A large turkey was donated by Butts Farm in South Cerney as well as a Christmas cake from the Baker Brothers.

## Environmental runner-up at business awards

The University celebrated being a finalist in the Environmental Business Award category of the Gloucestershire Business Awards in October 2014. The University's position as a unique institution at the forefront of tackling the issue of climate change in the rural sector; by educating and inspiring current and future leaders in agriculture, business,

real estate and land management, was particularly commended by the awards.

It was also noted that the RAU is an exemplar through its own operations, such as the installation of a biomass boiler, environmental management system implementation and the development of the new Rural Innovation Centre at Harnhill Farm. Its holistic approach to environmental sustainability has led to a 33% reduction in total energy use over the past four years, with an increase in the proportion of renewable energy generated.

The University is on track to meet its HEFCE approved carbon management plan target by 2020.

RAU Principal Professor Chris Gaskell said: "To be shortlisted was a terrific achievement, and the University has come a long way – mainly by recognising and building on many things we were already doing. After all, sustainability is core business. Pearl Costello, our Environmental Management Graduate Trainee, and the team are to be congratulated on all the work they have done to help us get this far – and give us the momentum to develop still further."

Pearl also won the Outstanding Intern Award at the Grow Gloucestershire Showcase Awards 2014.



Pearl Costello with the Environmental Business Finalist Award



# From the archives

Dr J A Hanley – Principal, staff and students 1928



Rugby team 1885



Diploma class Easter 1887



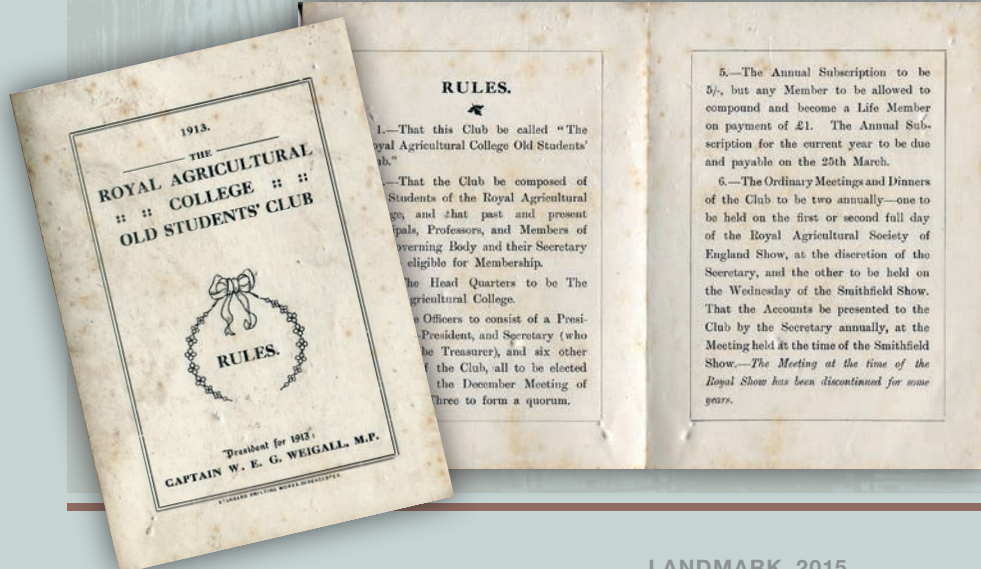
Sports 1886



John Scales first Principal 1844-46



College group summer 1890 – Prince Johan Kuhio Kalaniana'ole of Hawaii, front second from left



Old Students' Club

## New Dean for School of Agriculture, Food and Environment

Professor David Hopkins,  
Dean of SAFE



Professor David Hopkins has been appointed the new Dean of the School of Agriculture, Food and Environment (SAFE), and took up the post from 1 October 2014.

Professor Hopkins was formerly Head of the School of Life Sciences at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh. Previously, he was Director of Science at the Scottish Crop Research Institute at Dundee, and before that he was a Professor and Head of School at the University of Stirling, where he also held a prestigious Research Fellowship from the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

Professor David Hopkins is a soil scientist with a PhD from the University of Newcastle. He is a specialist in nutrient cycling processes in soils and the dynamics of soil organic matter. He has applied these expertise in both agricultural and ecological contexts, and his work includes studies on the decomposition of residues from GM plants, the effects of soil

management on nutrient turnover, and the carbon distribution and storage in soils.

He has published extensively in soil science research literature, maintains an active research programme, has enduring international collaborations, has supervised the training of over 20 PhD students, and has extensive editorial experience for scientific journals. He serves on Defra's ACRE panel which provides scientific advice to UK Government Ministers in relation to GM organisms, currently chairs the UK National Committee on Antarctic Research, and has substantial experience on research committees of the Natural Environment Research Council and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council.

RAU Principal, Professor Chris Gaskell, said: "Professor Hopkins is a tremendous addition to the team at the RAU; he brings a wealth of experience in

agriculture, particularly in areas such as soil science which are key to the challenges facing food production and environmental management, and his international experience fits well with our global outlook and heritage. These are exciting times for us all."



## Dean published in *Nature*

Professor David Hopkins has co-written a ground-breaking paper in the field of soil carbon which has been published in the prestigious journal *Nature*.

Results published in *Nature* show that, contrary to previous expectations, decomposers in most soil microorganisms do not control

their respiration rates as temperature increases. Therefore, the rates of CO<sub>2</sub> loss from soils may be greater than predicted, which could have implications for climate change.

The research was led at the University of Exeter by Dr Iain Hartley and Dr Kristiina Karhu.

## Students win NIAB Agronomy Cup

A team of four final year BSc (Hons) Agriculture students successfully proved they are the best wheat growers around after winning the 2014 Countrywide NIAB Agronomy Cup. Poppy de Pass, Elice Willett, Matt Clarke and Elwyn Thomas achieved the highest gross margin beating 16 other teams. They won a day out with a NIAB TAG agronomist, free entry to a NIAB technical conference and a £100 Countrywide voucher for each team member.

Since completing the competition, Poppy de Pass (team captain) now works at NIAB Sutton Scotney as a trials officer, Elice Willett is in New Zealand on a six month contract for Monsanto growing vegetables for seed, Matt Clarke is applying to go back to IRRI to work on a C4 rice project, and Elwyn Thomas is working for a contract farming business.

NIAB Agronomy Cup winners  
Poppy de Pass and Elwyn Thomas with trophy



# Brandon Lewis MP on localism and neighbourhood planning



Brandon Lewis MP, Minister of Housing and Planning, delivered the keynote speech at the second annual Localism and Neighbourhood Planning Conference in November 2014, organised by the School of Real Estate and Land Management (RELM).

During his speech, the Minister pledged continued Government support for neighbourhood planning and stated that further announcements would be made to streamline and speed up the

process, but the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) would not be replaced.

Brandon Lewis MP said: "Neighbourhood planning is one of the most exciting innovations of the localism agenda. For the first time, community groups can produce development plans that, if passed by the community at referendum, will carry real weight in the planning system, and allow them to play a much stronger role in shaping the future of the areas in which they live and work."

The School of RELM welcomed Michael Newey, Chief Executive of the Broadland Housing Group and RICS President 2013-14, and Matt Thomson, Head of Planning for the Campaign to Protect Rural England to the conference, as well as representatives from the Department of Communities and Local Government, CLA, and Gloucestershire Rural Community Council.

## Great RAU Bake Off



RAU Bake Off contestants

The RAU celebrated Fairtrade Fortnight (23 February – 8 March 2015) with its first ever Fairtrade and Local Bake Off. Seven eager bakers put their skills to the test in the RAU Food Centre, with three hours to bake their showstopper using only Fairtrade and local ingredients.

Winner Olivia Yates created a layered orange, beetroot and chocolate cake themed as a vegetable patch to show

sustainability at the RAU. Runner-up Jessica Maude baked a fantastically technical opera cake, with layers of home-made raspberry jam, ganache and Fairtrade chocolate sponge.

The students' bakes, along with some staff creations, were sold as part of a cake sale the following day which raised more than £130 for the RAU's RAG charities and First Steps Fund.



Winner Olivia Yates with her orange, beetroot and chocolate cake

This was the first Fairtrade Fortnight since the RAU achieved Fairtrade University status in 2014, which recognised the commitments made by the University to support smaller suppliers in the developing world through purchasing and teaching.

# An insight into the Gloucestershire property market



Dr Arvydas Jadevicius and Dr Simon Huston, lecturers in the School of Real Estate and Land Management, have published a report into the Gloucester and Cheltenham property market.

The report examined current asking property prices for both cities and compared them with the UK average. The average asking price for a house in Gloucester was £200,444 and £332,328 in Cheltenham, compared with £260,609 in England and Wales, and £454,034 in Greater London.

