

Landmark

Issue 17 | 2019



Royal
Agricultural
University

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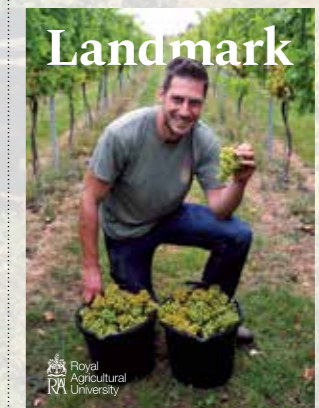
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Landmark



Cover image: Alex Crawley (GDA 2018)

The Vice-Chancellor writes...

I am delighted to introduce the latest edition of our Landmark magazine. I hope that you enjoy reading about the life of the University over the last year and get an insight into what lies ahead.

A year ago I wrote about the challenges and opportunities facing Higher Education and the food and farming industries. Unfortunately, the passing of a year provides no greater political certainty at home or abroad; media stories abound about the value that a University education can offer. However, the RAU is not just any old University. We are a small specialist institution whose culture and values are underpinned by our heritage and a strong global brand, extensive industry links, and an award-winning student enterprise programme. We are also fortunate to have you as our alumni network who combine loyalty to the RAU with national and international influence.

However, the life of long established institutions like the RAU is a cyclical one of growth, progress, success and stability followed by a gradual lack of competitiveness requiring renewal and investment followed by a new cycle of growth and success. We are currently at the beginning of a phase of academic renewal and growth and are having to seek investment to support the new strategy which you can read about on page 6.

While many recognise the need for change, many also lament that things are not remaining as they were when they enjoyed them so much in their younger days. It is important to realise that we are not indulging in change for the sake of change; the status quo is not an option. Unless the RAU increases its student numbers by widening its academic appeal it will no longer be sustainable. It is little comfort to know that we are not the only university to be in that position. It is not enough for us to decide that we need to be the best in order to succeed, it is also necessary for us to be able to define what the best looks like in terms of courses provided, their content and their appeal and relevance, not just to those who



“
We are currently at the beginning of a phase of academic renewal and growth.”

have traditionally been to the RAU (there are not enough of them), but also to those who have never previously heard of us but who are attracted by what we offer.

You, our alumni, are best placed to know what we should be offering in order to satisfy the future needs of the land-based industries. If you think that you have a view that warrants hearing we need to hear from you, and I am grateful to those of you who have already contacted me to share your thoughts and ideas, who have helped in the design of our new Catalyst programmes and who have given us feedback on early drafts of the strategic plan. In the near future we will be undertaking a survey to gather your views, not only in terms of what we need to be a real national and global resource, but also what sort of alumni events you would like us to run, what you would like to read about us and how often, and what social media platforms you are using.

Our vision is for the University to become the UK's leading specialist University providing a fresh perspective for the land, agri-food and rural enterprise sectors.

A key strategic priority is to refresh our academic portfolio in order to attract the increase in student numbers required to sustain the University and service the impending revolution in agri-business so vital to the nation's economic well-being.

Key to the success of this strategy has been the recruitment of a new executive team (see page 9) and senior academic thought leaders who will play a critical role in the shaping and delivery of the University's academic vision. Our governance structure is also being revised under our new Chair of Governors and while we were sad to say goodbye to a number of long-standing Council members who had completed their maximum term, the appointment of a number of new trustees, fully committed to the University, will also be instrumental in supporting the change process.

Endorsement of our new strategy has been provided by government funding of a £2.5 million Catalyst project. This supports the development of an exciting suite of new

industry-led programmes, all offered with distance-learning options, that will attract a wider, more diverse community of learners to the RAU and prepare them to lead and navigate change after the UK leaves the EU.

New courses covering sustainable food and agriculture policy, and heritage will recruit postgraduates this year, with related, new undergraduate courses opening in 2020. This includes a two year accelerated degree programme, a format for delivery which government is keen to promote. The new academic programmes are supported by a team of new academic talent and also by exciting partnerships - with the world-leading Countryside and Community Research Institute at the University of Gloucestershire and with the University College of Estate Management, Reading, a pioneer of distance learning delivery in Higher Education.

The University's strategy to develop business leaders of the future is supported by the Gloucestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (GFirst LEP). In 2018 we opened the state-of-the art Alliston Centre which houses Farm 491 and the Cirencester Growth Hub. These new initiatives are already having an impact and are strengthening our position as an anchor institution that is a driver of entrepreneurialism supporting the local and national economies. The centre is the

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heart of our new Knowledge Hub that has a focus on policy and strategy and farmer-led innovation.

In September, we will be holding an event to say farewell to Ron Coaten, who has been with the RAU for 50 years. He will be our guest of honour at the Alumni Dinner on 21 September. There are few of you who have not encountered Ron during those 50 years. I hope that you can attend this event to help us thank him.

On 17 October we will mark 40 years since the first women students came to Cirencester. This event will be a celebration of the achievements of women in the land-based sector. We would like in particular to welcome our first cohort who joined us in 1979, and if you would be prepared to become involved, we would love to hear from you. However, this will not be a celebration for women only since all will be welcome.

We hope to see you at one of these events, at one of our show receptions around the country over the summer or at Cheltenham in November. A list of our events can be found on page 51. Please do not hesitate to get in touch, either directly (vcsec@rau.ac.uk) or through the alumni office (alumni@rau.ac.uk). ■

Professor Joanna Price, Vice-Chancellor

Meet the new Chair of Governors

The Rt Hon Michael Jack CBE was appointed Chair of the Governing Council in January 2018. Michael Jack is currently Chairman of Gs Fresh Produce, before that he was Chairman of Topps Tiles PLC.

He has had a varied career with a number of organisations; notably he was Food and Agriculture Advisor to HSBC Bank and Non-Executive Director of 2 Sisters Food Group.

Before that he worked with L O Jeffs (latterly part of Northern Food) and with Marks and Spencer PLC.

Michael has also had a long parliamentary career and was Member of Parliament for Fylde between 1987 – 2010. During this time he was appointed Privy Counsellor in 1997 and has been Chair of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee. He has held many other posts including Chair of the Office of Tax Simplification at HM Treasury and has been a



judge for the BBC Food and Farming Awards. Other posts held include Shadow Minister of Agriculture, Shadow Financial Secretary, Financial Secretary to HM Treasury and

Minister of State Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

In January 2015, Michael was awarded a CBE for services to Tax Simplification in the Queen's New Year's Honours. ■

The RAU's Vision and Strategy



Vision

Our vision is to become the leading specialist University providing a fresh perspective for the land, agri-food and rural enterprise sectors.



To grow and diversify our student community by providing an outstanding student experience and excellent employment outcomes. Our innovative programmes will be informed by the evolving needs of industry and designed for learners at all stages of life, delivered via traditional and distance learning platforms.

Strategic aims



To establish a Knowledge Hub that will help industry navigate change and uncertainty making it possible to tackle big challenges more effectively delivering societal benefit and impact. The Hub will provide a focus to pioneer farmer-led innovation, act as an accelerator of rural enterprise and become a centre for thought leadership for the informed development of evidence-based policy and strategic thinking.



To become a sustainable, efficient, organisation that can fund a continuing investment in our physical, digital and human infrastructure ensuring a continually improving and excellent experience for both our students and our staff.



Strategic and sustainable partnership working - partnerships with land-based colleges and schools will diversify our student community and extend the reach of the learning opportunities we offer. Developing more sustainable partnerships with industry and research-leading institutions will provide a wider perspective, ensure that what we teach is relevant, improve student employment outcomes and enable sustainability-oriented innovation

Teaching and Research



Meet the Senior Academic Team

Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Dr Lucy Meredith

Dr Lucy Meredith was appointed as Deputy Vice-Chancellor in March 2018, taking a strategic lead for teaching, learning and research at the RAU. As part of this, Lucy has grown the academic team, seeking to build on our strengths and ensure that we develop our influence and expertise across a range of subject areas from food security to entrepreneurship.



Heads of School

Professor Mike Gooding

Professor Mike Gooding will join us in April this year as Head of School for Agriculture, Food and the Environment (SAFE). Mike is currently Professor of Crop Science at Aberystwyth University where he has been Director of the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS). He returns to the RAU where he began his academic career teaching grassland and crop science in the early 1990s.



Professor Neil Ravenscroft

Professor Neil Ravenscroft joined the RAU in March as Head of School for Real Estate and Land Management (RELM). He was previously Director of the Brighton Doctoral College and Professor of Land Economy, at the University of Brighton. He specialises in people-environment relationships associated with farming, forestry and water resources.



Dr Andrew Hemmings

Dr Andrew Hemmings joined the RAU in 2000 and took up the post of Head of School for Equine Management and Science in October 2018. Andrew's degree in Equine Science led to an MSc and PhD in this field and now his research interests centre on the brain and behaviour.



