

Published by the Royal Agricultural University,
Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 6JS
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 01285 652531
www.rau.ac.uk

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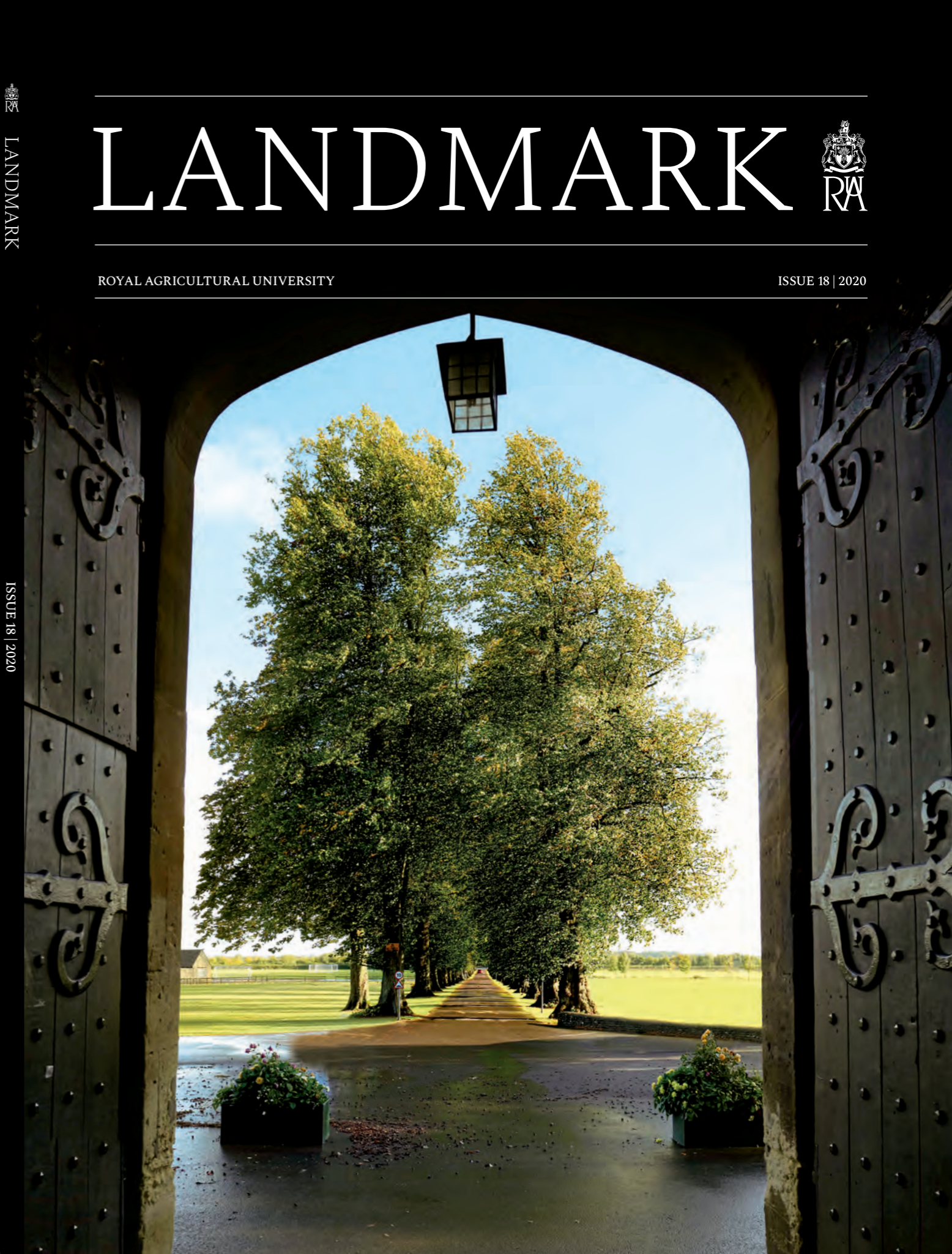
ISSUE 18 | 2020

LANDMARK



ROYAL AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY

ISSUE 18 | 2020



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2020

16 February

Launch of RAU 175 Plough
Sunday at the Parish
Church, Cirencester

4 March

RAU 175 Agriculture Lecture by
Richard Williamson (Beeswax
Farming) at the RAU

2 April

RAU 175 Rural Estates
Panel Debate, supported
by Savills at the RAU

23 April

Alumni Estate Visit
Wotton, Guildford

2 May

Family Open Day Event at
the RAU,

27 - 28 May

Suffolk Show

29 May

RAU 175 Heritage
Lecture at the RAU

6 June

RAU 175 Alumni
Ball at the RAU

12-14 June

Royal Three Counties Show

25 June

175 Vice-Chancellor's
Lunch (Invitation only)

20 -23 July

Royal Welsh Show

22 July

Prize Winners' Ceremony
at the RAU

23 July

Graduation, at the Parish
Church, Cirencester

18 August

RAU 175 Drinks Reception
at European Workshop on
Equine Nutrition, at the
Alliston Centre RAU

15 September

Happy Birthday RAU
Online Global Tea Party

16 September

RAU 175 Agri-Tech
Lecture at the RAU

October

RAU 175 Lecture on Food
Integrity and Security,
supported by Creed
Foodservice at the RAU

21 October

Prize Winners' Evening
at the RAU

25 November

RAU 175 Bledisloe Lecture
by Helen Browning (Soil
Association) at the RAU

7 December

Closing of RAU 175 Year
Carol Service at the Parish
Church, Cirencester

12 December

Shareholders' AGM



WELCOME



We are delighted to introduce the latest edition of Landmark which reaches you as we begin to celebrate our 175th anniversary year. In this edition you will find the full calendar of 175th events and hope that you also enjoy reading about our successes in 2019 and plans for 2020. We look forward to be able to meet you at one or more of the events where you will be able to celebrate with us and find out more about the outstanding work of our staff and the achievements of our students.

For those of you who are interested our annual report has also taken on a new, improved format, is a rich source of information and can be found at www.rau.ac.uk/annual-report



The Royal Agricultural College was founded at the time of the industrial revolution, when the nation faced the problem of feeding an ever-increasing urban population. The world faces a similar problem today. Nationally we have left the EU and the new Agriculture Bill sets out a road map that will put significant pressure on British farms and food – on the one hand to maintain high standards of animal welfare and sustainable ecological practices and on the other to manage the threat to farming communities of cheaper food from lower cost producers with different standards such as the USA.

The role of the RAU (as it now is) is therefore as important as it ever was. Our original motto - *how to manage land and care for the beasts* - continues to define our core purpose. The food, land and agri sectors need thought-leadership, original insights and new ways of working. Our aim is to produce graduates with the skills, education and imagination to provide these. The University's Governing Council and Executive are fully committed to ensuring that the RAU has the resources (financial and academic) to meet this challenge and seize the opportunities that lie ahead.

I very much hope that you will help us to shape our roadmap for the future. It will be by following this map that the RAU will be able to celebrate its bicentenary in 2045 as a world-leading, specialist, land-based institution.

Prof Joanna Price, Vice-Chancellor
John Pain, Chairman of Governing Council

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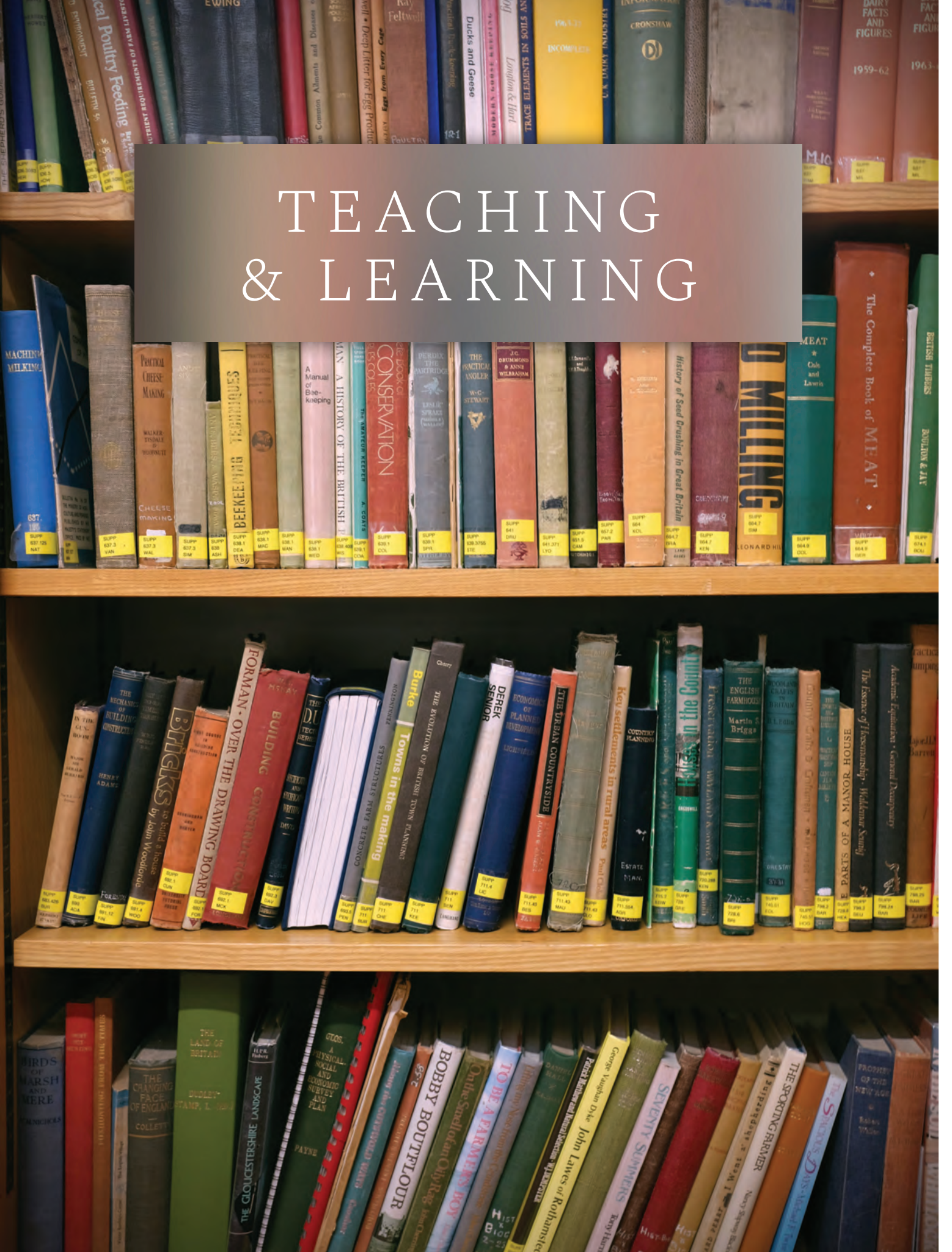
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TEACHING & LEARNING



League table, result!