The data indicates that the average asking price in Cheltenham is 66% higher than in Gloucester (114% higher for a terraced house), and 28% higher than the average in England and Wales. It is also interesting to note that asking house prices in Gloucester are 23% lower than the average in England and Wales.

Dr Jadevicius and Dr Huston also published a report into the Help to Buy (HTB) mortgage guarantee scheme in Gloucestershire. During the first six months of the scheme 7,313 mortgages, that's 7.5% of all residential mortgages, were completed in the UK – the majority of which were in England (81%).

Regional analysis suggests that there were 599 mortgage completions in the South West; 8% of total completions. The average property value was £157,500 and the mean borrower income was £50,210 per annum.

In the Gloucestershire (South) region, just 30 HTB mortgages were completed. The average mortgage loan in Cheltenham was £152,100, compared with £139,500 in Gloucester.

## Farmers Apprentice finalist

**Catherine Corbett, second year BSc (Hons) Agriculture student, featured in the 2014 Farmers Weekly Farmers Apprentice competition and embarked on a week long boot camp in a bid to win £10,000.**

Catherine Corbett was selected as one of 10 finalists after she submitted her one minute 'why you are awesome' video and impressed judges. Catherine was put through her paces in a series of farm challenges at Easton and Otley College. The tasks she and her fellow competitors faced reflected real life aspects of running a modern farming business. These challenges made up a six-part web series.

Catherine said: "It was incredible to be involved in the Farmers Apprentice and meet people my age so passionate about farming. It was great to be part of a show that's educating the nation on what farming is about."



Catherine Corbett competes in the Farmers Apprentice 2014



Dr Simon Huston



Dr Arvydas Jadevicius

## Conserving Cirencester

Environmental foundation degree students have been working hard to conserve the local area. They've enhanced habitats for key farmland bird species by installing nest boxes and providing summer and winter food, and planted 700 trees during National Tree Week (29 November – 7 December 2014). Their restoration of coppice woodland on a local estate saw the return of a Pearl Bordered Fritillary butterfly, now one of our most threatened species.



# Research and consultancy

The RAU is building on its long tradition of applied research which typically benefits our immediate constituency, farmers, and land managers by expanding into new fields such as equine behaviour and real estate. This year sees three PhD students graduate from the School of Agriculture, Food and Environment (SAFE) and a large intake of new PhD students, as the School

of Equine Management and Science (SEMS) and the School of Real Estate and Land Management (RELM) commence research degrees. Our third submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) reported our research over the period 2008-2014 and for the first time we were recognised for world leading research. The Consultancy Unit have also managed a

wide range of projects for specific clients. We are proud of our research activities and are continuing our developments towards Research Degree Awarding Status. A selection of research that the University is involved with is included in this section.

**Dr John Conway**  
**Director of Research**

## Research Excellence Framework submission

In December 2014, more than 10% of the RAU's research output was independently accredited as either 'internationally excellent or world leading' by the REF: the periodic assessment of university level research. This outcome is related to the University's submission of research activities over the past six years, much of which has been categorised as internationally and nationally recognised. This is the first time RAU research has been recognised as 'world leading'.



## Research development and the corporate plan

The 2014-2019 RAU corporate plan stresses the value of research to the strategic development of the University. Its focus, building on the REF, is for research to have demonstrable impact on the industries the University serves. The RAU is delighted to have been awarded £2.9m as part of the Gloucestershire Growth Deal to further develop facilities and incubate new businesses. The University is currently developing a new research strategy to concentrate activities around the Government's agri-technology focus.

## Sunshine Organic Farms scoping study

The RAU has recently completed an initial scoping study for Sunshine Organic Farms, a Ghanaian organic farm located near the coastal city of Cape Coast. The project involved carrying out an initial review of the local environmental conditions and the prospects for upscaling the farm to a commercial venture. The research team identified the social impacts of the plan and the possible influence on the surrounding area, including providing employment for local farmers. The facilities at local universities were also mapped as the business is aiming to work in partnership with students to provide practical training and education.



## New PhD projects

The RAU is continuing its developments toward Research Degree Awarding Status, having doubled the number of PhD students during 2014, and offering three fully funded PhD opportunities this year, which are yet to be allocated. Two new projects funded by the Oldacre Trust have just started: exploring the best agronomic practices for intercropping field beans and wheat to reduce nitrogen inputs yet produce high quality crops; and optimisation of red clover as a tool for building soil fertility. The School of RELM has engaged in PhD research examining the management of mega-construction projects like the Olympic Centre in London, valuation systems for residential property in UAE, and the attraction of London property to GCC investors.

## Research degree students

Recent PhD graduates include Dr Harriet Moyo and Dr AV Vijaya Bhaskar. Dr Harriet Moyo evaluated the contribution of legume-grass mixtures to the nitrogen supply to subsequent wheat crops. Dr Vijaya Bhaskar investigated the interaction of three different cultivation treatments, combined with undersowing white clover, black medic

or no undersowing. Vijaya published several research papers and has now returned home to India. Karen Rial-Lovera has submitted her thesis; her research is allied to Vijaya's but is not limited to organic certification. Kirsty Roberts has just embarked on her PhD investigating behavioural probes of equine brain function.



Dr Vijaya Bhaskar



Karen Rial-Lovera



## Garden Enfield community growing

The University is working closely with Enfield Borough Council in North London to evaluate the Garden Enfield community growing scheme and assess its impact on the community. This initiative has seen unused plots of council land transformed into urban agricultural plots in deprived areas of the borough. Local volunteers and charities have been involved in the development of these schemes, and the RAU will continue to work closely with these groups to assess their impact on the community. The evaluation is looking at various aspects such as health, environment, skills and development, employment, and community engagement. Professor Ali Parsa, who is leading this investigation, will use his experience from the Commercial Local Urban District (CLUDs) project in deprived areas of Boston and San Diego.

## RAU Economic Impact Review

The RAU has been privately commissioned to investigate the economic impact that it has on the surrounding area. The School of RELM has carried out the investigation through interviews with key stakeholders in the region and holding a focus group meeting. The results from these activities have allowed the project team to gain a very good insight regarding how the University is portrayed within Gloucestershire and further afield. Key discussions also considered how the RAU could become more involved within Cirencester relating to economic and social activities. The project is due to be completed this summer and should lead to interesting discussions with key members of the community.



## Agri-Net research

Commissioned by the Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, the RAU is finalising a project which aims to create a greater understanding of the degree of cohesion of the agri-science, chemical biology, and physical science communities. It has identified the resources available to create opportunities for high-impact multidisciplinary research, which is also facilitating application at a practical level. As part of this project, data has been collected from UK universities on the types of research that have been carried out, and the impact of this research. The project has involved interviews with experts in these fields regarding their views on the collaboration between the sciences.

# Sports reports



## Equestrian

This year we have a particularly strong equestrian club, both the 1st and 2nd teams are doing well. Our teams have won every competition so far this season and are on track for regionals and, with any luck, nationals. Individually, several of our team members are also in the selection process for the British student equestrian team. This year we have received brilliant sponsorship from Fairfax and Favor, enabling us to reach our full potential.

*Posy Ash*



## Lacrosse

So far, lacrosse has had a very successful season, winning four out of the five matches played. Our most notable victory was winning 35-0 against Cardiff 2nds! These great results are reflected in our league placing which is currently second, so we are hoping for promotion next season. Following a strong influx of freshers, many have sustained a keen interest and shown consistent hard work and commitment. We received coaching at the beginning of the season which really benefited the team. It will be sad to say goodbye to the third years who have been an integral part of the team. However, roll on next season where I hope we will continue to do just as well. Good luck to next year's captaincy!

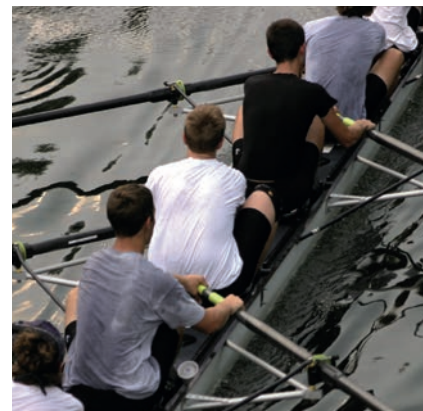
*Henny Trevelyan*



## Rowing

This is the first year that the club has trained on Coate Water in Swindon and we have built up a solid base of new talent from this year's freshers. It's fantastic to see the progression that they have made from wobbly beginners to strong and competent rowers. Rowing twice a week, with circuit sessions scheduled inbetween, I'm confident that if we continue to work hard, we will reach our aim of getting crews out to race this summer. Rowing is, by nature, a gruelling sport – there has literally been blood, sweat and tears this year – but it's when you feel that you've had one too many early Saturday morning sessions in sub-zero temperatures, that you really pull together as a club. I'm very proud to have captained such a great group of people.