Dr David Bozward

Dr David Bozward also took up the post of Head of School for Business and Enterprise in October last year. With over 20 years of entrepreneurial business experience, David has been named in the Maserati 100; the top 100 individuals in the UK actively supporting the next generation of entrepreneurs. His research interests remain in this broad field of entrepreneurship education, new venture creation, entrepreneurial ecosystems and business growth.



Rural Policy and Food Security Professors

Professor Tom MacMillan

Professor Tom MacMillan has been appointed Elizabeth Creak Chair in Rural Policy and Strategy, joining us from the Soil Association where he was Director of Innovation. He has served on the Cabinet Office's Food Matters report, ScienceWise, the BBSRC, Sustain, and the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership.



As Creak Chair, Professor MacMillan is at the heart of our mission to inform national and international policy relating to the land-based sector, the environment and the food supply chain.

Professor Louise Manning

Louise Manning joined us in January 2019 as Professor of Agri-food and Supply Chain Security, re-joining the RAU from Harper Adams University where she was Reader in Food Policy and Management.



Professor Manning has worked for over 30 years in the agri-food supply chain in a range of roles. Her expertise is in the area of food integrity including food safety and quality, food crime, governance, social and corporate responsibility. With experience throughout Europe and Africa, Louise will ensure we build a global reputation for innovation, thought leadership and applied research. ■



Agriculture and food security research at RAU boosted by £2M donation

PhD research into topics such as growing soybean as a profitable, low-carbon crop will continue to thrive at RAU following a donation of £2 million.

The RAU has received this research investment thanks to the John Oldacre Foundation, which supports agricultural sciences and is a long-term funder of doctoral study at the University.

Henry Shouler, Chair of Trustees at the John Oldacre Foundation, said: "After promoting research at the RAU for more than 30 years, we are delighted a programme has been agreed to secure the future for its PhD students and their projects in the name of John Oldacre, who was a longstanding supporter of this work."

The RAU's two current John Oldacre scholars are already supported by an investment of nearly £190,000 and are working on crop science projects

that will be of long-term benefit to the UK's food security.

The new endowment of £2 million will ensure future research of this kind at the RAU in perpetuity – an estimated two new PhDs per year. It will also enhance links with the agricultural research community, including a collaboration with the National Institute of Agricultural Botany (NIAB).

Pedzisai Nemadziba, one of the current PhD students, is developing strategies for the UK to successfully grow large-scale soybean crops, which have lower reliance on fertilisers and are becoming a growing part of our diet. The majority of the UK's soya is currently imported and genetically modified.

Caitlin Willis' project is investigating insecticide resistance in UK populations of oil seed rape pests, in this case in conjunction with the non-profit Rothamsted Research Institute. These projects are being

supervised by Dr Nicola Cannon and Dr Xianmin Chang.

Dr Nicola Cannon, Principal Lecturer in Agronomy, who is supervising Pedzisai's PhD said: "It is an honour that the Foundation has chosen to build on its already generous support for research at the RAU. It means we can increase our focus on studies that offer benefits to farmers, the environment and the public by improving the carbon footprint of agriculture and reducing input costs.

"Soya is now being incorporated into meat products including burgers and sausages to help reduce red meat consumption for environmental and dietary benefits. Growing soya in the UK would help improve consumer understanding of this crop whilst reducing food miles and hopefully in the near future be a profitable and viable crop for farmers." ■

New Degree Programmes at the RAU

We are excited to announce a new £2.5 million initiative to help meet the needs of the land management and agri-food sectors in the post-Brexit era.

The plan sees the RAU and its academic partners, the Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI) at the University of Gloucestershire, and University College of Estate Management (UCEM), unite with industry stakeholders to drive future success in sustainable land management and food production. £1.1 million of funding for the project was provided by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), through its Catalyst Fund. The investment will continue to be monitored by HEFCE's successor, the Office for Students.

Professor Joanna Price, the Vice-Chancellor, said: "This exciting initiative addresses the unprecedented opportunities and challenges posed by the rapidly changing political, economic and natural environments by providing leadership training and education in the land management and agri-food sectors, especially suited to the post-Brexit era.

"Working closely with industry, we have established a new academic team and developed undergraduate and



postgraduate programmes that reflect the emerging needs of the sector."

The project brings together academics from different disciplines and the partner organisations who will work alongside a group of industry stakeholders, including Waitrose and the National Farmers Union.

Professor David Main, a veterinary surgeon and international expert in farm animal welfare and knowledge exchange research, was the first member of this new team, coming to the RAU from the University of Bristol Veterinary School. He has now been joined by other key appointments including Professor Louise Manning (see page 9).

The RAU is offering two new postgraduate programmes from September 2019; an MBA in Innovation

in Sustainable Food and Agriculture and an MSc in Sustainable Food and Agriculture Policy. Information on how to apply can be found on the back cover and on our website.

These courses will be followed by two new BSc undergraduate programmes in 2020; Business and Innovation (Food and Farming) and Environment, Food and Society. Our new offer focuses on leadership in the food and agri-business sector, rural policy and strategy, agro-ecology, sustainability and innovative land management.

Involving industry partners in programme co-design and delivery create an 'innovation bridge' with industry and ensures there is sustained and meaningful engagement with students, preparing them to lead future change in their careers. ■

Cultural Heritage Institute

In addition to the Catalyst Fund we are also committed to the delivery of a new postgraduate and professional training hub in Swindon to support the cultural heritage industries. Plans for the hub were launched in response to the national skills gap in archaeology, and a demand from businesses in the South West of England for CPD courses, such as heritage management. We joined University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSd) as local partner in early 2018. As it became clear that there was a need for focused local

higher education leadership, and that the project was a better strategic fit with the RAU, we became the lead body responsible for delivering and managing the learning hub.

The Cultural Heritage Institute (CHI) will be located on the site of the former Great Western Railway Carriage Works in Swindon and will be an important element of the 'invest to grow' plan for the University.

Dr Geraint Coles has recently joined

the RAU team as Director of the Cultural Heritage Institute.

He commented: "This project will provide students with first-hand insight into heritage-led regeneration and the complexities involved. With a goal to deliver courses from September 2019, this is an exciting project and one that I believe is essential if the UK is to remain a leader in heritage management." ■





Growing businesses at the RAU

At the RAU, we are not just interested in how we grow crops on the land, we also want to help grow the people and businesses who shape the land-based sector.

With a reputation for encouraging and developing student start-up businesses through our award-winning student enterprise programme, we created a new project, Farm491, providing high-spec facilities to foster entrepreneurship, idea generation, and collaboration.

In July 2018, NFU President Minette Batters formally opened the RAU's new home for regional business development and UK-wide agritech innovation, the Alliston Centre.



Alliston Centre Opens

Named after the late Professor John Alliston, who was Emeritus Professor of Agriculture at the RAU, the centre is a base for Gloucestershire businesses of all kinds and a headquarters for innovators working across the UK's agriculture and land-based industries.

Located within the RAU's campus in Cirencester, over half of the £4.2 million Alliston Centre is used by Farm491, and also home to the Cirencester Growth Hub - part of the Gloucestershire Growth Hub network - supporting local enterprises to achieve their potential, expand and create jobs. The Alliston Centre creates a collaborative, entrepreneurial community where businesses can be born and developed.



Innovators working with Farm491 include Multibox, which aims to produce low-cost insects for fish and animal feed; Horse Logic, a consultancy optimising equine performance and welfare, and Raw Energy, which develops renewable energy assets.

Opening the centre, Minette Batters said: "It is so refreshing to be a part of and witness agritech innovation on this scale, and I'd like to congratulate the Royal Agricultural University on the success of their Farm491 enterprise."

"With Brexit presenting a myriad of challenges, UK agriculture is and will continue to embrace technology as tools for the future. Seeing the diversity of entrepreneurs and innovators on show at this opening demonstrates how forward-thinking we already are when it comes to new technology."

Guests were invited to tour the building and enjoyed welcome speeches from Professor Joanna Price, Vice-Chancellor of the RAU and David Owen, CEO of GFirst LEP, Gloucestershire's Local Enterprise Partnership.

The Growth Hub, funded by GFirst LEP and the RAU, is managed by Yesim Nicholson and helps Gloucestershire businesses of all sizes to collaborate, network and exchange ideas. It aims to grow the county's economy as a whole, by accelerating their development and takes particular advantage of the RAU's existing areas of expertise.

Dr Diane Savory OBE, Chair GFirst

LEP, said: "Back in 2013 we came up with the original concept of a Growth Hub network offering business support right across the county. The original Growth Hub in Longlevens, Gloucester, in partnership with the University of Gloucestershire, opened its doors in October 2014 and has worked with over 2,000 businesses since then.

"To now see the first of these new Hubs open its doors, in a brand new building that has the wow factor both inside and out, makes me very proud. It has been an absolute pleasure working with all the team at the RAU."

Professor Joanna Price said: "As part of our campus, the Alliston Centre will be instrumental in developing business acumen and an entrepreneurial mind-set in our students, skills that will be critical for enabling the land-based sector to cope with the current uncertainty and unprecedented rate of change.