The University was delighted to be ranked seventh in the UK – and top in the South West – for student satisfaction, following the publication of the National Student Survey (NSS) in July; an important marker which forms the basis of university league tables, as well as allowing prospective students to make informed choices about HE options.

This fantastic result, which reflected a commitment to improving student experience, was corroborated in the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide, where the

RAU leapt up 26 places in the league table and ranked 12th in the UK for student experience. The good news continued when the RAU was named a Top 10 UK University at the WhatUni Student Choice Awards, and ranked 6th in the Job Prospects category; all the more pleasing as the awards were based on the views of students themselves.

The achievements – and hard work – didn't stop there as the RAU also became just the sixth university, and the only small specialist, to be made a Centre of Excellence by the Institute of Enterprise and

Entrepreneurs (IOEE); awarded for leading-edge enterprise practice and for making the development of students' entrepreneurial skills a priority.

Finally, 2019 finished on a high when the University was crowned Enterprising Learning Provider of the Year at the Small Firms Enterprise Development Initiative (SFEDI) and IOEE awards, and Katy Duke, Head of Enterprise, was also named runner-up in the 'Intrapreneur of the Year' category. A truly remarkable year, where #OurRAU team spirit really shone through!



SEVENTH
IN THE UK
FOR STUDENT
SATISFACTION*

*Times Higher Education ranking of NSS 2019 results





Innovation in education

Written by Professor Neil Ravenscroft

Developing a responsive and inspiring approach to learning.

As we enter a new decade, with unprecedented new challenges facing the rural and agricultural sectors, education is also evolving. We are adapting to help farmers, and the wider land-based sector, develop the skills they will need to thrive.

The RAU, together with the University College of Estate Management and the Countryside and Community Research Institute, has developed an innovative £2.5m education project to stimulate and support enhanced leadership training and education in the land-based sector.

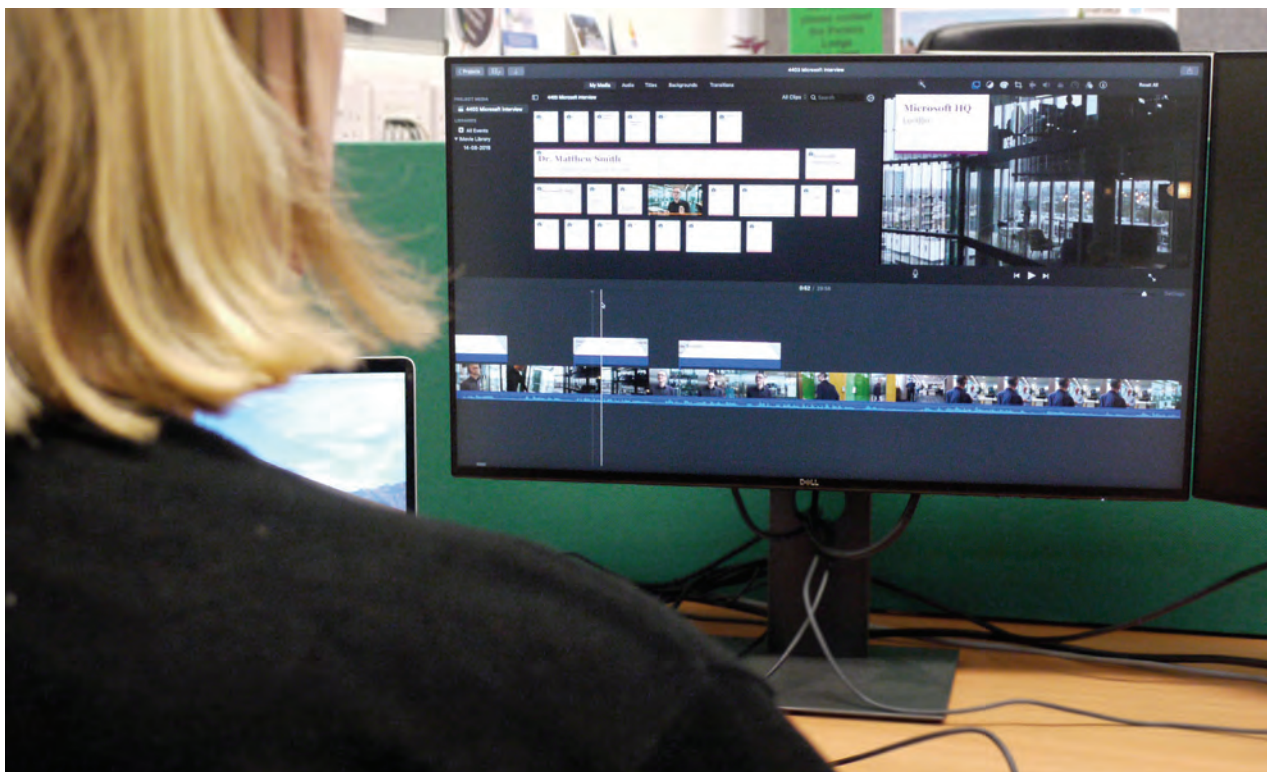
This project is developing a ‘problem-based learning by design’ approach. It uses a digital learning platform to support collaborative interdisciplinary ways to address real world assignments.

The project comprises four related programmes, at BSc, MSc, and MBA levels, all involving case studies, examples and scenarios to help build a lively and engaging dialogue with learners in a variety of media. Practical application of innovative solutions and skills, including use of agri-tech, is at the core of these new courses, which aim to promote a flexible, responsive and inspiring leadership style for the sector.

We hope that these new courses will help to support the future leaders of the land to meet the needs of political, social, economic, and natural environments, and have thriving businesses.



Professor Neil Ravenscroft



Placements that work



When Alice Foster (Rural Land Management) graduates in 2020, she knows her first step on the career ladder is secure, thanks to making a success of her work placement.

Alice completed an eight week internship this summer with leading property consultants Fisher German. Her positivity and willingness to take on a range of tasks at the Ashby de la Zouch office saw her rewarded with the offer of a permanent post, which she'll be starting in September.

Alice said: "I applied through their internship application process at the beginning of the year and as a result I was offered an interview in March. I chose them due to their fantastic reputation

and in particular their RICS Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) pass rate really impressed me."

"The firm's interest in getting to know their employees really showed throughout the interview process. During the 8 weeks, I helped with a variety of different tasks, from being out of the office assisting with Injurious Affections claims, to being in the office arranging access for site visits. A placement of this length allowed me to learn the whole process of a claim as opposed

to just seeing one section, which would have been the case with a shorter placement."

"One of the challenges I faced was the phone call work and developing the confidence to communicate professionally in an open plan office. I now feel a lot more confident speaking on the phone having been given the opportunity to get stuck in!"

"I was not expecting to have as much responsibility given to me based on some of my previous work experience. However, I really appreciated the fact that



It is only with the support and engagement of local and national businesses that the RAU is able to offer such beneficial and diverse placements and graduate roles to our students.

We need your help. We are looking for more employers to provide placements and opportunities, and alumni are uniquely placed to help with their knowledge of the RAU as well as their skills and experience in industry. We welcome engagement from all sectors.

Employers are encouraged to work with our students at all levels from 1st year undergraduates to postgraduates.

“My work placement also helped with my recent coursework (based around a utilities department) because I had learned all the relevant terminology and felt confident talking about the subject.”

I was given the opportunity to get involved in so much of the real day-to-day work and not just tea making and filing!

“My work placement also helped with my recent coursework (based around a utilities department) because I had learned all the relevant terminology and felt confident talking about the subject.

“From the placement I was delighted to be offered a job starting in September 2020, which I am so grateful for since I absolutely loved my summer there. I’m looking forward seeing what the future holds for me.”

Find out more

Please contact our Head of Industry Engagement, Katherine Jones, to find out more on how you can benefit from working with the RAU.

Katherine.jones@rau.ac.uk
Tel: 01285 652531

Graduating on a global stage

The RAU is a truly global University with current students joining our community from over 40 countries.



We continue to seek ways to expand and grow our worldwide community.

“This year the International Recruitment team have visited countries including India, Nigeria, Ghana, Germany, China, Thailand, with the Outreach team also active in Ireland”

We are proud that our international alumni go on to a wide range of careers from working for governments and NGOs, to starting their

own businesses or using their experience to help countries like Angola develop its emerging farming industry.