*Anna Williams*







### Ladies' shooting

After last year's unbeaten record the girls had a lot to live up to, but they have more than filled the shoes of last year's team winning every competition we have been to. Three countries, three competitions, three wins! From St Andrews to Monmouth the ladies are unstoppable this year, yet again defending their champion title at the BUCS competition held in November. We have seen an influx of new lady shots, not only to the team but also to the club, which is brilliant news for the sport. We have another few competitions to finish off the season including the annual Cirencester Cup. We hope to end the season as successfully as we have started it.

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*Molly Chenery*

### Team chasing

As a new club this year, team chasing set off to a good start with wonderful results. We have made a significant step into the competing world of team chasing, with the intermediate team (RAU Mad Hatters) being placed sixth in the Cotswold Team Chase and the novice team (RAU Fossehill Furies) being placed third in the Bicester and Whaddon Team Chase. There has been fantastic enthusiasm from all involved so far. We hope that the momentum will continue and that we will bring home some more excellent results and rosettes.

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*Amanda Briscoe*

### Men's shooting

The men's shooting club has so far had a very successful year, competing at five events. At St Andrews, Patrick Thick picked up second men's individual, and at Monmouth the men's 1st team was awarded first place. The BUCS Nationals were a success with the men's 1st team coming third, and at Aberystwyth the men's teams picked first, second and third place. At the Oxford Gun Club the men's 1st team also picked up first. The club has once again had a great following from the student body which allows us to progress and build ever stronger teams for the future. The four competitions which are soon approaching are: Hull, Reading, Ag nationals and our very own Cirencester Cup, which will hopefully be even more successful than the previous.

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*George Rankin*

### Yacht club

This year the yacht club entered the BUSC/BUSA Yachting Championships. We competed as a team of eight in Portsmouth with a strong group, and had a good few days sailing. We are looking at going to Greece or Croatia with The Big Sail again, as last year's trip was such a success. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity to make some amazing memories with fellow students.

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*Tabitha Denny-Northover*

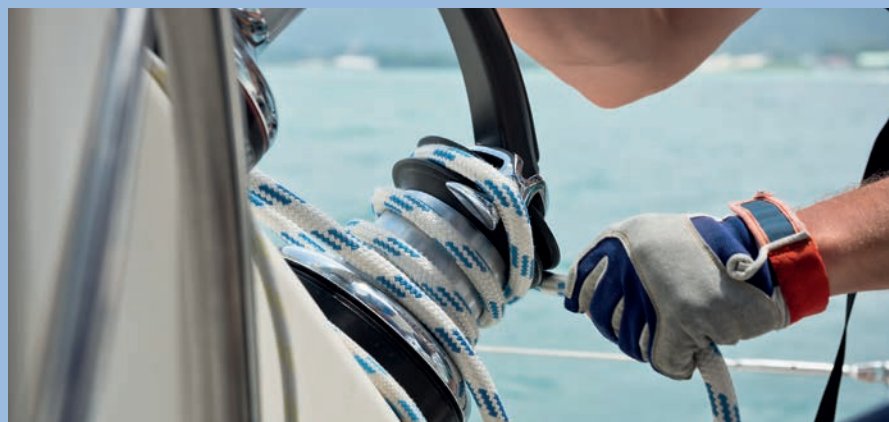


### Polo

The polo club had an excellent start to the year with over 70 people participating in the taster sessions. With a move to Inglesham Polo Centre this year we have organised three varsity tournaments for the beginner and novice players against other universities. We have had many successes with the 1st beginner team having a great season so far, winning three tournaments to date. The arena nationals were particularly good, with four teams entered into different sections. The 1st beginner team narrowly missed out on the final and came third in a strong Division One. The 2nd beginner team and novice team performed well against some strong opposition and came away with some pleasing results. The upper intermediate team managed to gain a place in the final and came away with a win against Edinburgh in a closely fought match. Lucy Bowman was awarded most valuable player of the section. We will be having a final varsity friendly in the arena before we move onto grass to continue what has so far been a very successful year for the polo club.

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*Perdy Humfrey*



### Netball

The beginning of the year had a great start, with so many enthusiastic freshers who were keen to take part in netball; some having a lot of experience and some just wanting to take part for the fitness or social side. We started straight away with fitness sessions on a Monday, which some people struggled with at the start after a long, relaxed summer holiday. This proved to be useful in our matches as we are now a very fit team! Matches have gone well. With the kind donation of sponsorship from Heck Sausages, we have been able to work our way through the league. Even though we have not won all of our matches we have certainly had fun playing them, learning from other teams and hopefully teaching them a few things too! I am very proud to have captained such an incredible team and a massive thank you to Lauren Hayhoe for vice-captaining the squad with me!

**Charlotte Edwards**



### Rugby

This year's season has gone extremely well with the 1st XV only losing one game in the league; they are well on the way to being promoted. The addition of a new coach, Andy Brown has really helped both 1st and 2nd teams, by adding more structure to the teams and working on specific skills. We've been giving as many people as possible a go in either team, so that both teams are up to a high standard. There have been several extremely close games this year really testing the team's determination to win. As long as they keep working hard, we hope both will be promoted and move up to a more challenging league.

**Harry Jackson**

### RAC Beagles

The RAC Beagles have had a brilliant season again this year. We have had more support than ever from the student body, with more people out on each hunting day. My Joint Masters Jenny Stewart and Luke Watts have worked extremely hard to maintain relationships with our farmers and have opened up many more pieces of countryside for our hounds to hunt over. This year saw the revival of 'The Beagle Ball' on the 23 January. After

a huge amount of organisation from a committee of students and supporters the party went off without a hitch. We are sure this is the first of many successful Beagle Balls to come. We have had a great team this year and my thanks must go to all those who have helped, especially my Joint Masters and whippers-in. There is an extremely good team lined up for next year and I wish them all luck and success.

**Harry Gosling**





### Racing club

The racing club has entered its fifth year, and has once again shown that there is great support for the sport. Many of our students are involved in the racing world, from Point-to-Pointing to riding out for local trainers. There was a fantastic turnout to the Heythrop Point-to-Point at Cocklebarrow and it was great to see the students supporting the local racing community. The annual Cheltenham Countryside Alliance Race Day also proved to be a huge success with many students attending the meeting. Thank you all for your support this season.

*Jack Bloom and Tom Abel Smith*

### Football

The football team has been expanding over recent years with more students than ever interested in joining. A large influx of freshers this season has brought great new talent to the side and with it some exciting changes resulting in improved performances. After taking a few matches to get into our stride we have proudly maintained an un-beaten record in 2015 with some comfortable wins. The club hopes to continue improving and be serious contenders for promotion next season.

*Alexander Lowery*

### Sporting rifle club

This has been another good year for the rifle club, with a marked increase in numbers, both trying rifle shooting for the first time, and of those signing up for club membership. With a club focus on deer stalking and associated skills, several members have gone on to undertake their DSC Level 1 qualifications with success. Improvements in weather and daylight promise to allow the club to meet for longer and more regularly. A new 'running boar target' is also due to be installed at the range, providing a different shooting experience and testing a variety of skills. Finally, club captains are looking into the possibility of entering a team for our first ever competition via the BUCS organisation.

*Kyle Shearer*



### Men's hockey

The men's hockey club has had an incredible season, with a number of very talented players joining the club as both freshers and postgraduates. We compete in a league and cup in the South West and so far are unbeaten in both competitions. We are hoping to be promoted this year and our cup effort is ongoing. The team has bonded very well and overall the team has been a great success both on and off the field. Outstanding players this season have been Luuk Ruys, Matthew Van Der Torren and Archie Stover.

*Nick Moss*

### Ladies' hockey

The ladies' 1st XI has faced many tough matches this season coming up against such teams as Bristol 2nds. The commitment of the ladies' hockey team has been outstanding. A large number of talented freshers joined the team this year, who have remained consistently reliable and been a great asset. After our strong victory last season, the team was promoted to a higher league, resulting in this year's matches being a real challenge. However, this has brought the team closer and we have a strong bond that I hope will be carried into the next season.