"Working at the RAU for more than 20 years Professor Alliston was part of the fabric of the University and a much-loved and prominent figure in the world of agriculture. He was ahead of his time in realising that the future of British farming lay in giving farmers the opportunity to improve their business and leadership skills.

"It is therefore both apt and poignant that his name should be associated with a project which seeks to drive enterprise and innovation, benefiting both the agricultural industry and the economy of the local area and its communities." ■

“
Professor
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”

THE GROWTH HUB

Our Growth Hub Service - Serving Cirencester and the County

Nestled in the capital of the beautiful Cotswolds and placed in between the RAU and Cirencester College, Cirencester Growth Hub is the perfect place to work and meet like-minded professionals in a relaxed atmosphere surrounded by green spaces. Whether you're a small business or part of a corporate

team, the Growth Hub is the place for you.

Promoting entrepreneurship, innovation and business growth in the area, the Cirencester Growth Hub provides support to businesses of all types in the region: from pre-start through to existing companies and organisations looking to grow.

There are co-working and office spaces, meeting rooms, casual membership access, access to business advice and workshops, and free wifi, tea and coffee.

You can also access support from Business Navigators on-site in Cirencester, and other services throughout the Growth Hub network. ■

University News

Defra Secretary visits Royal Agricultural University

Michael Gove visited the RAU in November to learn about our key role in the development of skills for the agri-food and land management sectors and its initiatives to help the industry navigate change.



The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) toured the University's Rural Innovation Centre (RIC) at Harnhill, where he heard about the range of practical programmes on offer for both professionals and students, such as courses in calf-rearing and the safe use of medicines on farms.

The importance of farm animal welfare was emphasised, with Mr Gove learning about Professor David Main's work on welfare assessment and the RAU's Buitelaar dairy bull calf-rearing project involving academics, industry and welfare organisations working in partnership. PhD student Emily Edwards described research that is underway to address the significant challenges facing the dairy bull calf-rearing sector, including antibiotic usage.

The strong emphasis the University places on developing leadership and business skills and entrepreneurial acumen was showcased during a visit to the Alliston Centre.

Mr Gove met business consultant and Honorary Fellow Christine Cross who mentors students as part of the University's award-winning Enterprise Programme, which provides an inspiring and supportive environment in which students can share, develop and launch their ideas.

Mr Gove toured the campus with the Vice-Chancellor Professor Joanna Price, who explained the RAU's strategy and vision to become one of the UK's leading specialist universities and to attract students from a wider range of backgrounds.

He said: "It was fantastic to meet students and staff in Cirencester and see first-hand the training and development of skills that are so vital for the industry's future.

"I was particularly interested to see the emphasis on farmer-led innovation and the opportunity for students to explore, develop and share their own ideas. This is essential and must be encouraged." ■



New equine partnership with Rein and Shine

We have recently announced a partnership with local equestrian centre, Rein and Shine, which broadens the range of equine provision for both groups of students.

BTEC Level 3 students at Rein and Shine at Braydon, Swindon will spend an away day at the RAU as part of their course, receiving training on equine anatomy and physiology from leading equine lecturers. The University has also confirmed that the BTEC Level 3 will be considered, alongside other relevant Level 3 qualifications, in applications to its BSc (Hons) Applied Equine Science and Business and BSc (Hons) International Equine and Agricultural Business Management degree courses.

Rein and Shine is offering all RAU students the opportunity to train for their British Horse Society (BHS) Stage 1 Certificate in Riding and Stable Management via Progressive Training. This will take place at Rein and Shine's first-class facility which sits in countryside on the North-Wiltshire, South-Gloucestershire border. RAU students will receive discounted rates on all riding lessons which they can plan around their studies.

Owner John McDonald, who runs

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Horse Society
(BHS) Stage 1
Certificate.**
”

the centre with wife Jo, said: “It’s so rewarding to be recognised by a University as well-known as the RAU. We’re very much looking forward to working with them to help our BTEC students gain further equine education. In return, our team are excited to work with the RAU students to help them complete their Stage 1 progression training as well as offering them a high-class venue to come and ride at their own leisure.”

Dr Andrew Hemmings, Head of the RAU’s School for Equine Management and Science added: “Working together will help our students learn the hands-on practical skills which are valued by many parts of the equine industry. We’re extending a warm welcome to Rein and Shine’s BTEC level 3 students at the RAU, providing them with first-hand experience of the University learning environment.

“It’s an exciting time to be part of the equine sector and together we can equip students with the skills required to succeed. We look forward to developing this relationship over time.” ■

Reggae Reggae RAU

Dragons’ Den star and sauce giant Levi Roots told an audience of student entrepreneurs that the key to business success was ‘willingness to change and adapt’ – as well as having a good lawyer.

Levi, a judge on the University’s annual Grand Idea competition for students, revealed the key quality for an entrepreneur was ‘willingness to change and adapt’.

He said: “Young people I come across regularly can find it hard to adapt to change; to make a complete change. You have so many entities coming at you - the TV, the internet. In my day it was easier to make that change.”

He explained how far he had come in his rise to international success with a range of sauces and foods and his own Caribbean Smokehouse restaurant. He added that at the height of his fame he found himself involved in well-publicised litigation over his sauce – which he went on to win. It was at that point he reaped the benefits of getting legal expertise on his team from the start.

“My first signing was a lawyer – get a lawyer involved and get a really good accountant involved. It may be expensive but at some time they will pay you back 100 times more.”

The audience of students - many taking business and management degrees at the RAU - also asked him to predict future trends in his industry. Street food would be the next big thing in dining, he felt.

“If you are a niche you will be able to survive – you are not just another fish in a massive market. Street food is a good market – people are thinking more healthily and not just spending time on cheap chicken. They want to be able



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”

to stand and eat; people are having fun going for street food and being able to stand with their friends.”

When asked about the hardest stage of his journey to the top he answered: “The most difficult part was the transformation from doing it in my kitchen.

“We made 65 to 67 bottles [of Reggae Reggae Sauce] with my kids in Brixton. Per batch.”

So when Sainsbury’s asked him and mentor Peter Jones for 250,000 bottles he had to come up with a plan, and fast.

“Be careful what you pray for! What was I going to tell the kids when I got home? I had to flip the switch and think very quickly. We came up with licensing – the brand is important not the products in the sauce” ■

Hanoverian Society honours 20 year friendship



One of the oldest horse societies in Europe has paid tribute to the RAU's two decades of friendship.

The Hanoverian Society made a presentation to the RAU at its Elite Auction in Verden, Germany, in honour of its long-standing support for the group's work and mission.

The President of the Hanoverian Society, Herr Hans-Henning von Der Decken and colleague Dr. Ludwig Christmann praised the close ties between the University and the Society.

The Hanoverian horse, which

descends from Lower Saxony, is one of the most successful breeds in the world and was represented strongly at the FEI World Equestrian games in the USA, as well as

at the Olympics in 2016.

Peter Morris, the RAU's Equine Development Consultant who was at the event with students, said: "It was a great tribute to the RAU's connection with a leading breeder like the Hanoverian Society, for us to have been recognised in this way.

We show our students the best in the world and so the Hanoverian Society are a natural choice to be connected with."

One of the main purposes of equine-related courses at the RAU is to let the students see not

only the strongest elements of the equine industry in the UK but also internationally.

Since the RAU's BSc in International Equine and Agricultural Business Management course launched over 25 years ago, study trips to Kentucky and Europe have been central features.

The European trip this summer gave the students an opportunity to experience the key areas of the equine industry in France and Germany.

The students visited a wide variety of businesses from the Prix De L'Arc De Triomphe at Longchamps to the German Olympic Centre in Warrendorf.

They had an opportunity to talk to leading figures in the industries of the respective countries in equine breeding, sports horses, racing and business. Students were also shown around the factory which makes the premier Butet saddles brand, by Arnaud Lievre, Managing Director. ■

Stampy's retirement

Stampy retired recently after 32 years at the RAC/U. He has been a constant source of support to students during his time here – keeping them on the straight and narrow and out of harm's way. The Students' Union marked his retirement by presenting him

with a grandmother clock, which was engraved to mark the gratitude of all students over the years. It was particularly poignant for Stampy to be awarded this by SU Chairman, Jack Walton, as his parents are both alumni of the RAC and were some of

the first students Stampy ever worked with. Stampy was also awarded a Hedgehogs playing shirt, which even had his name across the back, which he loved. Stampy will be greatly missed and we wish him a long and happy retirement. ■

Strutt & Parker support enterprise at the RAU

Strutt & Parker, part of the BNP Paribas Group, is proud to announce

a new partnership with the RAU Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Programme in the 2018/19 academic year.

This includes the launch of a new alumni award for a graduate

business start-up and funding for the Grand Idea Competition.

James Farrell, Head of Strutt & Parker Rural, said: "We believe the RAU programme aligns perfectly with Strutt & Parker and the BNP Paribas Group's commitment to making a positive impact on society through supporting entrepreneurs and young people.