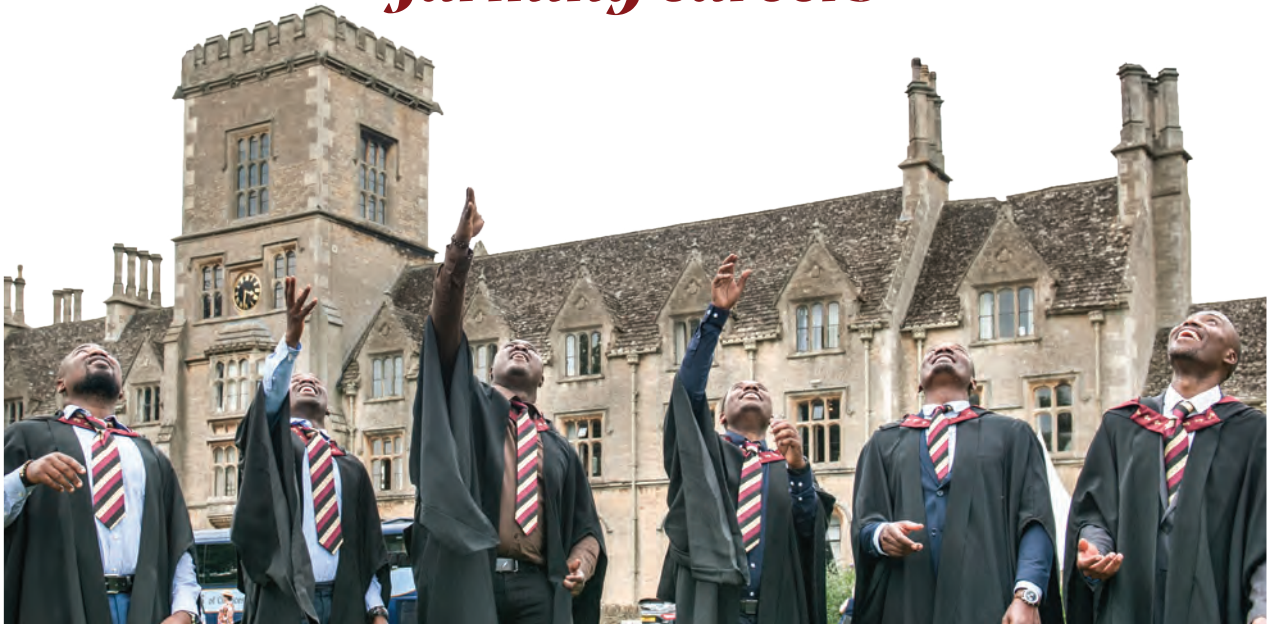
Recent graduate Juanita Prempeh, originally from Ghana, described her time at the RAU as “life changing” and an experience that she “will forever cherish”.

She particularly valued the opportunity to network with key stakeholders in the food industry, and also enjoyed a placement with

the Global Food Division of NSF International. She said: “Working with a global organisation really increased my prospects of building a solid career in the food industry and as a result I secured a job at Tate and Lyle Sugars, producers of Lyle’s Golden Syrup, one of Britain’s oldest brands.”



RAU's first Angolan graduates begin their farming careers



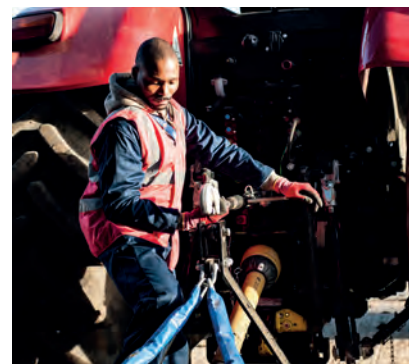
Six Angolans are starting new careers in farming after graduating from the RAU with a Graduate Diploma in Agriculture. The group gained expert knowledge and farm management experience along with the skills to

train others once back in Angola, where they are now managing a 5,000 ha farm. One of the graduates Eugenio Suzano said: “The graduation ceremony was one of the best moments in my life, I’ll never forget that day. Our adaptation

to work in Malanje is going very well, we found an amazing team here and we continue to learn about field work. We are also sharing everything that we learned in the UK. I feel proud of being part of this project.”



Photograph by Charlotte Eccles



THOUGHT LEADERSHIP & RESEARCH

BLEDISLOE MEDAL

- 1947 LT-COL. SIR ARCHIBALD WEIGALL, BART., KCMG, DL., JP., MR.A.C.
1948 ALEXANDER GODDARD, C.B.E., MR.A.C.
1950 SIR JOHN H. MILNE HOME, DL., JP., MR.A.C.
1955 J. A. ARNOLD-FORSTER, O.B.E., F.R.I.C.S., MR.A.C.
1962 SIR WILFRED DE SOYSA, MR.A.C.
1965 D. C. BARBER, MR.A.C.
1970 N.D.G. JAMES, O.B.E., M.C., T.D., M.A., F.R.I.C.S., MR.A.C.
1975 HIS EXCELLENCY HOSSEIN SEPEHRI.
1978 SIR EMRYS JONES B.Sc., LL.D., D.Sc., F.I.BIOL., FR.AgS.
1989 MAJOR GEOFFREY BERESFORD HEYWOOD, M.B.E., F.R.I.C.S.
1998 SIR C. DAVID NAISH, DL., MR.A.C.
2015 LORD PLUMB

For Outstanding Services to Agriculture

Breaking down barriers

An RAU student's research revealing the need for improved communication between vets and sheep farmers received attention across the farming press.

Tayla Harding shared the results of a survey she devised and carried out with an audience of industry professionals at the Sheep Veterinary Congress.

Her work found that vets and farmers both believed that a high turnover of vets

in practice and lack of specialist knowledge surrounding the sheep sector were barriers to regular interaction between the farmer and vet. Farmers placed cost as the biggest reason for lack of interaction, and this was also mirrored in the responses from the veterinarian data, where cost

was also detailed as the main reason alongside market prices and value of stock.

Tayla, who is staying on at the RAU for a Masters degree said: "The conference was a fantastic opportunity to present my findings to a room of industry professionals.

"Although the results seemed controversial for some, I hope it has provided an up to date perspective on how farmers view the role of a veterinarian in the sheep industry and the areas which need improvement to enable excellent interaction between the two parties."

"A high turnover of vets in practice and lack of specialist knowledge surrounding the sheep sector were barriers to regular interaction"



Tayla Harding

Aiming high for animal welfare

Written by Professor David Main



.....

Politicians love to claim that the UK has the highest standards of animal welfare. You also don't have to spend much time with farmers to see inspiring examples of best practice.

However, given the societal challenges around climate change, anti-microbial use and animal welfare, what does the future hold for livestock production in the UK?

The NFU manifesto suggests that we need to “ensure Britain’s world-leading animal welfare standards are recognised and promoted in line with farm businesses.” This seems like a good starting point. We have a history of leading animal welfare regulation, we have world-leading certification programmes and a number of higher welfare options are available to UK consumers.

Other countries are pursuing similar strategies and maintaining world-leading status requires innovation and co-ordination between Government, industry, and civil society organisations.

“Defra is currently considering options for financial payments for animal welfare related public goods.”



Professor David Main

Researchers at the RAU have been actively engaged in these debates. For example, Defra is currently considering options for financial payments for animal welfare related public goods.

We are helping to identify how these payments can support strategic shifts in animal production systems that support higher welfare and long term sustainability of UK production.

By developing new ways to assess positive welfare, we are also exploring better ways to measure and communicate how animals are reared in the UK. Demonstrating compliance with minimum standards is an inevitable part of modern farming but a new positive welfare assessment should help farmers communicate what they are doing well.

The livestock sector is facing a period of considerable change and uncertainty but the RAU endeavours to help the sector develop higher welfare and sustainable solutions.

A green powerhouse?

Written by Professor Tom MacMillan



By the usual way of thinking, cities are the future and the countryside trails behind. This urban bias runs deep in Westminster and Whitehall.

You see it in futuristic strategies for soilless food production, short shrift for farming communities threatened by trade tariffs, and civil servants excusing poor rural services in the misbelief people live in the countryside only by choice. However, there are signs this is changing.

Harnessing nature offers some of the best ways to tackle problems ranging from climate change to flooding. Whether you like or loathe the term 'natural capital', it is making waves. The great bulk of our natural assets, of course, sit firmly in the countryside. Groups outside Westminster, from the RSA Food, Farming & Countryside Commission, to the CLA, to our Local Enterprise Partnership here in Gloucestershire, are making that connection.

With investment, they argue, rural communities can be a powerhouse for a green economy.

This argument pushes rural issues in from the margins of policy, to the heart of one the next decade's biggest economic challenges.

Taking it seriously means upending government's urban bias, not just half-hearted efforts to 'rural proof' new policy. It includes recognising and rewarding rural enterprise and innovation, recommitting to land-based research and skills, and investing in rural infrastructure – priorities we champion at the RAU. The case for a rural rethink in economic policy is about more than harnessing nature.

“The big idea, in policy-speak, is that future productivity will hinge on protecting and investing in ‘natural capital’.”

Rural communities lead cities on trends ranging from start-up rates to gig working, and have experienced neglect and disenfranchisement in spades. Shifting more attention and investment their way is in everyone's interest.



Professor Tom MacMillan

Professor Tom MacMillan joined the RAU in 2019 from the Soil Association as the Elizabeth Creak Chair in Rural Policy and Strategy. In his first year in post, Tom has played a leading role in the RSA and the Food, Farming & Countryside Commission's Our Future in the Land report, setting out a blueprint for the country's food, farming and countryside system as the UK prepares to leave the EU.