*Rebecca Head*



Photos from our programme  
of regular events

# 2014 alumni events

**1** RAU lecturer Simon Daniels with Tim Hadaway and Major Charlie Lane, former head of equine studies at the RAU, at Badminton Horse Trials – 8 May



**2** The 66 Club reunion held at the RAU – 4 October



**3** 1968 – 1971 Rural Estate Management reunion held at the RAU – 11 May



**4** RAU alumnus Craig Pilgrim (BSc (Hons) Rural Estate Management, 1977) winning owner and trainer of Peeping Thom at the VWH Point-to-Point, Siddington, Cirencester – 21 March





5

5 Mr Vic Hughes at Eastnor Castle – 14 May



6

6 Brown & Co staff all RAU alumni, at the Suffolk Show – 27 May



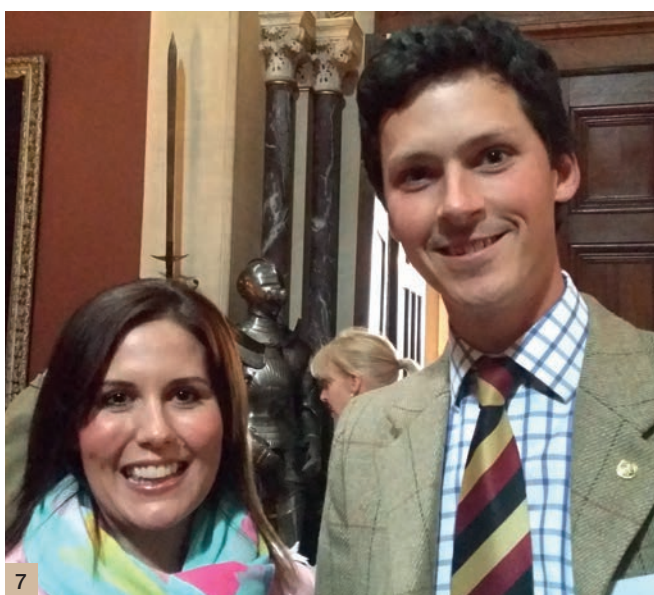
7 Beth Filmer (2006) and Charles Carter (2006) at Eastnor Castle – 14 May

8 Student Ambassadors Mike Wilkins and Anna Bowen at Badminton Horse Trials – 8 May

9 Peter Morris presenting a trophy to former student Izzy Brown (BSc (Hons) Rural Land Management, 2012), owner and trainer of Santos Thomas, at the VWH Point-to-Point, Siddington, Cirencester – 21 March



8



7



9

**Name:** Rebecca Harvey

**Course:** BSc (Hons) International Equine and Agricultural Business Management

**Class of:** 2002

# Racing ahead!



*Assisting in managing world-class racehorses for Prince Khalid Abdullah is all in a day's work for Rebecca Harvey, who works with the crème de la crème of the racing world and was part of the team that produced internationally renowned racehorse Frankel.*

Rebecca Harvey felt like she was first past the post when she landed her dream job at Juddmonte, working as Racing Secretary and PA to Lord Grimthorpe, Racing Manager to Prince Khalid Abdullah. The pinnacle of her racing career to date came in the shape of a sleek young colt called Frankel, rated the world's best ever racehorse by the World Thoroughbred Racehorse Rankings Committee.

by many well-regarded people in the racing industry as the best racehorse they've ever seen!" Rebecca proudly declares. "Such was his dominance on the track. Watching the power of his performance was simply breath-taking."

Bred by Prince Khalid Abdullah, Frankel remained unbeaten in 14 races over his three year career, 10 of which were at the very highest level. "He was so popular with the racing public that he

"I've worked at Juddmonte for the past 12 years, but the most exciting time so far has undoubtedly been being a part of the team that produced Frankel, acclaimed

was often applauded before his jockey was even in the saddle – very unusual in horseracing! He has 26 awards to his name, including two Cartier and two Racehorse Owners Association Horse of the Year awards. 'Team Frankel' even won the Daily Telegraph Award of Merit at the Cartier Awards in 2012. I certainly feel very privileged to be a part of it." Now aged seven, Frankel is standing at Banstead Manor Stud and his first foals were born in 2014.

So, how did RAU alumna Rebecca Harvey wind up working with the world-class Thoroughbred? From an early age, Rebecca had always known that she was destined to work with horses. "I decided to come to the RAU because of my love of horses. I wasn't entirely sure what I



“The RAU was the ideal place for me, it had a friendly environment and I found myself surrounded by like-minded people.”



wanted to do for a career, but I knew it had to be something in the equine sector.”

Little did she know that her decision to study at the RAU would spark her life-long passion for the racing industry she now lives and breathes. “The RAU was the ideal place for me, it had a friendly environment and I found myself surrounded by like-minded people. The course developed my knowledge and interest in the racing industry, which led to my future career. I completed my placement at Banstead Manor Stud, Juddmonte's flagship farm in Newmarket, and started working there as a receptionist once I'd finished my degree.”

Rebecca then moved on to Racing Administrator, and has worked as Racing Secretary at Juddmonte for the past five

years. “Prince Khalid Abdullah is one of the leading owners and breeders of racehorses in the world, with horses training in the UK, Ireland, France and the USA. We manage these horses for him and keep him up-to-date with their health, how they're progressing and when they will race. Liaising with his 12-strong band of European trainers and our pre-training farm on a daily basis can be quite a task; he currently has more than 250 horses of racing age worldwide!”

Rebecca's favourite time of the year is the sales at Tattersalls. While Prince Khalid Abdullah retains some of the horses for breeding, a large number are sold each year at public auctions, including Tattersalls, Newmarket and Doncaster Bloodstock Sales. “It's the best time of

year, apart from when we're winning big races of course! It's my job to organise the Juddmonte draft at these sales. It's a great opportunity to get outside with the horses and the clients. We have a great team of staff working to present the horses to a high standard and keep potential clients informed of any issues. Amongst other tasks, I also organise hospitality at major race meetings, including Royal Ascot.

“Frankel will be a very tough act to follow, but we'll continue to aim to produce top class horses to win at the highest level.”

**Name:** Mark Gold

**Course:** BSc (Hons) Business Management

**Class of:** 2012

## Pole position!

*Mark Gold feels like he's motoring ahead as he embarks on a thrilling career in the motor racing industry, combining his lifelong passion for cars with his business savvy and PR knowhow.*

**W**orking in the industry he's loved since childhood, Mark takes a look back at where it all started. "I was influenced in no small part by the RAU graduate who gave me my first ever job fresh from school, painting his motor racing team's factory floor!

"It was clear from an early age that I had more than a passing interest in food, agriculture and countryside management, so the RAU seemed the perfect place to study and learn the essential cogs of business. I soon discovered a zest for marketing and brand development, and embarked on second year electives that followed this theme.

"Undoubtedly, the most valuable part of my degree was my work placement within the public relations department at McLaren, Formula 1 team and sports car manufacturer. It enabled me to combine my passion for racing with business and was a truly life-changing experience. I helped organise a car launch press conference, wrote social media content during races, and assisted the making of a BBC documentary. McLaren's attention to detail and work ethic is considered industry standard, and I came back to Cirencester

an altogether more professional individual with real-world experience."

Soon after graduation, Mark joined the Motor Sports Association

and started working for the Director of Development and Communication. "My role included participation campaigns, young driver development programmes, public affairs, media events, and internal and external publications. I then moved to work freelance as an assistant to the Head of Motor Sport and Special Projects at Aston Martin, coordinating race team logistics for their entry in the gruelling Nurburgring 24 Hours endurance race and ensuring the Team Principal was briefed on complex sporting regulations throughout."

In autumn 2013, Mark joined Bonhams, the fine art auction house based in the heart of Mayfair, and that's when the real fun began. "I started working within the world record breaking Collectors' Motor Car Department – think £23 million Ferrari 250 GTO! – reporting to both the Group Motoring Director and Head of Department. My responsibilities take in the organisation and logistics of collectors' car sales in the UK and across Europe, including hospitality, catering and transport, whilst assisting with marketing and communication, dealing with media enquiries, and publishing promotional content. It truly is a global market and we hold sales



from Lord March's fabulous Goodwood Estate in Sussex to the Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart and the West Coast of America. I've even managed to ensure that a number of cars have found new homes with old friends from Cirencester!

"One of the biggest challenges is being away from home and the office for weeks at a time during the height of sale season, May to September, setting up for the auction, consigning cars for the future and publishing the catalogue for another auction – often all at once! It requires a great deal of





organisation and flexibility, but the benefits are plain to see. There's nothing better than achieving a world record price that surpasses the client's expectation, or simply indulging in the history and provenance of some truly fascinating motor cars."

Looking to the future, Mark has big plans. "This year I hope to gain my race licence and compete in something interesting, but I doubt the professionals will have too much to worry about. Occasionally I've been allowed to drive some of the cars (slowly),

but I'm still waiting for the call! I feel like I've really found a home to channel my passion and energy into. I would like to progress to become a specialist, and perhaps one day even an auctioneer myself, whilst continuing to champion, promote and defend British motor sport and agriculture. That being said, farming a few Cotswold acres and restoring old sports cars in a barn holds a certain appeal."