"It nurtures innovative and enterprising talent in the rural sector and provides an exciting environment in which ambitious ideas can flourish; we are delighted to have the opportunity to support high calibre students at the outset of their careers."

More news about the alumni award will follow later this year. ■



Record wine harvest

The RAU's vineyard at Down Ampney had a record year in 2018 with the largest amount of grapes picked since it was planted in 2010. The exceptional spring and summer weather was perfect for the vines and the vineyard is set to produce 15,000 bottles.

The 2.6 hectare plot is used to teach students from food production, business and agriculture courses including taking part in the cultivation and picking. The 40 rows of vines contain mainly Ortega grapes, with a small amount of Seyval Blanc, Bacchus and Chardonnay.

Described as a 'fruity, dry white wine with aromas of peach and country hedgerows' the RAU's wine has won a Bronze award for two years running from the International Wines and Spirits Competition.

The grapes are handpicked by

students and transported to the winery near Shepton Mallet, where they are crushed and vinified by RAU alumnus Steve Brooksbank. Over the winter the wine is clarified, fined and filtered, before being bottled.

The bumper crop means the wine which is sold on campus, through selected outlets, and distributor Craft Drinks Co, could now be sold on a wider scale through major retailers.

Master of Wine Susan McCraith, a former RAU wine lecturer, who oversees the project with RAU farmers Tom Overbury and Tony Norris explained:

"Conditions for viticulture have been ideal this year. The lack of a late spring frost with warm dry weather for the flowering helped to set a large number of grapes which then basked in the summer weather until perfectly ripe."

The vineyard, which was taken over by the University in 2016, gives students the opportunity to gain first-hand experience of the wine production process, from grape to bottle. They learn about vineyard management, grape varieties, and wine production, marketing and finances before helping with the grape harvest. In addition, 50p from every bottle sold goes into the RAU's First Steps Fund which provides small grants to students wanting to start their own businesses.

You can buy Cotswold Hills online from the RAU shop. ■



Short Courses at the Royal Agricultural University

Welfare in production animals

With the final outcome of Brexit still to be revealed, managing its possible impact upon animal welfare and veterinary medicine is a cause for serious concern. In addition to this, our long hot summer brought with it a drought causing low feed supplies for livestock farmers, which meant some were forced to tap into their winter feed supplies early. These are only two of the myriad reasons why close attention to welfare of animals grows ever more important to livestock production.

Last year the University introduced

a timely series of new livestock short courses, which focus on the key issues around welfare and the skills required to address them. The sessions are aimed at anyone with an interest in livestock – from farmers to feed, breeding and barn design consultants, vets and students.

Navaratnam Partheeban, Senior Lecturer in Livestock Production at the RAU said: “The livestock sector is the largest agricultural sector in the UK producing the top four farming products in this country. The idea behind these courses was to make sure our University was meeting industry

needs and demand from professionals and students of all kinds for livestock skills. The programmes have all been developed and designed to allow the participant to get the most up-to-date information and learn modern techniques in livestock.”

All courses are externally accredited and many carry awards upon completion such as AMTRA SQP qualifications, UKRS certification and bovine mobility register inclusion. Courses on offer include:

One-Day Calf-Rearing - An expert-led, innovative course teaching the basics

of how to care for a calf from birth to 12 weeks old. Students will learn how to prepare accommodation and feeding plans, monitor health, understand colostrum management and weaning, and learn routine procedures.

CowSignals - This course offers a simple approach to reducing disease and prolonging the lifetime of cattle, developed in the Netherlands and accredited by DairyPro.

Safe Use of Veterinary Medicines on the Farm - New Red Tractor Guidance recommends that at least one member of staff responsible

for administering medicines has undertaken training in the handling and administration of medicines on each holding. Students learn to recognise common diseases in farm animals, correctly interpret labels and instructions, keep accurate records, and correctly and safely store and administer veterinary medicines in accordance with health and safety, good practice and relevant legislation.

RoMS Mobility Scoring - The impact of lameness on an individual farm both economically and in terms of welfare is

considerable. It, therefore, needs to be measured to increase awareness and to manage it successfully. This course aims to give trainees the knowledge, understanding and skills to perform cattle mobility scoring on-farm.

AI in Bovine Animals (Defra Approved) - This training course aims to give trainees the knowledge, understanding and skills to perform Artificial Insemination in the bovine animal. It introduces the trainee to recognising common diseases, health and safety, good practice and relevant legislation. ■

Student Successes

RAU student shares research findings with colleagues in Africa

A Kenyan student taking an MSc in Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security, has returned from representing the UK at a global air-pollution workshop in Nairobi.



Peter Okoth was a contributor to the 'Air Pollution in Emerging Mega-Cities' event run by the British Council and Newton Fund Early Career Researchers (ECR). He presented his own research on 'Mitigation practices to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions from urban and peri-urban Agriculture'.

Peter said: "Agriculture suffers from air pollution with reduced light intensity, varying average temperature, low relative humidity and particulate deposits. This leads to low crop yields and reduced animal performance which affects regional food production and food security. Therefore, it was beneficial that

“
Peter is one of 184 students supported by the Marshal Papworth Fund.
”

this workshop facilitated cross-boundary networking and identified common experience on which to build future collaborative partnerships with fellow ECR members, established scientists, policy makers and stakeholders.”

Peter is one of 184 students supported by the Marshal Papworth Fund, aimed at equipping them with the practical and sustainable agricultural knowledge to meet their community's future food needs for generations to come. He is also part-supported by the RAU's African Fellowship to make up the difference between the funding and the full costs of study. ■

Farmers Weekly Agricultural Student of the Year



Alex Dunn wins 'Agricultural Student of the Year' at the 2018 Farmers Weekly Awards.

The judges cited Alex's entrepreneurial flair, her drive to gain experience and dedication to improving agriculture's safety record as reasons why she beat competition from other leading universities in the land-based sector.

Alex's nomination was partly due to her creation of an innovative farm safety app, which won the RAU's own Grand Idea competition for young entrepreneurs, where judges included Levi Roots from Reggae Reggae Sauce (see page 17) and Superdry co-founder Julian Dunkerton.

Alex graduated in 2018 with a first-class degree in Agriculture. She is currently in New Zealand working with a family of dairy farmers after winning the Richard Wigram Scholarship which invites students to visit the country to learn and share best practice.

She told the Farmers Weekly: "This is an industry that is exciting and also open to those not from farming backgrounds."

“This is an industry that is exciting and also open to those not from farming backgrounds.”

I like the quick response to actions in dairy and I'm good at reading people, so my short-term goal is to become a dairy farm manager. I would also love to get into milking goats because this is a growing market in the UK.

"Poor health and safety in agriculture is a deep-rooted problem that needs a solution. This app would help to protect staff and visitors by changing attitudes towards health and safety and promoting best practice.

"What excites me most about the business is to be able to make a difference in the industry. It's not only agriculture here – there are people studying business and equine and you can learn so much – food production, for example, is going to be so important in the future. The University helps you develop any business idea you've got, whether it's related to the agricultural industry or not."

Independent judge Ian Pigott, farmer and Farmers Weekly Columnist said: "It is clear that Alex is not only extremely bright, but also intuitively perceptive of farming issues well beyond her years. But it is the overwhelmingly high regard with which she is viewed by her peers and lecturing staff, recognising her skills as a leader, a team player and an asset for British farming, which made Alex stand out." ■

Double success with the John Innes Bursary

In 2018, the John Innes Foundation (JIF) launched a prestigious new bursary for students taking farming subjects without a family background in the industry.

The Bursary supports students who are aiming to make a career in primary crop production, rather than follow an academic or scientific research route.

Students across six universities compete for the award, which is specifically designed to encourage those from non-farming backgrounds to apply to university, regardless of their financial circumstances. The funding covers all of the student's course fees and is awarded on a competitive basis to students taking on a three-year degree course.

It comes with mentoring from farm management advisors Velcourt, as well as the opportunity to complete summer work experience and to be considered for the company's management training scheme after graduation.

Alex Neason won the inaugural bursary in 2018, and this year Harry Goring was one of the chosen students.

Alex (pictured top) is studying Agriculture with Applied Farm Management at the RAU and hopes to make farm management his profession. He is interested in working internationally and wants to gain as much experience as possible in every area of the industry.

He said: "This scholarship proves you don't necessarily need to come from a farming background or have a family farm to be successful in the industry. With rising populations putting increasing stress on the UK food produce industry, we are going to need not just more people, but more highly skilled people, working within agriculture to keep up with such demands."

Harry (pictured bottom) is studying a



“I'm incredibly excited about my future, and delighted to be the first ever recipient of this amazing scholarship.”

Foundation degree in Agriculture and Farm Management. He said of the award "I have had a passion for farming from a very young age. Although I don't have a family farm at home I have grown up around farming and began working for my great uncle, corn carting at age 13.

"I didn't perform amazingly at school, but I was inspired to go to agricultural college, where I excelled. I moved on to the RAU and so far it's been a great experience for me. Not only has it provided great tuition but it's also highlighted some of the possibilities available to young graduates."