The Elizabeth Creak Chair in Rural Policy and Strategy continues our long relationship with the Elizabeth Creak Charitable Trust, which has also supported the Rural Innovation Centre, Farm491, and five Clyde Higgs postgraduate scholarships in agriculture.

The Trust's commitment to the highest standards of agricultural education and to broadening opportunities to enter the industry are also key to our vision and mission, and we are delighted to be working both with them, and with the Elizabeth Creak Research Network, which is made up of agricultural universities across the UK supported by the Trust. We are very grateful to the Trust for their continued support.



Leaders by example

Written by Professor Louise Manning

Innovation has always been at the heart of the RAU.

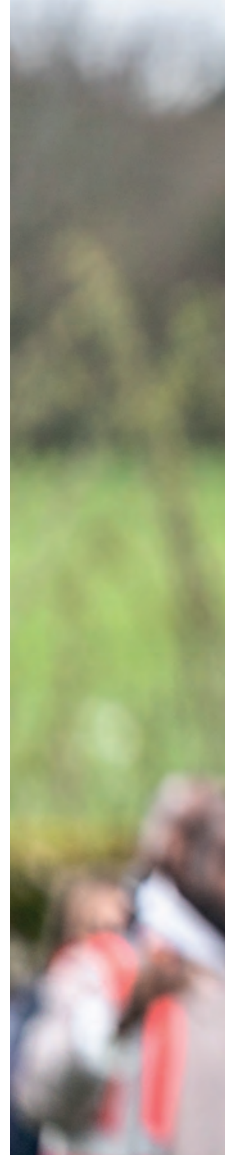
Innovation and leadership has always been at the heart of the RAU. From those first days 175 years ago when the goal was to feed a growing UK population who had migrated to towns and cities away from the countryside, through to the stark challenges today of feeding a largely urban global population with the finite resources we have on the planet.

Contemporary issues include unpredictable weather patterns and the impact on food security, and climate change and finding opportunities to sequester carbon whilst ensuring that every person on this planet has continuous access to affordable, nutritious food. Developing new ideas and technology that focus on landscape management, resilience of farmed land and farming businesses, strengthening the linkage between rural and urban communities, and addressing the need to drive the

efficiency of resource use and profitability in agri-food supply chains frame the current and future role of the RAU.

Technological applications can also help to improve productivity, promote entrepreneurial activity, enhance animal health and wellbeing, and reduce waste. To achieve all these goals, food supply chains, wider food production systems, and food supply in our towns and cities must become smart! Being smarter allows supply chains to become more transparent and honest, more efficient, fairer and more consumer focused.

New and relevant opportunities for people to develop the skills and knowledge they need to meet the future are essential and these need to be combined with facilitating access to the technological solutions that will accelerate business performance too. An exciting time ahead.





“Technology provides land managers, farmers and food business operators with the data and information with which they can make informed and grounded decisions.”



“Tom”, one of the small robots from the Small Robot Company at a Farm491 event

Worshipful Company of Farmers Course



Worshipful Company of Farmers course delegates 2019: Photograph by Charlotte Eccles

We are very proud to be the provider of the Worshipful Company of Farmers Advanced Course in Agricultural Business Management course each year in November.

The ACABM is the industry's leading development programme for business owners and senior managers, and is an immersive and intensive 18-day residential management training programme designed for those working within agriculture and the land-based sector.

Through seminars, group discussions and case studies, delegates are given the opportunity to further

their knowledge in all elements of farm business management and, through peer debate, share their varied experience and expertise.

ACABM19 delegate Holly Smallman said: "I wish I had done this course 10 years ago! It added brilliantly to previous knowledge, and encapsulated so much more. I now feel in a better place to start my next phase of life, both personally and professionally."

The courses started at Wye College in 1963 and has seen over 1,200 delegates in its history. Since its arrival at the RAU in 2010, we have supported almost 200 students and many now hold influential positions within agriculture and its allied industries. We look forward to seeing what 2019's alumni (18 from the UK and one from the Netherlands) go on to achieve in the coming months.

Rural Housing Report

The RAU has this year been working on a new report on rural housing. “Retirement Housing for Farmers in the United Kingdom: A review of the issues, experiences and possible answers.”

The report looks at the impact of access to housing for retiring farmers, and the subsequent impact on the industry.

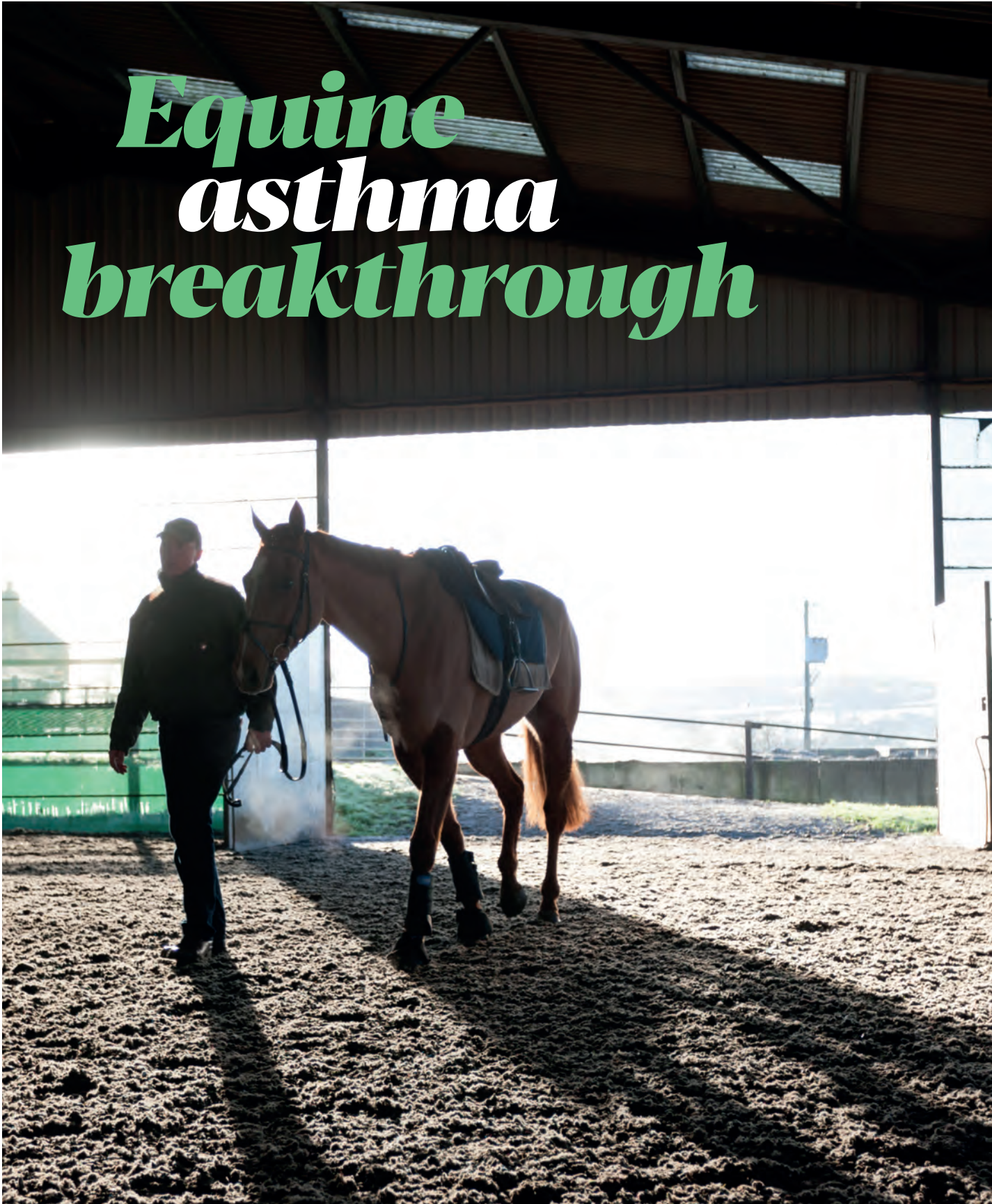
Released in partnership with the University College of Estate Management (UCEM), The Central Association of Agricultural Valuers (CAAV), The Prince’s Countryside Fund and Northumbrian Water Group, with support from a steering group including Addington Fund, the report identifies and examines the measures needed to enable those who wish to retire from the agricultural industry to do so without fear of hardship.

This can have a knock-on affect across the whole industry, including for those wishing to launch their careers in agriculture and farming. Jeremy Moody, RAU Visiting Professor and Secretary and Adviser to the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers, commented: “Taking this work forward will be about encouraging imaginative practice, proactive and positive



behaviour, and innovative solutions among all from local planning authorities to families considering their future or discussions within landlord/tenant relationships.”

Equine asthma breakthrough



The biggest ever study into the causes of severe equine asthma (sEA) has revealed associations with over 113 substances, including latex found in artificial surfaces.

Lead researcher Sam White, who carried out the work for the RAU and the University of Nottingham – found that natural rubber latex was among ‘the most surprising and significant’ of several new allergens present in the dust horses breathe.

The study used advanced computing power to assess 400 potential allergens in over 130 sEA-affected and healthy horses, working with research groups in Switzerland, France, Canada and USA. The research revealed many similarities with human allergic asthma and confirmed previously unlinked bacteria, fungi, arthropod, and pollen allergens.

Sam said: “The most significant and surprising allergens associated with sEA were from natural rubber latex. Latex is historically associated with the equine environment in the form of artificial surfaces on arenas and racetracks.”