**"Undoubtedly, the most valuable part of my degree was my work placement within the public relations department at McLaren, Formula 1 team and sports car manufacturer."**

**Name:** Simon Scott-White

**Course:** BSc (Hons) Rural Estate Management

**Class of:** 1994

# Talking stock

*Rural Land Agent turned City Stockbroker Simon Scott-White retains his inherent love of the countryside as he uncovers the surprising similarities between these seemingly polar positions.*

There was never any doubt in Simon's mind as to where he wanted to be. One way or another he knew he'd spend his days surrounded by the glorious British countryside. "I initially trained as a Land Agent/Rural Chartered Surveyor, with the intention of one day taking over the family practice. My father studied at the RAU so I was always aware of the University and its outstanding reputation within the agricultural community. I eventually followed in his footsteps and enrolled on the very same course he had taken some 25 years previously. I enjoyed it so much that I stayed on to convert my diploma into a full BSc Honours degree.

"My first job was working for an agricultural finance company. After that I worked for UFB Humberclyde as an area agricultural sales manager, before being offered a trainee stockbroking role for Capel Cure Sharp." Simon then joined Charles Stanley as an investment manager in their Oxford office and, six years later, took on the role of Branch Manager.

"I soon found that my new role as a stockbroker was quite similar to that of a land agent, in terms of looking after clients' assets. Where a land agent may cover

a number of different tasks throughout the day; landlord and tenant issues, planning or farming issues, a stockbroker will cover a variety of sectors; commodities, real estate or retail. The RAU provided

me with a wealth of transferrable skills that I'm able to apply to many other areas of business, not just the land-based sector."

Simon now manages a team of 12, with over £260m of funds under their management. "Client interaction is definitely the most enjoyable and rewarding aspect of the job. The relationship between a broker and client is based upon trust and this is something we are never complacent about. One of our core values at Charles Stanley is considering each client on an individual basis."

Captivated by the charm of the Cotswolds, Simon has always remained nearby. "Although I work in a city industry, my heart has always been in the countryside. When I'm not spending time with my wife Sam and our two children, you'll find me stalking, shooting, fly fishing and trying to train my three spaniels. Sam works for

a local property search company, so our main pastime is buying and renovating properties. We've recently bought a 450 year old Cotswold Inn which was closed around the end of the Second World War. I hope that this project draws to completion within the next 12 months, but with a house of this age I fear it'll never be finished!"

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**“My father studied at the RAU so I was always aware of the University and its outstanding reputation within the agricultural community.”**



**Name:** Lucie Charlton  
**Course:** BSc (Hons) Equine Management  
**Class of:** 2010

## What a sport!

*As the fifth generation of her family to breed Fell Ponies in Northumberland, Lucie lives and breathes the equestrian industry and has the perfect blend of passion and experience to manage Scotland's leading equestrian event.*

**B**lair Castle International Horse Trials attracts more than 40,000 people over four days and takes a huge amount of organisation. This is something that Lucie Charlton, Sports Manager for FEI European Eventing Championships at Blair Castle knows all too well.

“Our motto is ‘Keep calm it’s just Horse Trials!’” admits Lucie, who works with the Event Director in the day-to-day planning and management of the Eventing Championships at Blair Castle Horse Trials. There are so many facets to organising an event like the FEI European Eventing Championships 2015, the trick is always in the juggling! This year we’re not just running the championships, we also have four other arenas with show jumping and showing throughout the four days, Arena Eventing Finals, and more than 250 tradestands. In previous years I’ve been involved in all aspects of the event, but this year I’ll be keeping my focus on the sporting side – which is what I’m truly passionate about!

“I’m responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the venue delivery and key personnel are delivered on time. I implement the plans and strategies that the Event Director, Alec Lochore and I put together, liaise with national federations, and manage administrative paperwork with regards to all aspects sporting, including FEI schedules. I also manage key event officials, such as ground jury, technical delegates, FEI stewards, and eventing Heads of Department, assist with the

creation and management of administrative teams, and oversee budgets.

“The best part of the Blair Castle Horse Trials is our team, we have such great support and everyone works so hard!

Alec is a fantastic director; he has a wealth of experience and great vision when it comes to the event – even though he’s often away organising other events!”

Before becoming Sports Manager, Lucie spent two summer seasons at Blair Castle as Assistant Organiser. “I handled lots of different areas of the event, including box office, volunteers, sponsorship, trading, contractors, health and safety, satellite competitions, the Country Fair and stabling and signage to name just a few. I’ve done lots of different jobs along the way, none as glamorous as Sports Manager but they’ve all helped me get to where I am today. Anyone who has been a full-time groom at a 30 horse event or livery yard and waitressed in a 600 capacity hotel, knows that nine to five jobs aren’t an option during the season. Fence post painting is always a favourite at Blair Castle – there are thousands of them to be painted each year!”

For Lucie, who’s been involved in the equestrian industry all her life; breeding Fell Ponies on the family Stud in Northumberland alongside running numerous Horse Trials, Pony Club and Showing events, a degree in equine management was a ‘no brainer’. “I wanted to work in the equine industry but needed more direction, as my previous experience was very broad. The equine management degree at the RAU allowed me to select the modules that interested me, and would be relevant to my future

career. I gained a broad knowledge of the industry, particularly in finance and business which are vital skills for managing events. Although I’ve always been interested in conservation, I found that I thrive on the excitement of event management. I loved my time in Cirencester, the campus is wonderful and welcoming and everyone’s on the same wavelength so you end up having friends across all years and all courses. I benefited hugely from the supportive staff and weekly one-to-one time with my tutor, something that amazed my friends at other universities.”

“Having spent three years at Blair Castle, I look forward to moving to another event and expanding my knowledge and experience. My overall aim is to settle back at home in Northumberland, set up my own freelance event management business, whilst running an equestrian centre and reinstating our Horse Trials at home.”



**Name:** Jenny Phelps  
**Course:** Diploma in Agriculture  
**Class of:** 1982

# The future of farming

*Passionate about the natural environment, Jenny Phelps is the driving force behind a ground-breaking new framework which will revolutionise the way we view wildlife and conservation management.*

Coming from a local farming family, Jenny's always had a love of the great outdoors. "I decided to study a Diploma in Agriculture at the RAU, which I enjoyed very much and learnt a lot – although it was quite a challenge being the only girl on a course of 100 boys! The Diploma gave me a thorough understanding of the complexities of agriculture, which is essential when advising farmers on environmental sustainability. A lot has changed since the 1980s, so it helps to know how it was taught back then. Today we learn to value our natural systems; soil, water, field boundaries, woodlands, pollinators etc. which is something some land managers have overlooked."

Upon graduation, Jenny completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Advanced Farm Management at Seale Hayne and went on to work as a conservation shepherdess for a wildlife trust. "This is where I first discovered the great divide between conservation and farming. I was being asked to manage 92 sites across three counties by moving one flock of sheep hundreds of miles, to get to the site and find sheep in the field next door! 'Why don't you ask the farmers to graze it?' I would ask, and so it began – the role I've been playing for 30 years, trying to bring the world of conservation and farming back together."

After eight years and a promotion to Grasslands Officer, nearly all of the sites were being grazed with the help of the local

farmers. Jenny joined the Cotswolds Conservation Board in 2002, and admits, "there was a certain amount of déjà vu! I was asked to manage 92 wildflower grassland

sites in the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, part of the Caring for the Cotswolds project, by moving a herd of cattle around. I suggested it might be more sustainable to get local farmers to graze sites for them, and so it began again!"

The Heritage Lottery Fund funded the project; one of five pilot schemes to determine whether investment in the countryside could deliver multiple benefits. "I felt hugely privileged on being able to contribute. It soon became apparent that the governance of the countryside was very complex, and that local knowledge and the communities' sense of connectivity to their land was being undervalued.

"It was from the success of the restoration of the Cotswold Commons, whilst working with local farming communities, that the Integrated Local Delivery (ILD) model was developed. The ILD model joins international, national, regional and local strategies to benefit local communities."

Jenny now works as a Senior Conservation Officer for Gloucestershire Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) and teaches two modules at the RAU; Farmland Ecology, and Farming and Integrated Environmental Local Delivery (FIELD). Students on the FIELD module are taught how to carry out this specialist facilitation.

"What I enjoy most is delivering projects that work for everyone, agencies that inspire people to come together and feel valued for their knowledge and contribution, to work together for mutual benefit for farming and conservation."

Jenny hopes to carry on learning and inspiring the next generation, teaching them how to build a more sustainable farm business. "I will continue to offer this simple framework for joined up partnership, and hope to soon secure core government funding so that every parish has the support of a FIELD adviser to help build preparedness for climate change and inspire people to look after their piece of the world. I will also continue to help rebuild FWAG as an organisation that represents farmers and landowners who care about the environment."

[www.ccri.ac.uk/ild](http://www.ccri.ac.uk/ild)



“

“The Diploma in Agriculture gave me a thorough understanding of the complexities of agriculture, which is essential when advising farmers on environmental sustainability.”