Peter Innes, Trustee of the John Innes Foundation, said: "The John Innes Foundation, which for more than a hundred years has provided support for some of the country's foremost plant scientists, is delighted to be extending its remit into practical farming by funding this new bursary." ■

RAU students win the 2018 Cereals Challenge

Four RAU students won the coveted Cereals Challenge prize in 2018, after growing the best 'virtual' wheat crop under a series of tough conditions. The team beat competition from Nottingham University, Newcastle University, Harper Adams University and Writtle University College to take the title at the Cereals 2018 arable event. Tania Coxon, Charlotte Pritchard, James Waddington and Oliver Carrick, supported and mentored by Dr Nicola Cannon, were set the task of growing the best crop of winter wheat in one of the most testing seasons since the Challenge was launched nine years ago.

The virtual plots meant there was no geographical bias for teams closer to this year's Cereals site at Crishall Grange Farm, Duxford, Cambridge. The wheat plots were grown and managed just as in real conditions, from choosing which variety to grow, cultivation and drilling details, through to making the real-time agronomy decisions on inputs.

Hutchinsons Crop Production Specialists run the competition alongside farm management advisors Velcourt, with the £1,000 first prize to be shared between the winning team. An award of £500 also goes to the University. Previous winners have gone on to join both companies in their training programmes.

During the course of the season the teams were presented with crop updates via a video blog on the Hutchinsons Facebook page. Technical Manager and soil health expert, Dick Neale and Velcourt's Technical Director Keith Norman reflected what a difficult season real crops have faced, posing questions on keeping crops clean and standing whilst remaining cost-effective.

The RAU team decided to include SDHI fungicide at T1 and T2 on their crop of Siskin - "although timings so far have not been as accurate as we would have liked", said team leader Tania Coxon during the competition. The final task in this year's Challenge involved writing a technical piece on farm diversification where land is no longer viable for profitable cropping, to a standard suitable for publication on a



farming website. Diversification options such as wine making, mob grazing grass leys and building a reservoir have been offered up as alternatives.

Chris Brough of the RAU, said: "Closer consideration of the 'Beast from the East' gave the team the edge, as this was a particularly challenging growing season. The team was skillfully guided to carefully consider their recommendations to nurture the crop through the difficult early spring conditions. This meant they were able to respond to the season by considering every aspect of the crop's requirements; managing lodging, disease and nutrition to keep the crop healthy, as well as making the best marketing decisions."

Dr Nicola Cannon, Principal Lecturer in Agronomy, added: "The team did a fantastic job and made logical and justified crop management decisions which they had to adjust and modify in order to cope with the weather conditions. I am really proud of their determination to be the best - they were strong and dedicated throughout." ■

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I am really proud of their determination to be the best - they were strong and dedicated throughout.
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RAU buzzing for new foodie enterprise

Students at the RAU have been awarded £1,000 from the national NUS Student Eats project to purchase a campus beehive and create a sustainable honey enterprise.

The honey is a small batch, craft honey enterprise produced from a beehive on the campus, ideally located between fields of oilseed rape, wildflowers, and meadows. A group of students in the Environmental Society have been attending beekeeping training with Cirencester and District Beekeepers and, keen to put skills into practice, are setting up their own campus beehive.

As part of the funding, provided by NUS Student Eats through the Big Lottery's Our Bright Future Programme, students can take part in a free training session to help them set up the honey enterprise and other future sustainable food endeavours. Mentoring support will also be available for students throughout the project.

Colin Javens, one of the students said: "We are really grateful to have received funding to set up a beehive on campus. Bees are critical insects in

our environment and for agriculture in general, so it's exciting to think of bees on the RAU campus, busily producing delicious honey for sale to all the students and staff."

The national Student Eats project is made up of 43 enterprises (and growing) across educational institutions in the UK. Together they have sold over £17,000 worth of sustainable food, diverted over 150kg of waste from landfill, and had over 3,000 volunteer hours. The RAU is already part of the Student Eats project, with the termly Campus Market which is led by students and showcases local and sustainable food.

The honey enterprise is another exciting collaboration between RAU's sustainability and enterprise projects, encouraging students to develop enterprising skills whilst contributing to a sustainable future. ■

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Students can take part in a free training session.
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Sparking Ideas: the Lycetts Summer Scholarship

Lycetts and the RAU have an established relationship over the last half decade with the firm boasting a number of alumni among its staff, and supporting alumni events around the country, including our Badminton brunch and Farm Walks programme.

Their strapline “We know your world” is founded in their commitment to immersing themselves in the rural sector and supporting all areas of their clients’ diverse and multi-layered businesses, farms, homes and estates.

In 2016, they decided to go one step further and commission their own research into pressing concerns of the day. To do so, they turned to the RAU, and we launched our first ever summer scholarship scheme.

Each summer, over ten weeks, two RAU students take on a project researching

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The project gives our students a chance to learn about insurance.”
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and making recommendations on topics such as flooding, the positive opportunities of Brexit, the future of family farming, and stable staffing issues. Pictured are 2018 scholars, Harry Phipps and Maisy Moseley.

The project gives RAU students a chance to learn about insurance and helps to develop their researching and presentation skills, all while being paid a stipend to allow them to concentrate on the opportunity without having to seek other work alongside.

We look forward to seeing what our third batch of scholars produce in 2019.

About Lycetts

Founded in 1961, Lycetts has grown to become one of the UK’s leading independently-operated insurance brokers. They specialise in farm and estate insurance but also provide bespoke financial services, commercial and bloodstock insurance advice. ■

Molly Williams – Sir Emrys Jones Award

Throughout my three years of study at the RAU, I have been fortunate enough to have benefited from the Sir Emrys Jones Award. This recognition of my academic achievements and commitment to my studies is something which I have valued tremendously.

Not only has the money proved invaluable towards funding my student life, providing a contribution towards accommodation and the cost of living, but in addition to this it has also allowed me to fund my work experience placements and hobbies. Without doubt, the work placements I have completed have aided my success in securing a graduate job.

In addition to this, I have been fortunate enough to fulfil my role as Real Estate secretary for the duration of my final year. I thoroughly enjoyed this position which has not only tested and improved my organisational skills, but has also allowed me to listen to some key speakers within the industry. My involvement in such a society has also been beneficial towards the completion of my final year studies, and joining the society is something I would strongly encourage other students to do.

Outside of my studies, I have continued to event my horse in British Eventing. The scholarship has also allowed me to pay for my

trailer test, which I successfully passed first time. This will undoubtedly prove useful during both my career and eventing life.

I would encourage all eligible students to apply for this scholarship. Not only am I honoured to have received this award, but also the financial benefits have been beyond helpful during my three years of studying in Cirencester. I am very proud to have received a first class mark in all of my final year modules, and an overall first class honours degree in Real Estate upon my graduation. I would like to sincerely thank the scholarship team for facilitating this opportunity during my university time. ■

Catherine F Dowson – RAU Cirencester Scholarship

I was one of the lucky recipients of the RAU Cirencester Scholarship to support my MBA in Advanced Farm Management. My background is in veterinary medicine but having been captivated by the intricacy and application of business management within the veterinary industry, I decided to dedicate a year to the rigorous study of this subject. The choice to study at the RAU seemed the right fit. I come from a farming background and my father attended the college back in the 1970’s.

However, that aside, it was the warm welcome I received at the open day and then meeting the course leaders that finally cemented my decision. It has indeed been an extraordinary experience in many ways. In terms of academic environment, the business school at RAU offers a platform for critical analysis to gain the knowledge and confidence in topics such as the challenges facing the food and agricultural industry today. The excellent academic staff encourage us to be future leaders



and to always maintain our critical perspective. However, for me, what really sets the University apart from other establishments, is the heavy focus on entrepreneurship with a dedicated enterprise department to support and grow our business minds.

Through the enterprise society, I pursued my interest in business and beekeeping to become one of the founding members of the RAU Cotswold Hills Honey. This has

been one of the highlights for me, and our achievement was keenly felt whilst selling to parents, guests and students at graduation. The feedback about the new enterprise was very positive and resulted in a near sell out of stock. I am hopeful that when I return as an alumna this enterprise will continue to have grown and cemented itself as other RAU businesses Muddy Wellies and Cotswolds Hills Wine have done.

I expect to complete my dissertation looking into retention of veterinary surgeons within the veterinary industry soon, after which I hope to take a non-clinical veterinary role managing a group of UK veterinary practices. With the ever-increasing challenges facing the veterinary industry with regard to recruitment and retention of vets, I hope and believe that my research will be an important contribution in this regard.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the RAU for making my studies possible. ■

Tayla Harding – Emmott Scholarship

My second year of study at the RAU was one which will never be forgotten! Having had my first year of university to settle in and get a good understanding of what university life and studying for an honours degree would have been like, I am able to say that my second year was better than I could have expected.