“The high level of respirable dust associated with training on these surfaces has already been linked with chronic bronchitis, inflammation and oxidative stress in riding instructors, and latex has long been associated with a variety of respiratory conditions in humans.”

“The most significant and surprising allergens associated with sEA were from natural rubber latex. Latex is historically associated with the equine environment in the form of artificial surfaces on arenas and racetracks.”

“These early results show it could be linked to respiratory problems in horses too, although it is too early to make firm conclusions based on these data and further work is needed.”

The research used mathematical modelling to enable diagnosis of sEA from a blood sample, preventing the reliance on more invasive diagnostic techniques currently employed.

The identification of new allergens will improve allergen avoidance and inform future diagnostic tests and therapies.

The full research paper “Antigen array for serological diagnosis and novel allergen identification in severe equine asthma” was published in the journal *Scientific Reports* and available online at Nature Research.

Celebrating 40 Years of Women at the RAU

National Farmers Union (NFU) President Minette Batters and Jane King, former Farmers Weekly editor and CEO of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board were among an influential line-up of speakers at our conference celebrating women in leadership roles across the land-based sector. The Leaders in Food, Farming, Land and Life event also marked 40 years of women at the RAU.

The conference heard from entrepreneurs like Caroline Millar, who diversified

her farm in Scotland into a luxury break venue and Sarah Dunning, whose family business created the celebrated Tebay and Gloucester Services.

On balancing parenthood and her executive role, Ms Batters said: “I have to be super organised. I plan everything. I deal with homework that hasn’t been done then talk to the Secretary of State. You have to learn to put things in boxes. It is a really important life skill.” Her most important lessons were developing the ability to embrace failure and

learning from her mistakes: “You will never be truly successful if you don’t fail.”

The event featured breakout sessions on encouraging more women leaders in the agri-food sector, the benefits of mentoring and networking and seizing global opportunities.

Jane King said radical change was needed in the recruitment of senior figures in the sector: “The industry is absolutely crying out for fresh leaders, for diverse leaders, from diverse backgrounds.



If Brexit wasn't happening we would still be talking about transformational change in British agriculture."

Also speaking were two RAU alumnae: Abi Reader, farmer and member of the NFU dairy board, and two-event para athlete and RAU Honorary Fellow, Suzanna Hext.

Abi Reader promotes farming with the Cows on Tour initiative, runs a large Open Farm Sunday and acts as a media voice for the industry. She said: "If you are going to do something, throw

the kitchen sink at it. Aim high, and then even higher than that. I love farming – if you are a farmer you need to be aware that people are always watching what you do – we are part of an industry that matters and we all carry one another."

Suzanna Hext closed the day by speaking about the challenges of changes to her life after her accident, and the inspirational story of her participation in two para-sports. But she also reflected on her time at the RAU, saying: "The RAU is

more than just a degree. It has helped me through the tough times, held me in good stead, taught me to be independent and dedicated to my work and my sport – more importantly it has taught me to enjoy life and have a good time."



Food for thought



Public lectures bring global thinkers to the RAU. Our mission to attract leading influencers on rural and agri-food issues to our campus saw Dame Fiona Reynolds DBE speak about preserving our countryside, while Professor David Hughes – aka ‘Dr Food’ – revealed changing public perceptions of food across the world.

Dame Fiona’s presentation “The Fight for Beauty”, drew on her long career as former Director General of the National Trust and now Vice President of CPRE Gloucestershire. She believes that beauty in our environment and buildings should be just as important a political consideration as economic concerns.

She said: “It’s as if beauty has been wiped out of the script. Politicians seem to find emotional words quite difficult to use. We’ve started using

management-speak words like ‘eco-system services’ or ‘natural capital’ and become entranced by this idea that everything has to be measurable, and we’ve written out the kinds of words and ideas that make our hearts sing.” She added that containing urban sprawl was a very important thing, separating town from country – but that did not mean that affordable

“When farming is working hand in hand with nature it can be absolutely extraordinary in the benefits that it brings.”

housing and large-scale town planning could not be done in an effective and aesthetic way. Farming has a key role to play in the future of preserving beauty in our countryside, she said: “When farming is working hand in hand with nature it can be absolutely extraordinary in the benefits that it brings. Farming, nature and beauty can and should go together.”

World-renowned agri-food market analyst Professor David Hughes gave insights on topics like the growing popularity of plant-based diets and the



challenges and opportunities of climate change when he delivered our Bledisloe Lecture in November.

The RAU Visiting Professor (and Emeritus Professor of Food Marketing at Imperial College London) focussed on the changing shape of the food and farming industries under the influence of the media and increasing public awareness of food provenance.

He felt that marketing successes of non-meat based foods had lessons for all

producers: “We have to learn that these companies are saying ‘We start with consumers and work backwards’, not ‘we start with the production and go forwards’.”

He explained that national and regional pride in local produce was vital to how we see food and understand international market differences: “Passing through the Emilia-Romagna area of Italy, my host said to me ‘We had better get lunch before we go into the next region’. You don’t get that level of pride and loyalty for local

cuisine when crossing from Kent to Essex. You don’t hear people around the world saying, ‘Let’s go out for a British!’ We should cherish food heritage and culture – it’s priceless.”

He also demonstrated that climate change-based decline in agricultural production would be greatest in Africa and Asia. This could create export opportunities for other countries – but only if the affected continents remained wealthy enough to purchase those products.

Making Headlines

RAU research and policy thinking is big news.



A CALL FOR CHANGE HEARD AROUND THE WORLD

Professor Tom MacMillan was instrumental in the RSA and the Food and Farming Commission's 'Our Future in the Land' report, warning that: "Our own health and the health of the land are inextricably intertwined [but] in the last 70 years, this relationship has been broken. The report called for a radical change to production practises and values, warning that the true cost of cheap food was ill-health and poverty. The report was featured in a range of national and internal press.

UK VS US DEBATE

Professor David Main's debate with US Professor Jim Reynolds, defending UK animal welfare standards was covered across the farming and trade press, from Farmers Guardian to the British Veterinary Associations own campaigns and policy newsroom. Prof Main countered warnings about post-Brexit standards from Prof Reynolds saying: "Animal welfare is GREAT' needs to be our claim in any trade negotiations," referencing the government's 'GREAT Britain' campaign slogan. "Citizens here in the UK want certain minimum, consistent production standards. And they are willing to pay for higher welfare produce."

OUR EXPERTISE IN DEMAND



Professor Louise Manning has featured on several broadcasts ranging from BBC Radio Four's Farming Today to Turkish-based international news channel TRT World News. As an expert in food security she has been called on to speak about issues ranging from antibiotics in the food chain, to rewilding and the impact of Brexit.

RAU FEATURED ON BBC'S ANTIQUES ROAD TRIP

The RAU was the subject of an episode of the BBC's popular Antiques Road Trip show which broadcast on 12 September. The show featured Peter Brooks, our Head of Library Services discussing the history of innovation at the RAU with presenter Tim Medhurst, who later took part in a tractor driving course at the Rural Innovation Centre.

CLIMATE CHANGE RESEARCH MAKES HEADLINES

Dr Laurence Smith, Lecturer in Agroecology, was the lead author on a major study, published in Nature Communications, examining the production and greenhouse gas impacts of a 100% conversion to organic farming in England and Wales. The research

concluded that whilst there are undoubted local environmental benefits to organic farming, such as reduced exposure to pesticides and improved biodiversity, these need to be balanced against the need for greater land-areas under production.

IMPORTANCE OF EARTHWORMS



Dr Felicity Crotty, Lecturer in Soil Science, helped compile the first global atlas of earthworms based on surveys at 7,000 sites in 56 countries. Earthworms play a key role in increasing crop yields and aerating the soil, but they have been overlooked in the past. The findings will help protect the hundreds of different earthworm species found on all continents except Antarctica. Dr Crotty said: “I am so pleased that iDiv (German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research) worked tirelessly to amalgamate this global distribution data that my work is part of.” The full story was covered by the BBC online and on Farming Today.

RED HEMP-NETTLE NEWS SPREADS



Work by Dr Kelly Swallow, Senior Lecturer in Ecology and Agro-Ecosystems, to revive the critically endangered Red Hemp-nettle was covered across a range of national news outlets, including the BBC. The distinctive flower, once classed as a weed, was common in UK fields 60 years ago, but it has now almost disappeared due to herbicides, fertilisers, and the spread of highly productive crops.



WINNING THE WAR AGAINST WEEDS

The use of herbicides has become a mainstay of conventional farmers’ weed control strategy. Cracks have, however, started to show in this method of weed control as they have become ever more resistant to the herbicides applied. Dr Nicola Cannon, Associate Professor of Agriculture, spoke to Farming UK about this problem saying that: “the weeds are only weakened initially and are not killed. In many cases, previously susceptible weeds are able to continue germinating, grow and seed, thereby increasing the resistant weed populations”.



ENTERPRISE

A reason to raise a glass

Muddy Wellies Ale, created by RAU students, is now on the shelves in three branches of Waitrose – Cheltenham, Cirencester and Stroud.

The stores were attracted by both the taste and the fact that the drink is a social enterprise, with 10p from every bottle sold returned to help launch RAU students’ new business ideas.

Muddy Wellies’ story began in 2006 after students in the Entrepreneurs Society created a craft ale with a local brewer which was sold in The Tithe. Now brewed by Friday Beer Company, it has been available in a range of small outlets across the region in a deal with the local distributor Craft Drinks Co, before catching the eye of discerning buyers at Waitrose.

Katy Duke, Head of Enterprise at the RAU, said: “It’s been a big journey for Muddy Wellies, with each group of new students taking

it a little further along. Seeing the beer taking pride of place in Waitrose over a decade after students came up with the idea makes us all proud and excited about where this might go now.”