**Name:** Andrew Shirley  
**Course:** Diploma Rural Estate Management  
**Class of:** 1988

# Standing up for the countryside

*Whether Andrew Shirley is demonstrating to the Government on the impact of HS2, working as a District Councillor, or walking his dogs near his home in Derbyshire – his unbridled love of the countryside always shines through.*

**A**t 18 years old, Andrew Shirley knew he didn't want a desk job. "I wanted to be in the countryside, creating something, and felt that becoming a Land Agent was the best way to do that – it's quite ironic really that 30 years later I find myself working behind a desk in London! The Diploma ticked all the right boxes for me; comprising of agriculture, farm buildings, law, taxation and forestry. I had a great time at Ciren, learnt a lot and made good friends for life – four of us still go on holiday each year!"



For Andrew, the Diploma was essential in launching his career. It enabled him to take his Test of Professional Competence (as it was then called) and land his first job at Carter Jonas before moving on

to work for ADAS. "My work gradually shifted from planning advice and grant checks to agricultural assessments for new roads; notably the A50, M6 Toll, Brimington and Staveley bypass and Hereford bypass – I remember meeting with a farmer about the Hereford bypass and 30 years on it's still not been built! I actually met my wife Tamara working in the ADAS Chelmsford office. She studied at the RAU too, but a few years before I did."

When the opportunity arose to join the CLA as a Regional Surveyor, Andrew leapt at the chance. "It was a fantastic position for me. I did several stints acting as Regional Director before moving on to become National Access Adviser. It was during my time in this role that the Marine and Coastal Access Bill was being consulted on (2008). I spent the winter on the coasts of Devon, Cornwall, the Isle of Wight, Cumbria and Northumberland and the summer meeting MPs and giving evidence to a select committee. We opposed coastal access, and although the Bill proceeded into legislation we won useful concessions."

Andrew had been working for the CLA for 16 years when he took up the position of Chief Surveyor. "I started in 2012 and currently manage a team of five policy and advisory staff and eight regional surveyors. The highlight so far has been my work on HS2. The CLA committed huge resource

to lobbying MPs and the select committee about the huge impact HS2 has on many of our members; landowners, farmers and rural business owners. Although I've already given evidence at three separate parliamentary committees, including an hour and a half cross examination, HS2 still forms a substantial part of my workload. As a result of our evidence, the HS2 select committee has taken up many of the CLA's points on taxation, replacement buildings and dispute resolution – we'll have to see how many make it into law in the new parliament."

Going forward, there are plenty of challenges to keep Andrew busy. "There are calls to amend the agricultural tenancy legislation and force longer Farm Business Tenancies. Housing is also a hot topic. Finally, it seems that every new government wants to reform planning – in my view any future reform must recognise the needs of a living, working countryside."

When he's not lobbying the Government on rural issues, Andrew channels his energy into his role as District Councillor with Derbyshire Dales District Council. "I've sat on their Southern Planning and Environment Committees for the past four years and was re-elected on 7 May. It's really interesting to sit on the other side of the table and have to make difficult decisions on a planning application or decide on a multi-million pound waste contract."

**Name:** Amanda Vanderlinde (née Boyes)

**Course:** BSc (Hons) Agriculture

**Class of:** 2007

# Say cheese!



*Amanda Vanderlinde has an exciting new challenge ahead of her, learning the ropes at her family's cheeseplant and farm in Canada as she and her husband prepare to take over the booming business full-time.*

**W**hen Yorkshire-born dairy farmer George Boyes upped sticks and moved to Canada in the 1980s, little did he know that he'd end up buying a dairy farm, meeting his future wife Debra – a Canadian prairie farm girl who learnt cheesemaking whilst living in Switzerland, and making the drastic decision to build a cheese processing plant that would later become the family business.

Having grown up on a dairy farm in Canada, their daughter Amanda decided to retrace her father's footsteps and return to the UK to study a BSc (Hons) degree in Agriculture at the Royal Agricultural University. She said: "My dad encouraged me to go; he studied a Diploma in Agriculture at the RAU before immigrating to Canada in 1975. I'm so glad I did, North America and Canada in particular seem to be behind the UK and Europe when it comes to food manufacturing, retailing and customer trends, so the knowledge and awareness I gained during my years in the UK have been invaluable for the family business. Plus I made friends for life who I'm still in contact with now!"

Amanda enjoyed the practical elements of the course, and puts her immediate employment at Farm Credit Canada (FCC), a Canadian federal crown corporation, down to the six-month work placement

she completed within the company. "The opportunity to complete a placement was extremely useful. I was offered a position as a Lender at FCC as soon as I finished my degree, and after two years of training

I was given my own portfolio of Canadian farming clients, with operations varying from poultry and dairy to fruit crops – blueberries and cranberries are large scale operations in British Columbia, Canada."

Fast forward to 2015 and Amanda has decided to join the family business "The Farm House Natural Cheeses" full-time. "My husband Jordan and I are both from dairy farm backgrounds, so when the opportunity arose to quit our day jobs and train to take over the family business, we leapt at the chance! We love the idea of running a sustainable business that has growth potential, and relish the chance to get creative. It fits into our philosophy of organic food, and our belief in the importance of connecting consumers to where their food comes from. It's also, we believe, the best environment in which to raise a family.

"At the farm we produce a large variety of fresh and firm cheeses, yoghurt and fluid milk, all Organic certified, and our farm shop and cheeseplant have become a popular agri-tourism stop during summer months, being located just minutes from Harrison Hot Springs. My roles include managing Organic paperwork and certification for the grain mill, cheeseplant and farm, and looking after the website and social media. I manage and contribute

to business and marketing decisions in the cheeseplant alongside my Mum, and assist with cheesemaking and farmers markets when needed. I find myself covering all sorts of odd jobs on the farm too, like milking cows and goats, but that's just the nature of a small family business. Jordan manages the day-to-day dairy farm field work activities with my dad.

"As the daughter of extremely hard-working parents, I'm honoured to be working towards taking over the innovative business they've built up. My parents will still live on the farm and assist with the business, but hope to have more time to travel and begin a new phase in their lives – retirement!"

[@fhcheeses](#)

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**"The knowledge and awareness I gained during my years in the UK have been invaluable for the family business. Plus I made friends for life who I'm still in contact with now!"**

**Name:** William Green  
**Course:** One Year Farming  
**Class of:** 2002

# Leading the field

*Professional rugby player Will Green swaps the rugby pitch for a different field entirely as he becomes Director of Edge Renewables (South West). This is a whole other ball game.*

Signing with the London Wasps at just 18 years old, Will Green played professional rugby for more than 13 years. “I’ve always had a passion for rugby. I played England schoolboy rugby from a young age and went straight from school into the Wasps in 1992. I studied Retail and Media Management at Oxford Brookes University and turned professional as soon as I graduated – playing my debut match in 1995. I was really lucky to have that transition and become part of a professional team that, towards the end of my time there, had become very successful. I had a lot of fun with the Wasps.

“As an integral part of the team I helped the Wasps win eight major trophies; including the Heineken Cup and LV Cup (then the Anglo-Welsh Cup) five Premiership titles, and the European Cup and European Shield. I played over 250 games with the team and was Captain in 1998.”

During his professional rugby career, Will made four appearances with the England team; also playing for the England U21, Students and U18, and had four England caps. Two years after his debut with the Wasps, he was selected to play as part of Clive Woodward’s first England team against Australia at Twickenham. He later played as part of the England World Cup training squads in 1999, 2003 and 2004, in tours to Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Argentina, Japan, USA and Canada.

In 2000, whilst still playing for the Wasps, Will decided to complete the One Year Farming course at the RAU. “I’d been playing professional rugby for a few years and had gotten

rather bored with the mundane nature of it. I enrolled on to One Year Farming to gain knowledge; I’m a farmer’s son so I wanted to build on my basic skills. I did it one day a week for two years and loved getting away from rugby for the day! It gave me a good understanding of agriculture and an insight into the pressures of modern farming. I met some really interesting people and enjoyed my time there.”

In the summer of 2005, Will left the Wasps and joined Leinster, Dublin. “I was the first English international to play provincial rugby in Ireland and it was an exciting challenge to be part of a new team after so many years with the Wasps.” By this time, Will had built up a substantial skill set just begging to be put to good use. In 2006, whilst still playing at Leinster, he set up Tri-Line Sports Solutions with David McHugh, Leinster Rugby Team Manager, providing hospitality for sporting events in Dublin. Tri-Line also dealt with sponsorship deals and player management negotiation.

Will remained at Leinster until he retired from professional rugby in 2007, and started coaching Worthing Rugby Club. In 2011, he left the sport altogether to concentrate on his businesses career. He became Projects Director for Aggregated Micro Power PLC, focusing on waste and biomass, before setting up his own company in September 2013.

“My business, Edge Renewables (South West) – from parent company Edge

Renewables – supplies woodchip boilers to the poultry sector. The sector we’ve gone into is farming-based, perhaps influenced in part by my family background in timber, so my agricultural knowledge, gained through the One Year Farming course, has been invaluable. It’s given me confidence when talking to farmers who appreciate that I understand the pressures they’re under.”