The sense of community which I have felt from the RAU has made the transition from being a college student to studying for an honours degree as well as being away from home for long periods of time much easier than expected. I took full advantage of my first year at the RAU and tried out many sports clubs and societies, such as shooting and rowing, in order to get a well-rounded view of what the University has to offer. In my second year, I made a bold decision to get involved and become part of the RAC Beagles, which consumed so much of my time and has been a great interest and hobby of mine for many years. I have enjoyed being part of this wonderful society that I put myself forward to take on the role of Beagle Secretary. So far I have absolutely loved this role and cannot wait for the season to begin.

Another achievement, having completed my second year, is the grades I have received for coursework and exams which were much higher than I could have ever expected. Although not directly related to university, my greatest achievement was being selected for the Farmers Weekly Farmers Apprentice 2018 which consists of a week-long bootcamp where 10 out of hundreds of people were selected to take part in different agricultural related tasks throughout the week and with the winner being awarded a highly prestigious prize. This has made my outlook for my second year, and going forward to my final year, very positive as it provides the reassurance of my ability to work alongside fellow classmates and lecturers to reach my full potential.

There have been several obstacles which I have experienced over both my first and second year - one being coming to terms with being away from home for



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My second year of study at the RAU has been a year which will never be forgotten!
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long periods of time; however, I believe having to overcome this issue has made me a much more independent individual and has developed my confidence with regards to everyday tasks such as decision making and independent thinking. A big obstacle which has massively impacted me over the past two years at the RAU is the medical issues my Mum is going through currently; having to balance my university work and also take care of my Mum, has meant I have had to be very conscientious and organised to make sure I manage my time very productively to not impact my duties at home. ■

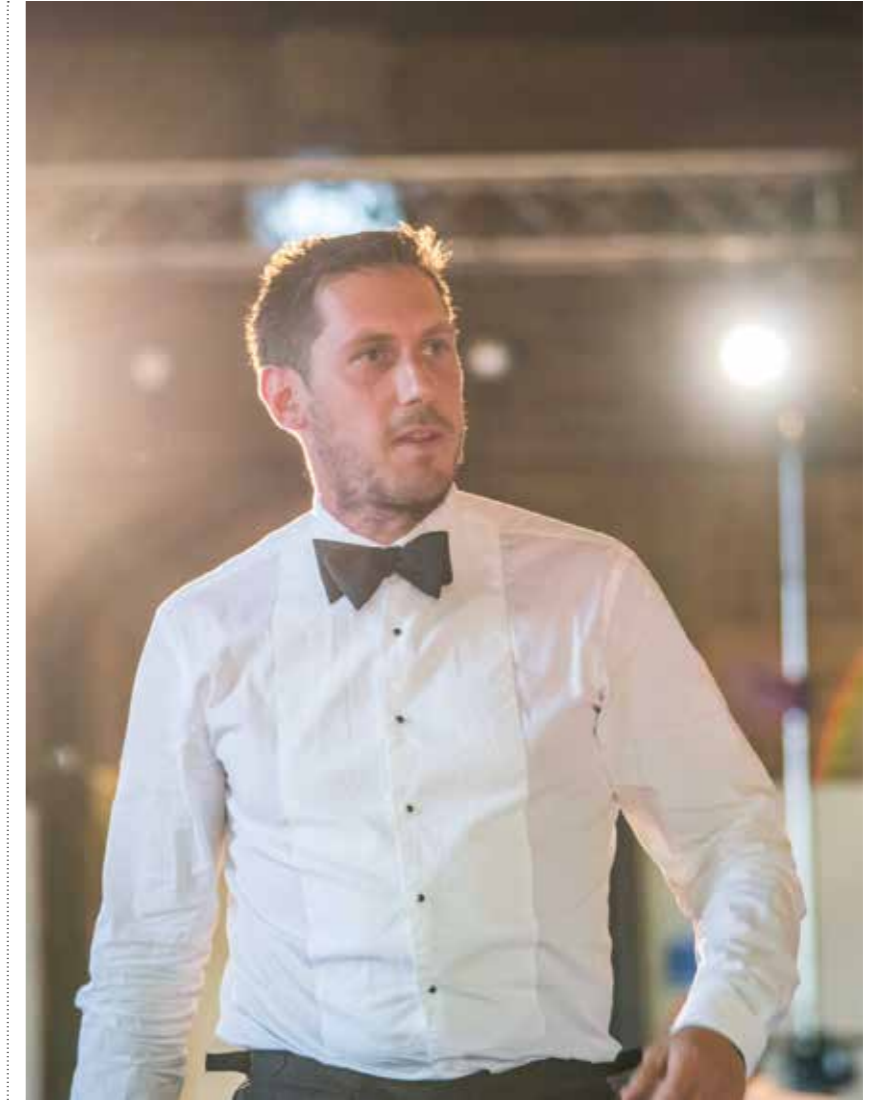
Alexander Crawley – Clyde Higgs Scholarship

I have completed a Graduate Diploma in Agriculture. The course is aimed at mature students who often have a family background in farming but are not farmers and are looking for a career change. The first few weeks were daunting. I come from a non-farming background and was surrounded by people who had grown up on farms, who nodded sagely along with lecturers comments, whilst I was desperately trying to understand the whole new vocabulary I was being immersed in. I didn't know what a tup was, and especially why it wanted to 'throw lambs'!

I threw myself in at the deep end using my spare time around lectures to organise extra work experience on local farms and attend courses and events. I passionately believe in learning an enterprise from the bottom up. This came as a shock to the system though when in January at 6am in freezing conditions I found myself pitch forking cow muck for free, thinking of my previous life as a diplomat in the capital cities of the Middle East and Europe last year.

The scholarship was key to this. I have a wife and two small children to support but with the help of the scholarship I was able to spend the time on various farms gaining practical hands on unpaid work experience in tandem with the academics. Without the scholarship I would have struggled to justify working for free and would have had to take paid work outside of agriculture and missed the vital experience I was lacking.

I also took advantage of the University's excellent enterprise programme, attending the extra curricular events, lectures and competitions. This led me to launch Grazing Management, a conservation grazing business aiming to support nature focused land owners and managers in the Cotswolds area with hardy native breed cattle. I won the 'Launch It' award and came runner up in the end of year Dragons' Den style Grand Idea competition finale.



“
I passionately believe in learning an enterprise from the bottom up.
”

The course has in other ways been life changing for me. I signed up as a scholar to the Army at 16 and spent seven years on full time service including two combat tours of Afghanistan and then spent another five years working on the Syrian conflict. I was mentally exhausted from the fighting, death and destruction and this course has opened up a new path for me away from that world.

I have been asked by the University to lead a project in Eastern Angola helping communities afflicted by land mines to rebuild their agricultural economy on land reclaimed from mines. I hope that there will be more opportunities to use my new agricultural knowledge to help rebuild places torn apart by war.

I have now graduated with a distinction, been awarded the Haygarth medal and am proud to call myself a Clyde Higgs scholar. ■

Exploring China

July saw the beginning of an exciting new collaboration for the RAU in China, with a visit to Yunnan Province.



PHOTOS: RAU AND THE LOVE LEGACY TEAM, WUMU VILLAGE, YUNNAN PROVINCE

Love Legacy is a Hong Kong based charity organisation, founded in 2015, focused on providing education fee subsidies to low income families in villages located in Yunnan, Guangdong and Gansu Provinces. Its name is inspired by one of the founders, who left her village to become educated and returned to share her knowledge and to help fund other students from rural villages to obtain higher levels of education. The charity was inspired by her legacy of love to continue her work.

Love Legacy has recently started to expand their poverty alleviation work to provide micro-farming assistance in the form of knowledge transfer and indirect financial support, to remote village families. This aims to improve their livestock micro-farming capability and overall farming management.

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Much of the daytime available was spent trekking up and down hills to reach small family plots.
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RAU alumnus Dale Webb joined Head of Development Hannah Langford on a week's trip to Guangdong and Yunnan Province to begin exploring a partnership with the RAU, where recent graduates help to translate agricultural research and best practice from around the world into on-the-ground activity.

The trip involved a lot of travel between villages, dodging a few landslides en route which graphically illustrated problems with local infrastructure. The terrain is very hilly and much of the daytime available was spent trekking up and down hills to reach small family plots, interspersed with some in depth planning sessions. During the course of the visit, Hannah also drank so much tea, in so many interesting locations, that she is now operating her own Instagram travel hashtag #hannahdrinkstea

About the project

A Micro-Farming Centre in Guangdong will help to develop modern micro-farming knowledge, to demonstrate techniques and provide technical support to Village Demonstration Sites setup by Love Legacy.

The aim is to utilise the farm and test sites to build applicable knowledge in livestock micro-farming by using energy and water savings techniques. Low income families in remote villages are often constrained by the insufficient access to energy and water.

The project will also focus on the quality of its produce, with advice and guidance on producing and marketing premium foods, such as organic livestock using high quality breeds, with an aim to help village farmers to develop higher margin produces. ■



The RAU and Love Legacy

To support the project, the RAU will be linking Love Legacy up with recent graduates to help provide research consultancy and knowledge exchange guidance. Dale will be joined in the first batch of RAU alumni consultants by Vickylee Cain and they are both already looking forward to what will be an interesting and challenging project.