“It’s been a big journey for Muddy Wellies, with each group of new students taking it a little further along.”

Enterprise took centre stage again in 2019 when the RAU became just the sixth university, and the only small specialist, to be made a Centre of Excellence by the Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurs (IOEE); before going on to be crowned Enterprising Learning Provider of the Year at the Small Firms Enterprise Development Initiative (SFEDI) and IOEE awards.





GRAND IDEA
PRIZE WINNER 2019

*Constantin Huet
and Pre-O*

“I graduated from the RAU in the summer of 2019 after having spent an extremely fruitful few years there. I learnt the value of a good network, and was immensely grateful for the close relationships I was able to build with many lecturers.”

The Enterprise and Entrepreneurship programme provided Constantin with the initial funding boost to launch his business idea.

Constantin describes working with the Entrepreneurship team: “Pre-O[®] is not only my ‘brain-child’, but equally the result of a huge amount of input from the Enterprise and Entrepreneurship programme’s mentorship scheme, their workshop sessions and their wide range of personal expertise.”

“When I first presented them with the problem I wanted to solve: the fact that farms transitioning to organic agriculture were not able to use the organic logo for the first 2-5 years – which in practice is a disaster because it means lower yields and higher costs during those transition years and no price premiums

to offset these losses – they immediately put me in touch with a lecturer at the RAU who is an organic farmer.”

“I subsequently met and had discussions with a substantial number of farmers to discuss the solutions. The result of those discussions is Pre-O[®], the first-of-its-kind – completely free – transitional label for farmers moving towards organic agriculture. We have since had extremely positive discussions with a UK top 5 retailer about joining our scheme, have signed-up a significant number of farmers to our ‘wait-list’, and have won various awards along the way.”

“Our revolutionary business model, unlike other agricultural certification schemes, does not charge farmers.”

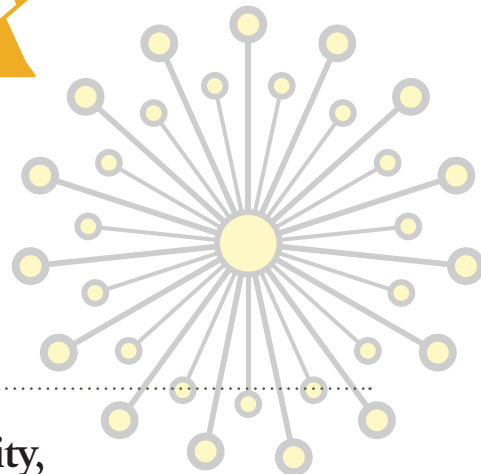
“Pre-O is beneficial to the consumer who perhaps can’t pay regularly for high-end organic produce, and beneficial to the farmer who is in the ‘organic-transition’ period yet suffering from non-organic prices. Until now, no outright ‘pre-organic’ offering has existed in the food market. We are making that change.”

Find out more at www.pre-o.com



“Agriculture is a complex interconnected system where no single solution will be sufficient”

Leading UK AgriTech Incubator



Based at the Royal Agricultural University, Farm491 is a leading UK AgriTech incubator and innovation space working with over 100 innovators shaping the future of British farming.

This is done by supporting entrepreneurs as they advance businesses with potential for impact in the agricultural sector, built around core values of empowering producers and consumers, helping farming to become increasingly environmentally sustainable and assuring integrity across the food supply chain.

Farm491 is founded on the belief that technology has the opportunity to empower farmers by both directly impacting farms with new tools, and helping to disseminate and accelerate the adoption of best practises, building resilience to external factors challenging farms everyday – from negative climate impact to labour shortages to price volatilities.

Agriculture is a complex interconnected system where no single solution will be sufficient. The support Farm491 provides helps to develop solutions that respond to the local context, while also being scalable to meet the global need, all the time placing the

farmer at the centre of the solutions to ensure the problems being solved matter. Farm491 actively works with any RAU student or organisation who has a potential business idea that could positively impact agriculture.

European Regional Development Funded (ERDF) activities continue to exceed targets. This year we announced a new partnership with Rothamsted Enterprises, and hosted the AgriTech and the Future of British Farming Conference, which showcased the best in technological innovation, automation and connectivity.

Under the leadership of new Head of Farm491 and Programme Manager Luke Halsey, it continues to grow, and now has 45 members, securing its position as the UK's largest support organisation for early stage agritech innovation. Farm491 has helped SMEs, a third of which are RAU alumni, raise £16m in investment and create 48 jobs.

A photograph of a long, straight path lined with mature trees, leading towards a bright horizon. The path is paved and flanked by grass. The trees are dense and green, creating a canopy over the path. The lighting is soft, suggesting a bright day. The overall mood is peaceful and natural.

RESILIENCE & SUSTAINABILITY

Focus on Sustainability

How we use land, what we eat and how businesses and society can innovate and adapt are at the heart of debates about the climate crisis and sustainability.

One of the RAU's four strategic goals is to become a "sustainable and efficient organisation". We have identified six key objectives that contribute that goal. These are to:

- Comply with the highest national and sector standards for sustainability
- Put sustainability at the heart of our teaching and research activities
- Minimise environmental costs and use of resources
- Embed sustainability into the core of our management and operations
- Work to actively enhance our environment
- Engage with our community and partner organisations

Ninety percent of the scientific papers published by RAU researchers since 2014 contribute to one or more of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),

particularly SDG 2 which is to 'end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture'.

"We are focussed on ensuring that sustainability and issues relevant to the UN SDGs are embedded into our courses."

This can include assessing how sustainability features can be incorporated into a building conversion, investigating the long-term effects of farm management on soils, or working with a local wildlife group to find the most effective way to restore the habitat of a rare bird, insect or plant.

Students often visit local farms to see how measures to improve sustainability and animal welfare can be put into practice.



Sustainable futures

Jordans and The Prince's Countryside Fund announced the 2019 recipients of their Sustainable Agriculture Bursary at a launch event on Tuesday 5th November.

The bursary supports the successful applicants' academic studies at either the Royal Agricultural University or the University of Reading, and helps them pursue their interest in, and knowledge of, sustainable farming and agricultural practices.

All four partners are dedicated to caring for nature and the environment, and the bursary is part of our long-term commitment to help build a more sustainable future for all by making a positive impact in agriculture.

The 2019 winners are Trystan Williams, Elena Chapman and Christabel Bishop (RAU),

and Elliot Cole and Ed Fearnall (Reading). Christabel said: "It was great to learn more about all the partners and hear about the projects they run. I now have a better understanding of how these organisations are striving to achieve a more sustainable agricultural sector and guiding us in our future within the industry."

The second year of the bursary is now open for applications. Successful applicants will each receive a £3,000 cash award in their first year, and a further £1,000 cash award (provided by the RAU) in both their second and third years of study.



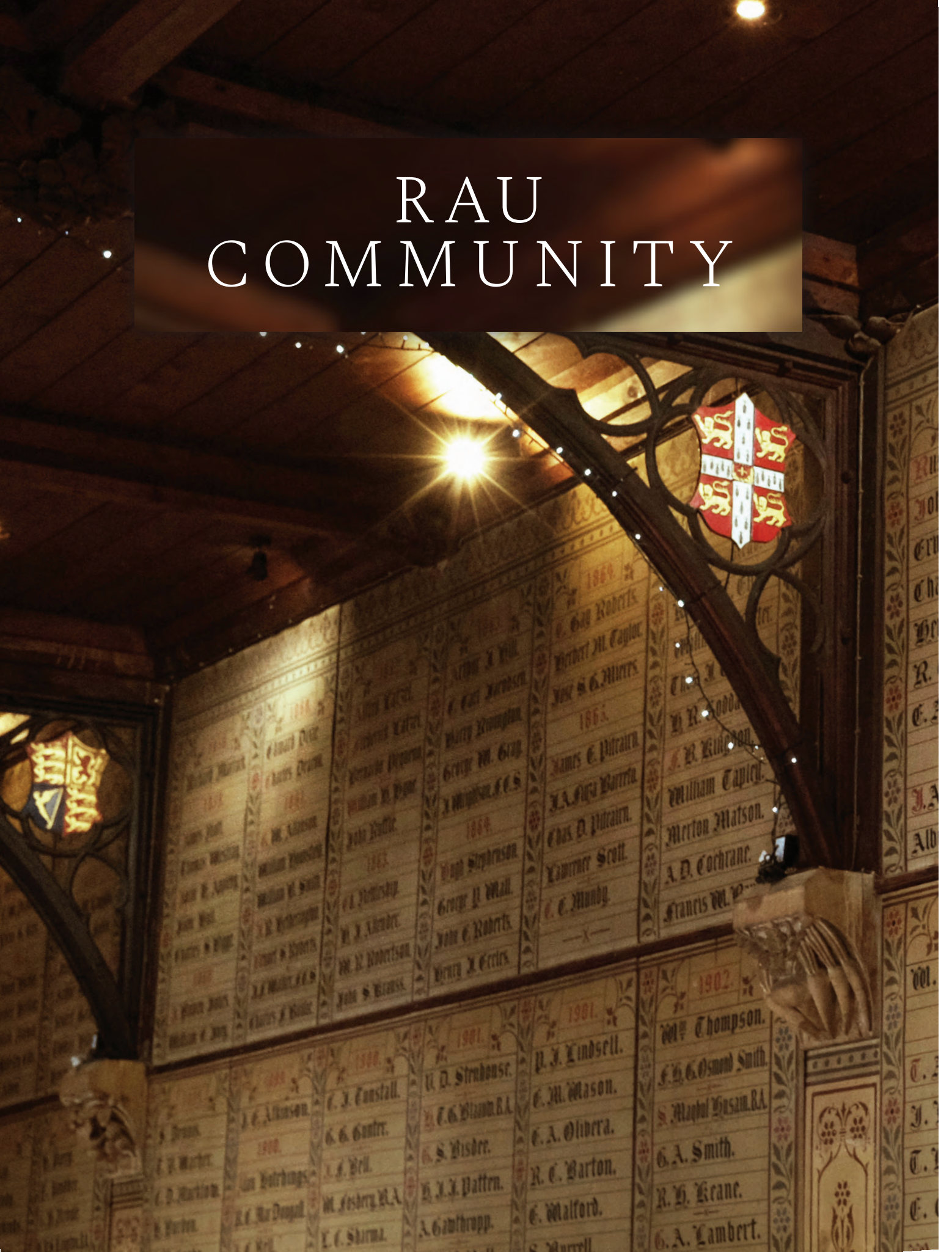
“All four partners are dedicated to caring for nature and the environment, and the bursary is part of our long-term commitment to help build a more sustainable future.”