The future looks bright for Will and his business. “I love running my own company. On a typical day I check the woodchip dryers and then concentrate on sales and project management. I’ve had a lot of support from Edge Renewables and am working hard to become established in the South West. My long-term plan is to supply woodchip fuel to the boilers we put in.”

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**Edge Renewables (South West) is now moving into a new phase installing wood pellet CHP systems.**

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“The One Year Farming course gave me a good understanding of agriculture and an insight into the pressures of modern farming. I met some really interesting people and enjoyed my time there.”



**Name:** Abhishek Pandey  
**Course:** MBA Business Management  
 in the Global Food Industry  
**Class of:** 2010

# A reputation for global opportunities

*Abhishek Pandey has the world at his feet. Armed with an MBA in the Global Food Industry from the Royal Agricultural University, there's no stopping him achieving a high-powered career in the international agribusiness sector.*

Studying in Cirencester was the first time Abhishek had visited another country. "I was drawn to the RAU for two distinct reasons; its reputation as the oldest agricultural institution in the UK and its powerful network of alumni worldwide. When I meet people from the agricultural industry, from any part of globe, they don't seem like strangers because the RAU brand is so well-known!

"I had a very enjoyable time at University, thanks to the staff and the SU. It was great to be involved in various social events – I still miss the Tithe Barn and Guinness which is not available in India – and the 'work hard, play hard' SU motto still works for me!

"I did my MBA in Business Management in the Global Food Industry in 2010 and, even before completing, was associated with the University's Research and Consultancy department for a period of 15 months. Being an international student, I was offered an Outstanding Achiever's Scholarship which was a great morale boost.

"My lecturers were great and always encouraged us to brainstorm new ideas for coursework without forgetting to retain the traditional concepts, which gave a dual edge to the degree. This still helps me today when I meet new people and need to manage everything with great zeal.

"I returned back to my country in 2011 and was offered a Project Manager position with UPL Limited, a global generic crop protection, chemical and seed company. Here I was assigned to undertake projects for establishing farm advisory and solution centres in North India, where I continue to look after operations. This job requires a great amount of energy, whilst remaining calm and sharp at the same time. I spend time undertaking a good amount of market research, before selecting a suitable site so that farmers can benefit from correct advice about their crop protection and selection.

"So far so good for me, I have been married for three years and have an 18 month old baby girl. I look forward to visiting the RAU campus with my wife and child as soon as I get some time away from the hectic work schedule!"



**"I was drawn to the RAU for two distinct reasons; its reputation as the oldest agricultural institution in the UK and its powerful network of alumni worldwide."**

**Name:** Jessica Sloss

**Course:** Graduate Diploma in Agriculture

**Class of:** 2013



# From 'red tape' to Red Tractor

*Daydream believer Jess Sloss explains how she ditched her day job as a Civil Servant to pursue her life-long ambition of working in agriculture and the food industry, and landed a managerial position at Red Tractor.*

**A**fter six years in the Civil Service, offering employment law advice and settling tribunal claims, I'd had enough. I'd just come into a bit of money, and knew that if I didn't take the plunge I'd get tied into a mortgage and become stuck where I was. I had previously considered working with animals and had always taken an interest in where my food came from. Looking back, I suppose my reasons for choosing to study agriculture seem a bit naïve – but it was definitely the right decision!

"I started looking for university and college courses in agriculture and the Graduate Diploma in Agriculture at the Royal Agricultural University really jumped out at me. A course specifically designed for those looking to change career was just what I was looking for. I went along to an open day where I had an impromptu interview with the course manager, Nigel Warner, and was thrilled to hear I'd be offered a place.

"My time at the RAU was so different to my previous university experience. I had gained my law degree at a huge university; there

were more than 1,000 students on my course alone and we were all totally anonymous to our lecturers. The intimacy the RAU offered was amazing. Within the first couple of weeks I knew everyone on my course, as well as many of the undergraduate students. I knew

all of my lecturers and where to find their offices, and even chose to sit in on a few extra modules to learn as much as possible during my time there. I was awarded a Merit in the Graduate Diploma in Agriculture in 2013, which was a very proud moment.

"During my final few weeks at Cirencester I applied for the position of Industry Communications Manager at Red Tractor, advertised through the University careers service, and after two tough interviews was offered the job! I started in July 2013, shortly after completing my course. The role of Industry Communications Manager was really interesting; I spent half of my time working on the consumer marketing side of the business, and the other half communicating with farmers through newsletters and articles, and by attending shows.

"Last October I moved into the role of Technical Manager for Pigs and Combinable Crops and Sugar Beet, which means I manage the standards for these sectors and work with our technical advisory committees to ensure

the standards remain relevant to current issues. I think most people believe that Red Tractor is a large organisation, but in fact there are just 17 of us in total. I love the variety of the work. It's an incredibly diverse and innovative industry to work in, full of enthusiastic and incredibly knowledgeable people. I've only been in this role for a few months so I'll be staying put for now, but I'm sure there are lots of exciting opportunities ahead of me.

"The biggest challenge of all has been the steep learning curve. Every day I'm discovering new things, which is great – in a way I'd like to go back and rewrite all my essays with the additional knowledge and experience I now have!"

“

**"The Graduate Diploma in Agriculture at the Royal Agricultural University really jumped out at me. Specifically designed for those looking to change career; it was just what I was looking for."**

# Ciren weddings

## Neil Colver Clark and Annelise Clements

Neil Clark (BSc (Hons) Rural Land Management, 2002) married Annelise Clements on 6 September 2014 in All Saints Church, Hutton Rudby, North Yorkshire. Louis Fell (2002) and Charles Ashbridge (2001) were best men, and most of the ushers were ex RAU. The reception was held at the bride's family home in nearby Skutterskelfe, where they were joined by a large number of former Cirencester students. The couple then jetted off for their honeymoon to the small island of Nevis in the Caribbean.



## ◀ Ashley-Marc Clark and Charlotte Colston

Ashley-Marc Clark (Diploma in Agriculture and Farm Management, 2003) married Charlotte Colston (BSc (Hons) Rural Land Management, 2005) on Saturday 5 July 2014 in St Mary's Church, Salford, Oxfordshire, followed by a marquee reception at Charlotte's family home, Rectory Farm. The wedding was attended by 180 guests, a great deal from Cirencester – Charlotte and Ashley's friends from 2002-2005, and a lot of Charlotte's father's Cirencester friends too (1978). This made for a very memorable, fun filled day with music, dancing and fireworks to keep all the guests entertained.

The couple enjoyed a short 'minimoon' to a luxurious Greek resort in the Mediterranean after the wedding, to enable Ashley to get back in time for the oil seed rape harvest, and a proper honeymoon skiing with friends followed by a week in the Maldives earlier this year. Ashley is now back at home running the family estate and property portfolio, and Charlotte is a Chartered Surveyor working as the agent on the Buckminster Estate in Leicestershire.

### ▼ Andrew Liddiment and Natalie Morton

Originally from Yorkshire and Suffolk respectively, Andrew (BSc (Hons) Rural Land Management, 2004) and Natalie (BSc (Hons) Rural Land Management, 2006) were married on 30 August 2014 in St Barnabas Church, Brampton Bryan, Herefordshire, where they now live.

After witnessing the wedding at the church, guests walked onward to the

reception where they were entertained by a Yorkshire brass band and enjoyed drinks before tucking in to a feast of local lamb. Some 25 plus ex Cirencester students joined Andrew and Natalie to celebrate their marriage, some of whom originated from the classes of the 1970s!

Andrew and Natalie left for a short break, before returning to their Land Agent jobs at Balfours. A 'proper' honeymoon is presently being planned!



### ▲ Roland Thomas and Tracy Button

Roland Thomas (BSc (Hons) Rural Estate Management, 1988) married Tracy Button on 21 June 2014 at the Registry office of the Athenaeum in Bury St Edmunds. Wedding photos were taken in the Cathedral rose garden, followed by lunch at the Angel Hotel and later dinner at Southgate Street. It was a fantastic day with unbroken sunshine and a wonderful selection of guests. It started early, finished late and of course, included a great speech from the best man with tales of Cirencester. There were a number of Cirencester students among the congregation. The couple enjoyed a few days on the Suffolk coast at Orford, and in September spent a week on the Isle of Mull in Scotland.



### ▲ Giles Bendig and Frankie Pickard

Giles Bendig (BSc (Hons) Property Agency and Marketing, 2005) and Frankie Pickard (BSc (Hons) International Equine Business Management and Agriculture, 2004) exchanged their vows at St Michael's Church in Betchworth, followed by a reception at Box Hill, Mickleham, Surrey on 23 August 2014 surrounded by friends and family. Many of their guests were friends from their Cirencester days. A glorious day followed by an exceptional band

meant a good party was had all round. Giles and Frankie jetted off to spend three days in New York followed by 10 days in Barbados. Giles is Managing Director of Finepoint Sales and Service Ltd, and Frankie is a Sales Manager at Allertons.