The project will also be an opportunity for students to visit the micro farm on work placements or during the holidays to help develop their knowledge of international agriculture, and we hope to inspire some of the young people we encounter in the villages to study agriculture, perhaps even to come to the RAU in the future.

If you would like to learn more about Love Legacy, or how you could be involved in this venture, please contact the Development Office.



Class of 2018



PHOTOS: LEE HAWLEY



PHOTOS: LEE HAWLEY

2018 Honorary Fellowships

Professor Christine Cross
Business and Entrepreneurship, Equine Management and Science, and Food Supply and Management

A food scientist by background, Christine lectured at the University of Edinburgh and the University of Bath for 15 years.

During this time, she was a Director with Tesco plc on their Operating Board (1989 - 2003) in a variety of roles; developing own brand, leading non-food and global sourcing, and latterly Business Development Director focussed on international and small format expansion.

She left Tesco in 2003 and now runs a retail advisory business focussing on international best practice in customer led business planning and value chain management.

Christine has non-executive Directorships with: Sonae Group plc, Hilton Food Group plc, and Coca Cola European Partners plc, and private companies such as The Pollen Estate, Fenwick, River Island, and Monsoon

Accessorize. In the last 10 years she has sat on the Boards of Next plc, Empire Canada plc, Fairmont Hotel Group Canada plc, Brambles plc, Woolworths AU plc, Kathmandu plc, and Taylor Wimpey, and has been Chief Retail Advisor to PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Christine holds the title of Visiting Professor at Belfast and Hull University Business Schools. ■

Meurig Raymond MBE
Agriculture

Meurig, born in 1952, was elected local branch Chairman of the National Farmers' Union (NFU) in 1979 and Pembrokeshire County Chairman in 1989. In 1992, he became the Welsh NFU Treasurer and served as the Pembrokeshire delegate on NFU Council between 1995 and 2004. He also served as Vice-Chairman of the NFU's Cereals Committee between 1999 and 2001, and was on the Agricultural Wages Board for six years from 1998. He was elected as Vice-President of

the NFU in 2004, became Deputy President in 2006 and President in 2014 and was re-elected for a second term in 2016; before standing down as NFU President in February 2018.

Meurig represented European farmers on the European Commission's High Level Forum for a Better Functioning Supply Chain – working to improve the position of farmers in the food chain across Europe. He represented Wales on the Home Grown Cereals

Authority between 1997 and 2004 and he served on the Council of Food from Britain between 1997 and 2003.

Meurig became a Fellow of the Royal Agricultural Society in 2000 and was awarded the MBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours in January 2005 for his services to agriculture.

Meurig farms 3,600 acres in Pembrokeshire in partnership with his twin brother, eldest son and nephew. ■

Caroline Drummond MBE
Real Estate, Rural Land Management, and Environment

Caroline has been Chief Executive of LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming), the farming and environmental charity, since it started in 1991. She graduated in Agriculture and has broad practical agricultural experience from across the globe. Her work focuses on encouraging more sustainable farming practices and building a better public trust and understanding

of farming, food and the environment – values that she is personally extremely passionate about. She is actively involved in many industry partnerships and initiatives.

In 2009 Caroline was awarded the MBE, she has an Honorary Doctorate from Harper Adams University, a Nuffield Scholarship and was awarded Honorary

Fellowship for the Society of the Environment.

Caroline is actively involved with the British Nutrition Foundation, North Wyke, the Agritech initiative – The Centre for Applied Crop Science and the Science Museum.

Caroline is married to a dairy farmer and they have a young daughter. ■



Alumni News



Royal Agricultural University pays tribute to Mike Tucker

The RAU last year mourned the loss of graduate and former Governor Mike Tucker, best known for his work as the BBC's long-serving equestrian commentator.

Professor Joanna Price, Vice-Chancellor, said: "I was shocked and saddened to hear of Mike's death. He was a very distinguished alumnus and the voice of British Equestrianism, as well as being a loyal friend and passionate supporter of the RAU.

"A former Governor, he was also instrumental in bringing equestrian courses to the University. Last year, we were proud to award Mike an Honorary Fellowship in recognition of his contribution to British Equestrianism, agriculture and the RAU.

"Mike will be hugely missed by the RAU community and our thoughts and prayers are with his family."

Mike graduated from the RAU in 1964,

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After competing
in top
international
events in
the UK and
abroad, Mike
started public
commentary
in 1969.
”

with a National Diploma in Agriculture. He had served on the Board of Governors and was also Chairman of the Advisory Council for the Centre of Equine Management and Science.

After competing in top international events in the UK and abroad, Mike started public commentary in 1969. He made his first equestrian television appearance for the BBC in 1977, covering championships all over the world. Mike had recently retired from TV work after 40 years. He died suddenly at the age of 73.

A Service of Thanksgiving was held to celebrate the life of Mike Tucker at the Parish Church of St John The Baptist, Cirencester in April last year. ■

Di Walton: Leading the Three Counties



When I left school in 1987 I really wasn't certain I wanted to do any further education at all but to keep my parents happy I enrolled at the RAC. Grudgingly, I headed off in October 1988 and am I glad I did! There followed the best three years of my life making friends for life and a foot on the ladder of a career path. I gained a husband too- we met in the first term and are still going strong!

My first job was in Warwickshire where I became the Company's first female trainee surveyor. In my interview I was rather thrown by the question 'And what will you wear to work?' but I hope I did the female surveying world proud by paving the way, certainly within that Company! Two years after qualifying, a change of job for Peter meant we relocated to North Northumberland for 15 years and in that time, I worked for two regional companies. Then once again we were on the move

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My first
job was in
Warwickshire
where I
became the
Company's
first female
trainee
surveyor.
”**

(Peter's job move again!) and we relocated back to Worcestershire in 2008, my childhood home.

I decided to take a break from surveying and approached the Three Counties Agricultural Society where I was employed for the next seven years as a part time assistant in the livestock department. It was a busy role, and little did I know, a great foundation for what happened next. In 2016 I was completely taken by surprise when asked to become Head of Shows at the Society.

This huge but exciting role includes heading up seven events - CountryTastic a children's educational event, RHS Malvern Spring Festival which we run jointly with the RHS (110,000 visitors over four days); The Royal Three Counties Show, our flagship event which was founded in 1897 (over 95,000 visitors over 3 days);

National Young Stars, providing a platform for young stock people and butchers to showcase their talents; Malvern Autumn Show, a celebration of Autumn with the incredibly popular UK Giant Vegetable Championships (65,000 visitors over two days); Malvern Caravan Show, and then in November, the Malvern Farming Conference.

The shows team is comprised of eight full time ingenious and dedicated people who, like me, are passionate about our shows and all go the extra mile to ensure our visitors have a great day out and want to return next year. In addition, we hire 200 temporary staff for show days and are lucky to have a further host of volunteers, without which we could not host such large and complex events.

My day-to-day role is extremely varied and with so many shows to organise, I'm often

**“
The lessons
I learnt from
my college
and surveying
days have
helped me
remain honest,
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in four meetings a day about four different events. I am responsible for controlling the budgets and the content for each show. There is never a quiet time of year as we continually move from planning one show to the next. This perhaps has been the greatest difference from my career as a surveyor - I now never finish a job - even in the middle of a show I'm planning the layout for the following year. My hours are long, but I look forward to going to work every day, so I guess I must love my job!

There are perks as I get to meet some very knowledgeable and interesting special guests. I regularly bump into friends from the RAC and we also have a laugh about some memory or other. I'm certain that although my new career seems very different from my last, the lessons I learnt from my college and surveying days have helped me remain honest, diligent, fair and good humoured! ■

Field and Flower launch with Amazon



James Mansfield and James Flower launched grass-fed meat specialist Field&Flower in 2010 shortly after graduating. The friends have seen order numbers rocket after being part of Amazon's Treasure Truck campaign.

Starting with one cow bought from the Flower family farm in Somerset, they now deliver their bespoke meat boxes to over 20,000 UK households and have an annual revenue of £2.7million. Part of their success was the crowd-funding campaign they ran in 2017, supported by RAU alumni.

As well as beef, Field&Flower also provide a range of poultry, wild game, fish, dairy and deli products from a small hand-picked team of independent farmers, fishermen and producers that share the same standards of welfare, sustainability and quality.

The new relationship involved working with Amazon Treasure Truck to sell their luxury grass-fed steaks and brisket, rump steak and

“We’ve even served steak from one of our pop-up kitchens to Sir Richard Branson!”

bone marrow burgers. The Treasure Truck visits cities across the UK offering surprise deals on delicious food, limited edition items, seasonal must haves and much more.

James and James said: “We’ve had overwhelming feedback from the activity and have seen a significant spike in subscribers and product orders – which are all part of our goals for growth.”

“Field&Flower has been a great success, as not only have we tripled the number of monthly meat box customers in one year, but we’ve also been praised in The Good Food Guide for the remarkable quality of our meat.