To find out more about the application process, including eligibility criteria, visit

www.rau.ac.uk/sustainableagriculturebursary



RAU COMMUNITY





Farewell Vic Hughes



In October 2019, H Vic Hughes, former Principal, passed away at the age of 93. What follows is an excerpt from the eulogy given by Professor Chris Gaskell at his funeral.

Vic's first appearance at the RAU was a four year stint as a lecturer. After his six year break at Brooksby Hall, he became Farms Director, under Frank Garner, holding the post for 18 years. During that time he also took on the roles of Director of Studies and then Vice-Principal, before in 1978 he was encouraged to apply for the position of Principal by the outgoing Sir Emrys Jones, a fellow Welshman.

As the next 12 years proved, it was an inspired suggestion. For example, Vic's foresight in the development of degree courses in the 1980s was a forerunner of degree-awarding powers in the 1990s, public sector funding in the early 2000s, and the achievement of university status in 2013. His encouragement of overseas students paid dividends in the

development of the international reputation of Cirencester and in building collaborations with overseas partners. And the admission of women to the RAC in 1979, many would say not before time, was an essential step morally, academically, socially and economically. It was fitting, and a mark of his external as well as internal standing, that in 1989 Vic Hughes was appointed Commander of the British Empire, CBE, for his services to agriculture.

Sorely missed, the man we all knew simply as Vic will be remembered with enormous affection, gratitude and respect. A memorial service and tribute to the life of Vic Hughes was held at the RAU Chapel on 30 October 2019.



2020 *is a truly ‘landmark’ year*

2020 is truly a ‘landmark’ year for the RAU, as it turns 175. We will be marking this milestone throughout the year as part of our usual University calendar, but we will also be taking the opportunity to celebrate with some special one-off events.

We hope that all of our alumni, friends and supporters will have a chance to join us in these festivities, whether by attending one of the events, or joining in, wherever you are, with our global day of celebration on 15 September to say “Happy Birthday RAU”.

We would particularly like to draw the attention of alumni to 6 June, which will be our alumni ball.

As well as inviting alumni to attend as guests, we are seeking food suppliers to help provide the food for the evening, and auction lots. If you would like to get involved, please contact alumniball@rau.ac.uk

We also welcome corporate patrons for our calendar of celebratory events. So if your firm would like to take this exciting opportunity to reach the RAU audience of over 20,000 worldwide, then please contact the Development Office for more information.



ANNIVERSARY CALENDAR

The events listed below will be our special series of events for 2020 to celebrate our 175th Anniversary.

 <p>16 FEB Opening of 175 Year Plough Service</p>	 <p>4 MAR Agriculture Lecture by Richard Williamson (Beeswax Dyson Farming)</p>	 <p>2 APR Future of Estates debate (supported by Savills)</p>	 <p>2 MAY Family Open Day at the RAU</p>
 <p>29 MAY Heritage Lecture</p>		 <p>6 JUN Alumni Ball</p>	 <p>25 JUN Vice Chancellor's 175 Celebratory Lunch (Invitation Only)</p>
 <p>18 AUG EWEN Conference Drinks</p>	 <p>15 SEP Happy Birthday RAU Global tea party</p>	 <p>16 SEP Agritech Lecture and Farm491 Showcase</p>	 <p>23 SEP London Drinks at Savills</p>
 <p>OCT Food Security Lecture (supported by Creed Foodservice)</p>	 <p>25 NOV Bledisloe Lecture by Helen Browning (Soil Association)</p>	  <p>7 DEC Closing of 175 Year Carol Service</p>	

Congratulations Class of 2019





Meet the new Honorary Fellows

In 2019, we were proud to create three Honorary Fellows, in recognition of their outstanding contributions to their chosen fields.

SUZANNA HEXT



Alumna Suzanna Hext is an international medallist in two different sports. Having gained a first-class degree in Equine Science from the RAU in 2012, Suzanna, an international level event rider from Cornwall, was just beginning her career when a riding accident caused her life-changing injuries.

Despite two years in and out of hospital and 13 operations, Suzanna went on to win three European Para Dressage Gold Medals for Team GB in 2017. After swimming as part of her rehabilitation, Suzanna took up the sport competitively in January this year and just eight months later won medals in S5 50m and 100m freestyle at the World Para Swimming Championships. She is now aiming for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

LEVI ROOTS



Dragons' Den winner Levi Roots famously secured investment from Peter Jones and Richard Farleigh on the BBC 2 show with his Reggae Reggae Sauce, after opening his pitch with a song. He went on to create a global brand including sauces and seasonings, ready meals, books, soft drinks and snacks, as well as his music.

He has advised the RAU on entrepreneurship for over 10 years and is a regular judge on the University's Grand Idea competition for students, alongside other leading business figures. He said: "The RAU has entrepreneurship in its DNA, and I've been inspired and privileged to watch that characteristic bloom in its students over the years. My message has always been that if I can do it, anyone can."

JULIAN SAYERS



Chartered surveyor Julian Sayers, also an alumnus, is one of the most respected figures in his industry. He graduated from what was then the Royal Agricultural College (RAC) in 1982, and has maintained close links with the University, sitting on a number of its Boards and serving as a Governor for nine years.

He has held senior positions at a number of the land-based sector's major organisations including chairing the National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Rural Faculty, the Oxford Farming Conference, and the Farmers Club. In 2018, he served as Master of the Worshipful Company of Farmers, and is the long-serving chair of the Defra Tenancy Reform Industry Group.



ALUMNI PROFILE

Lewis Steer

Not having a farming background only made RAU alumnus Lewis Steer more determined to make a success of his Dartmoor Shepherd brand.



Lewis graduated in 2016 with a degree in Rural Land Management then returned home to Chagford, Dartmoor, with his girlfriend Flora Season. Starting with just 40 animals and one rented field, the two launched the enterprise which creates sheepskin rugs and gourmet lamb from native sheep. The slow grown, gourmet lamb is now being sold at high end restaurants, and the sheepskins are retailed online, at shows, and at interior design outlets.

“They began renting but now their first field is one of the smallest they rent from their 13 landlords.”

Lewis's parents were greengrocers and Bath Spa alumna Flora's were teachers. They began renting but now their first field is one of the smallest they rent

from their 13 landlords. Interviewed for BBC News in November 2019, Lewis said: “I thought I had to be somebody else [to be a farmer] and maybe one day retire to it, or do it on the side.

“It's very difficult to persuade someone to sign a tenancy with a young couple not from farming who are breeding rare breeds and deemed

economically unviable, and a young couple doing all that but not just selling lambs like a sensible farmer, but producing handbags and sheepskins.”

He added that: “a bubble of people with really cool, fresh ideas were just waiting for their opening in the industry and it could be transformed by giving them a chance.”



For more information

You can read more about Lewis' journey, his rare breeds and his products at www.thedartmoorshepherd.co.uk



ALUMNI PROFILE

Fiona Galbraith

Many farming and land-based businesses struggle to find reliable staff. Productivity in the industry is patchy and the agri-tech revolution is a few years behind the labour and skills shortage.

Fiona Galbraith believes ex-military personnel have a significant role to play in addressing these challenges and, since graduating last year with an MSc in Rural Estate Management, she has been developing a leading role in linking military talent with land-based employers.

“My company, Ruralink, benefitted hugely from the excellent university enterprise programme, especially my mentor, and it is such a joy to now maintain strong links with the RAU through my membership of Farm491.”

Fiona says, “My company, Ruralink, benefitted hugely from the excellent university enterprise programme, especially my mentor, and it is such a joy to now

maintain strong links with the RAU through my membership of Farm491.”

Fiona attended the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and served for 24 years, much of it abroad, including on operations in Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan. She explains that the pinnacle of her career was commanding 1st Military Intelligence Battalion, a complex organisation of over



300 technical specialists based across Europe and conducting military activity on three continents. Fiona maintains her military connections as a reserve officer working part-time as an assessor at the Army Officer Selection Board where she is responsible for selecting officer cadets to go, in their turn, to train at Sandhurst.

Alumni wishing to offer work experience or potentially employ a veteran are invited to attend The Rural List, a networking event which builds connections across the land-based and military communities, or contact Fiona directly through www.ruralink.org.uk





RAU
WANTS
YOU

MILITARY CAREER

RAU HEROES AND HEROINES

We are updating our records and would like to hear about any Cirencester alumni who pursued a military career.

We also particularly want to celebrate the sacrifice of those who have lost their lives in combat since WWII.

PLEASE CONTACT ALUMNI@RAU.AC.UK WITH ANY INFORMATION, IMAGES OR ARCHIVE MEMORIES.