# The Ciren society pages

# Inform

We'd love to hear what you've been up to since leaving Cirencester. Please send no more than 100 words to [alumni@rau.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@rau.ac.uk) and remember to include the year you graduated and the course you studied.

## 1950s

### **John Sheard** **1956 Rural Estate Management**

I attended the three year Rural Estate Management 'B' course and thoroughly enjoyed the experience including being part of the rugby team, the theatrical society which produced 'Someone at the Door' and seeing the Beagles at work. Above all it grounded me for the following examinations to become an FRICS. I was accepted as a Resident Land Agent for the Duke of Devonshire's Bolton Abbey Estate where I worked for 33 years, including 28 years as Senior Land Agent. It contains 30,000 acres of the Yorkshire Dales, Sites of Specific Interest, five miles of an excellent trout river, a fantastic grouse moor, all ready for improvements throughout with increased access due to being in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The estate also includes a wide area of forestry (more than three million trees) which was planted by the 6th Duke of Devonshire at the beginning of the 19th century. I also keep in touch with friends, who originated from the 'Cirencester days'. John Sheard has written two books about the estate, 'Bolton Abbey; The Yorkshire Estate of the Dukes of Devonshire' and 'Times Past'.



John Sheard

## 1960s

### **Christopher Fairs** **1969 Short course**

Within two years of leaving Cirencester, I had applied for a job in the Orchard Department at cider makers, Bulmers of Hereford. I knew nothing of cider apple growing but was fortunate in joining the company at a time of imminent expansion. Cider was becoming a very popular drink and genuine bittersweet apples, the company's principal raw material, were going to be in short supply. For years, the shortfall in local apples had been augmented by importing fresh cider fruit from Normandy. However, the quality and quantity supplied did not meet requirements and a decision was taken to buy land and plant high-yielding, genuine cider apple varieties. With farm prices rising rapidly, land was purchased, company orchards planted and local farmers encouraged to do the same on their own land. Offering a free advisory service covering drainage, ground preparation, varietal choice, planting, pruning, pest and disease control and harvesting became my job at Bulmers. I did the same job for more than 40 years and when I retired in 2012, the area planted under contract had grown to 6,300 acres with more than 200 growers. The production of intensive cider apples under contract has been a success. The climate, good soil and skill of the family farming community in and around Herefordshire all contributed to this success and to making my working life at Bulmers so fulfilling.



Christopher Fairs



Simon Boughton

## 1970s

### **Simon Boughton** **1979 HND in Agricultural Science**

I was not from a farming background but at the age of 17 I made a decision that I wanted to pursue a career in agriculture, not in the support industry, but as a practical farmer at the sharp end. The route for me to achieve this was first to gain a good qualification, a HND in Agricultural Science at the then Royal Agricultural College, and then to work my way up the farm management ladder. In 1979, this involved a year in the Cotswolds as a Tractor Driver/Shepherd, then five years in Cambridgeshire as an Assistant Farm Manager, and five years in East Kent as a Farm Manager. I joined Velcourt in 1990, starting as Farm Manager on the Burghley Estate near Stamford. I spent 20 years with them, eventually becoming a Director in 2005, and was lucky enough to couple the core farm management with several overseas projects in France, Zambia, Hungary, Ukraine and Russia. The time was right in 2010 to join Trigon Agri, where I am currently responsible for the farming operations on 120,000 hectares of land split between Ukraine and Russia. As you might imagine, 2014 has been a challenging year with the political upheavals. I have had a very interesting career to date, and it's not over yet!

## 1980s

### **Abigail Benson (née David)** **1988 Rural Estate Management**

On returning to the Royal recently to bring my daughter Phoebe to an open day, it hit me that it's been 30 years since I started on the Rural Estate Management course. Although I still feel 21, it's an awfully long time since I dressed in pink and threw flour soaked pies in the quad for RAG week! On entering the Boutflour Hall, it was a great testament to the RAU to see so many old students there with their children for the open day. On finishing my A Levels I travelled around London and Europe for a couple of years before coming to Cirencester. It was without doubt the best three years for memories, fun, learning and gaining life skills. Cirencester offers what money can't buy; friends and contacts for life. Wherever you are in the world a client, colleague or acquaintance will have been to the RAU or know someone who has. In the eighties, there were still not many girls at Cirencester but enough to hold our own. When we graduated in 1988 the property world was booming and there were more jobs than applicants, we were blessed and could be very picky about where we wanted to work and in what sort of business. I joined Savills' new office in Stamford, Lincolnshire where I worked for 11 years; progressing from the new recruit to the Head of the Agricultural Department. In 1998 I had three children under 18 months, so I took a year off and then came back to work part-time. I joined Milton Estates Company (Peterborough) and am now part of the resident agent team three days a week. I am involved in the professional one-off jobs such as valuations, rent reviews, BPS, gravel, solar and health and safety issues. It is a very exciting time for me to see the next generation go to Cirencester. If Phoebe has even half as much fun as I did she will have a blast and a great career to look forward to.



Abigail Benson (née David)

## 1990s

### **Hannah Dodds** **1995 MSc Rural Estate Management**

Since completing the P course in 1995, I worked as a Land Agent for Smith Woolley in Norfolk from 1995-2000; leaving there to join the NFU Mutual, where I have now been for 15 years. Whilst the NFU Mutual are best known as leading rural insurers, I work within their subsidiary company, Risk Management Services Ltd, comprising 70 health and safety consultants, assisting businesses (notably farms, estates and rural related businesses) with their health and safety management and training. As a consultant myself, I specialise in supporting farming and estate clients, but also act as a Regional Manager for the company, based in East Anglia. Accidents are far too common in UK agriculture; we have the highest fatality rate amongst the main industry groups, being almost quadruple that of construction. Through our work we aim to help highlight the common risk areas, and support businesses with practical solutions to ensure they do not experience the physical, emotional and financial consequences that accidents bring.



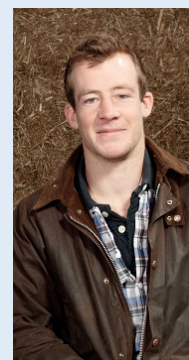
Hannah Dodds

## 2000s

### **James Mansfield** **2009 BSc (Hons) Agriculture**

My business partner, James Flower and I, launched Field and Flower, a premium online meat business, soon after graduating from the RAU. We support British farmers and always make sure they get a fair price for their livestock. We share details about the farms in each week's delivery and keep the distance between the farmer and customer as short as possible. It was initially set up as an outlet for James Flower to sell his beef direct to the consumer. Four years on and we're starting to gather momentum; we have five main farmers from Somerset and Devon and deliver over 1,000 subscription boxes a month nationwide. We love being recognised for what we do, and were thrilled to receive an Observer Food Monthly Independent Retailer Runner Up Award and

to be voted Best Meat Box by *The Independent*. In terms of the day-to-day running of the business, James Flower looks after the farm, farmers, butchery team, packing, and logistics, whilst I look after sales, marketing, website, and customer service. Having a very clearly defined split in roles has really helped the business grow. It's been challenging but very rewarding. The biggest issues have been finding new subscription customers with a limited budget, and finding good people to work in the business – but both of these bring the most reward too. We currently employ eight people, all of whom share our values. Looking to the future, we're working to expand the customer base through targeted marketing campaigns and are investing in a new scanning system to help us become more efficient when packing boxes. Our aim is to be the go-to place online to buy great quality meat with traceability.



James Mansfield



Philippa Cusack

### **Philippa Cusack** **2014 BSc (Hons) Agriculture**

Some eleven months ago I was sitting in the Boutflour Hall writing my final exams. Now, almost a year later, I have moved to a different county, started on a three year training contract in agricultural accountancy and found myself no longer named as a 'student' but instead a 'young professional' – which I strive to live up to! In the few short weeks between completing my finals and graduation, I moved to Taunton and started work at Albert Goodman Accountants; where I had been offered a training contract within the agricultural team with the aim of becoming a qualified Chartered Accountant. By the end of the summer, when most of my peers were still out on the combines, I found myself back in the classroom, this time in Bristol, receiving my first set of study materials for the upcoming exam. By Christmas, I had completed six of the 15 exams needed to qualify as a Chartered Accountant. Now in my 15th year of annual exams, I'm still enjoying the challenge of learning! Since Christmas there has been a break from studies, and I have adapted to office life, including the January rush of tax returns followed by endless March year ends. I never imagined myself working in an office but am thoroughly enjoying it, and I still find time to get my hands dirty on local farms at the weekend!

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