“We’ve even served steak from one of our pop-up kitchens to Sir Richard Branson! There are many skills that we use on a day-to-day basis that we were taught at the RAU, which have been invaluable in allowing our business to establish and grow in the last few years.” ■

Tara takes a punt on PR

*Course: International Equine and Agricultural Business Management
Year: 2013*

Tara’s love of all things equestrian and rural shines through in her Cotswolds based PR business: Tara Punter PR, which is now celebrating its fourth successful year. Her choice of degree helped broaden her horizons, giving her the extensive knowledge she now puts into practice on a daily basis.

Tara said: “My Equine and Agricultural Business Management degree really gave me the love of learning - I found the courses so interesting and knew I wanted to work in the equine industry, I just didn’t know what I wanted to do!

I graduated in 2013 and started working in 2015 as an equine journalist. The first event I covered was the Hickstead Derby, it felt like all of my career dreams had come true! I couldn’t believe I was at an event I’d watched on TV for so many years. Being paid to watch some of the world’s best riders and share my views in the form of a report still fills me with such an immense amount of joy. It was one of the best days of my life.”

Tara’s business grew organically and she soon found herself working as a web editor, doing social media management/ consultancy and PR. As time passed, she realised it all tied in together particularly well, so she officially launched her equine and rural PR company in October 2016 and hasn’t looked back since.

“I’ll never forget the day I officially launched - I was terrified! But, I knew it was what I wanted to do, I already had a great network of contacts and clients and was excited to properly push the business forward. Since then, I’ve worked with clients in the U.S. as well as the entire length of the U.K. from Scotland to the Isle of Wight. While I do work with some non-equine or rural



Social links - @TaraPunterPR
www.tarapunterpr.co.uk

“My Equine and Agricultural Business Management degree really gave me the love of learning.”

businesses, the majority do fall into those industries as it’s what I know and love.”

Tara manages to fit a horse, a dog and a farmer husband into her daily life, all of which complement each other nicely.

“I use my morning or evening ride as my quiet time - my days can be so intense so having that hour where I’m not on the phone / looking at a screen / in meetings is just wonderful. It’s my zen. My husband Simon also went to the RAU, although he graduated the year before I started. He’s a real key part of my success - as an entrepreneur himself, his advice and support is always appreciated and welcomed, he’ll be the one to tell me an idea is a little too crazy!

“I’ve learnt a huge amount since my time at the RAU but am sure my business can be directly linked to my course and time spent there.” ■

James and Briony Ewart: A shared passion

James and Briony Ewart met whilst studying at the RAC in 1999, finding themselves among a like-minded social group who were passionate about all things horse racing. The first date was a trip to Stratford Races followed by dinner at The Wild Duck in Ewen! After Cirencester their ways diverged and among other positions, James worked at Ferdy Murphy's yard in Yorkshire and also with Nicky Henderson in Lambourn. There followed a stint in France with Guillaume Macaire (French Champion Trainer) where James became champion amateur jump jockey. Briony worked at The Thoroughbred Breeders Association in Newmarket and Shadwell Stud in nearby Thetford. However, with a mutual passion for bloodstock, the couple remained in close contact and both lived for a year in France where they were involved in racing before moving back to the U.K.

Here in the Scottish Borders town of Langholm they set up James Ewart Racing in 2004 on the family farm. Since then 47 stables have been built and converted from their previous use as cattle housing. The facilities have been constantly upgraded and there is now a bespoke Monarch Horse Walker, three gallops – sand, all weather and grass – together with schooling grounds.

Over the years, the quality of the string has constantly improved and the aim is to have a live contender back at their old college stomping ground - Cheltenham - having had runners placed there so far to date. It's no coincidence that one of the most exciting young horses they have at the moment is the dual bumper winning Black Pirate. He was sourced and selected by college chum Clive Webb-Carter who runs the respected bloodstock agency - CWC - and now accompanies James to public auctions as his form and pedigree expert.

The couple believe that it is these earlier opportunities, experiences and contacts formed and moulded at Cirencester that have given them the foundations for their continued successes today. ■



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Pasture-Fed Livestock Association at Farm491

The Pasture-Fed Livestock Association (PFLA) began in 2009, when a small group of British farmers decided to join together to extol the wide-ranging benefits of producing meat from animals fed exclusively on pasture.

Now comprising some 360 members, many focus on native breeds, like Herefords or Aberdeen Angus, and keep their animals in family groups. A set of certification standards has been developed to define what pasture farming really means. Only PFLA Certified Farmers (currently around 60) who adhere to these rules can market their meat under the Pasture for Life brand.

All are managing their grassland, their greatest natural asset, so that it produces high quality feed for the animals, and builds pasture, which also feeds the soil and the millions of organisms that live within it. The way their fields are grazed encourages flower-rich meadows, filled with insects, birds and mammals. Permanent pastures capture and store carbon, helping reduce the impact of climate change, whilst retaining rainwater, reducing the impacts of flooding and drought.

The animals are healthier, grazing a natural, varied diet of not only grasses, but herbs and clovers. As a consequence they are less stressed, live longer and are more fertile than conventionally fed livestock. Clovers also naturally capture nitrogen in the soil which then helps other grasses and plants to grow, without the need for chemical based fertilisers, which are expensive and made from non-renewable sources of energy.

Run as a Community Interest Company (CIC) since 2011, the membership of the PFLA includes farmers, butchers, retailers and consumers – all with a passion to increase the supply and market for pastured meat and finding new ways to do that profitably.



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Consumers can buy Pasture for Life meat and dairy products directly from the farmers who produce them. A map on the Pasture for Life website shows where all these are and many deliver nationwide. Every pack of meat can be traced quickly to the farm via a smart phone app or at the website www.pastureforlife.org

The PFLA was the first tenant of Farm491 in 2016, and has been an integral member of the programme, including working with students.

Russ Carrington, PFLA General Manager says: “Farm491 has helped us network with a whole range of innovators, encouraging entrepreneurship, new ideas and collaboration. We are a small organisation with big ambitions. Being part of the Farm491 community is helping us achieve our objectives even faster.” ■

Your Weddings



Tim and Lydia – Tim Williams (Agriculture) and Lydia Goodfield (Property Agency and Management) met during their first year 2001–2002. They were married on 29 June 2018 at St Andrew’s Church, Miserden.



Will and Amy – Major Will Mawby (MBA 2015) and Amy Steventon were married at St John the Baptist Church, Weston sub Edge, Worcestershire.



James and Claire – James Saunders and Clair Postbeschild (Equine and Agricultural Business Management 2014) were married on 26 April 2018.



James and Zoe – James Meikle an arable farmer from Northampton and Zoe Barr (Rural Estate Management 2009) were married on 14 July 2018, in St Mary’s Church in Redbourn. The wedding vehicle was a 35 year old Mercedes Benz tractor, restored by James for the wedding.

George and Lucy – George James Hosken and Lucy Higgins (International Business Management (Food and Agribusiness) 2015) were married on 23 June 2018 at St Columb Major Church.



Fergus and Rachel – Fergus Russell and Rachel Myles (both Rural Estate Management 2011) were married on 7 July 2018 at St Salvators Chapel, St Andrews.

From the Archive

In the summer of 2018 we had the pleasure of welcoming back to Cirencester two of our alumni from the 1950s.



Mr Mappledoram visited us and told us all about his fond memories at the RAC where he studied Agriculture from 1950-52. He remembers enjoying playing sports with Vic Hughes. We did some digging in our archives and discovered Mr Mappledoram was quite the sportsman back then with many achievements on Sports Day. He also played for the soccer team.

Mr Dewhurst was a student at the RAC from 1957-59 and also studied Agriculture; he kindly brought along some memorabilia, including his May Ball invite from 1958. Mr Dewhurst was combining his visit with a trip to Highgrove, home of our President, HRH Prince Charles. ■



Dates for your diary 2019

- 4 May: Badminton Breakfast 09:00-10:30
- 22 May: London Evening Networking Event, Irwin Mitchell
- 29 May: Suffolk Show Reception hosted by Brown & Co, 17:30-18:30
- 12 June: Cereals Reception hosted by Farm491, sponsored by Pollock Associates, 15:30-16:30
- 14 June: Royal Three Counties Show, RAU Afternoon Reception, 15:30-16:30
- 21 June: Royal Highland Show, details tbc
- 10 July: Great Yorkshire Show, Welcome to Yorkshire Stand, sponsored by Irwin Mitchell
- 22 July: Royal Welsh Show, RAU Afternoon Reception, details tbc
- 21 September: RAU Alumni Dinner and Ron Coaten Testimonial
- 17 October: Women in Agriculture Conference and Celebration
- 11 November: Bledisloe Lecture with Professor David Hughes
- 15 November: Cheltenham Countryside Raceday Alumni Lunch and Reception

For more details on all of these events, please sign up to our monthly e-newsletter (if you don't already receive it) by emailing alumni@rau.ac.uk or updating your details on our website.

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