ALUMNI PROFILE

Sarah Eykyn

When Sarah left Cirencester in 1988, no-one could have predicated her future in land management.

Back then, with just 60 girls and 800 boys, Sarah said: “I had a lot of fun on farm walks, and as secretary of the SU, but I couldn’t see myself in a career as a chartered surveyor. Fueled by wanderlust, I spent the next decade exploring my options – as a riding instructor in Pennsylvania, then in London managing public relations for a travel company, and finally, as a travel writer for Reed Elsevier. Inevitably, marriage made me settle down, in Tuscaloosa in 2000.”

“I was thrilled to represent the Savory Institute in 2018 as they rolled out the world’s first outcome-based, verified-regenerative sourcing for wool, beef, dairy and leather.”

“I’ve been lucky to work from home representing two PR agencies based in Colorado – The Fresh Ideas Group and Essenza Communications. We

work exclusively with organic food, beauty and supplement companies, non-profits, and authors, all over the US.”

Sarah was thrilled to represent the Savory Institute in 2018 as they rolled out the world’s first outcome-based, verified-regenerative sourcing for wool, beef, dairy and leather. They are on the front lines of climate change solutions, food and eco-fashion, with the introduction of an empirical method for measuring regeneration through Ecological Outcome Verification (EOV).

In late 2018 she was managing media at the first global meeting of Savory Hubs at White Oak Pastures, Georgia. There, in a field with farmers from Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Europe watching a soil scientist demonstrate EOV, she met RAU alumnus William Houston, who is training to be a Savory Accredited Professional for Holistic

Management practitioners. It is, indeed, a small world.

30 years ago, armed with one of the RAU’s first BSc Hons in Land Management, Sarah had no idea where it would take her. As it happens, it has been the foundation for the adventure of a lifetime – and quite a few farm walks.





ALUMNI PROFILE

Ed Ritchie

This autumn, Ed Ritchie (RELM 2006) has helped to launch philanthropy/tech start up, JustSeats.

JustSeats sell unused tickets and hospitality boxes which are donated by corporates or venues when they are not being used. They give 70% of revenues directly to UK charities. They estimate about £500M a year worth of tickets are currently wasted by the corporate sector.



As well as being great for the charitable sector, this is great for businesses to reduce wastage, and great for venues who reap the rewards of higher footfall. Ed said: “The only guys who lose out are the ticket touts.”

The platform was trialled privately over the summer raising £2K for nominated

charities. Now with the backing of leading racecourses and venues in London, they have started to sell unused tickets and boxes to the general public. JustSeats is a 'social enterprise' with the ambitious aim of raising more money for charity every year than any other single initiative that currently exists in the UK.

It already supports more than 20 charities – any charity can be a recipient as long as they are UK registered, and this now includes the RAU.

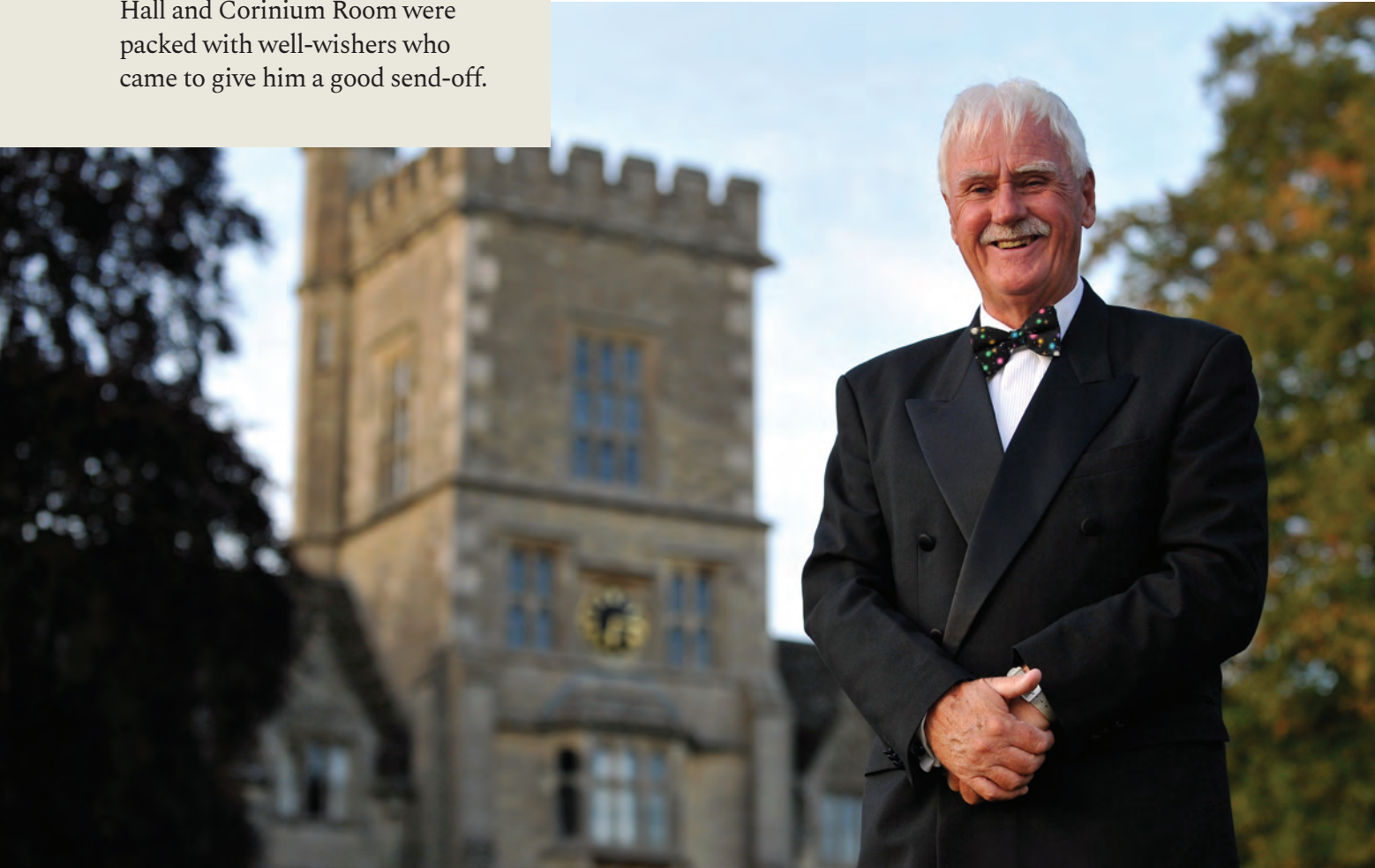
“The only guys who lose out are the ticket touts.”

For more information

Please visit www.JustSeats.org or get in touch with Ed directly: edward.ritchie@justseats.org

Alumni Dinner & Ron's retirement

The Alumni Dinner in September 2019 became a retirement party for Ron Coaten, known and loved by generations of Cirencester alumni, who stepped down after 50 years' association with the RAU. From bar manager, to student welfare officer, to alumni liaison, Ron has played an enormous role in the life of the RAU, and the Hall and Corinium Room were packed with well-wishers who came to give him a good send-off.





Your Weddings



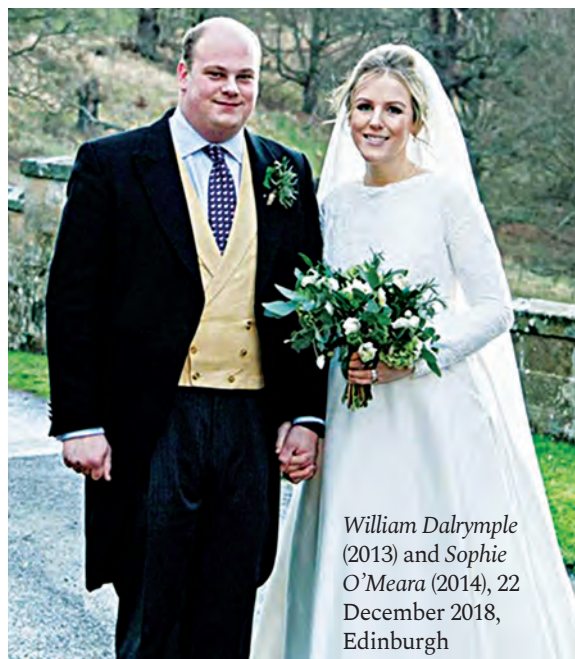
Martina Edwards (2010) and Thomas Kershaw, 2 February 2019, Wairarapa, New Zealand



Sophie Osborne (2009) and John Wentworth, 14 September 2019, North Yorkshire.



Nicholas Jenner (1995) and Vics Thirlwell (2002) 12 May 2016, New York



William Dabrymple (2013) and Sophie O'Meara (2014), 22 December 2018, Edinburgh

Rebecca Harvey (2002)
and David Wiggans,
9 March 2019, Essex



Michelle Brindline
(2008) and Joshua
Smith, 12 April 2019,
Michigan, USA



Jack Matthews (2013)
and Millie Naylor
(2013), 1 June 2019,
Hampshire



Lucy Carnaghan
(2008) and Tom
Hall, 21 September
2019, East Sussex



Richard Mayo
(1988) and Sharon
Manuel, 18 October
2018, Mauritius

From the archive

2020 is an exciting year with for us. As it's our 175th anniversary, we wanted to share with you some of the images of what life was like here in times gone by.

Things have changed so much in teaching and learning and also in good practice across the different industries we serve. As part of our 175 celebrations, we would love to hear from you if you have any photos of your time at Cirencester that you can share with us. Email us at alumni@rau.ac.uk

