

JAMES NELSTROP

NFST BOARD MEMBER

Formal agricultural education was at the Kesteven (Lincolnshire) Farm Institute at Caythorpe where James completed a NCA with C&G Skills awards.

1965 - Appointed Farm Manager by Frank Arden of Waddingham Grange, North Lincolnshire – farming 600 acres, growing mainly potatoes, sugar beet and cereals. Installed irrigation. (...provided James with “the other part of his education!”)

1966 - Married Barbara and lived at Waddingham Grange. The couple have two children - Andrew (1972) and Lizzie (1975).

1967 - Obtained the tenancy of Cross Leys Farm at Wansford - 1200 acres, growing mainly potatoes and combinable crops, and operating a large warehouse. Installed irrigation.

1975 - “Lost complete leave of my senses and emigrated to Australia.” Purchased ‘Caloola’ in NSW comprising 6,000 acres of combinable crops, plus flock of Merinos.

1978 - Returned to the UK and obtained the tenancy of Roudham Farm, Norfolk. Installed irrigation and grew potatoes, onions, sugar beet, asparagus and misc vegetables.

1981 - Awarded a Nuffield Farming Scholarship to study irrigation and water management in the USA. Subsequently installed centre pivots and advanced irrigation management at Roudham and introduced intensive vegetable production to the local area. Also joined the local Highland Internal Drainage Board

1982 - Founder member of Breckland Growers (a pea and bean growing syndicate).

1985 - Opened a farm shop and garden centre.

1990 - Sold the tenancy, whilst continuing to live in Norfolk managing the farm. At the same time, started to provide training (in conjunction with the British Council) for Russians involved in the Rural Economy.

1991 - Bought Blyborough Farm (1,200 acres) in Lincolnshire - mainly combinable crops, with 600-sow Cotswold nucleus breeding unit. (Andrew became the resident and managed the farm.) Restructured a scattered property, planted miles of hedging and thousands of trees, built a new farmhouse and a new foreman’s house, expanded pig herd etc. Sold the farm in 1998.

1992 - Founded the ‘Nuffield Russia Trust’ and was appointed CEO. Operated in Russia, providing agricultural training, military conversion and rural advisory services. It was the first EU TACIS project in Russia. Project completed in 1999, when the Trust was wound up.

1999 - Bought 650 acres at Lakenheath. Converted land, which had been excessively and intensively farmed, to organic grassland with raised water levels in a ‘stewardship scheme’. Restored the farm buildings and let them for various non-agricultural uses. Sold the property in 2005. Also joined the Fenland Internal Drainage Board.

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1999 - Embarked on property development, including building houses (with Andrew as MD). A total of 35 houses built before building St Georges Distillery in 2005/2006. In 2007 the building company was closed, with staff moving to the Distillery.

2004 – ‘English Whisky Company’ project underway (in partnership with Andrew). Initial work involved drilling for water, testing, planning, gaining many, many permissions, building, engineering, making whisky, opening a visitor centre and a major retail whisky shop, installing a bottling line.

2009 - Marked by the release of the only ‘English Whisky’.

2010 - Marked by the release of the first ever ‘peated English Whisky’ - with much more yet to come!

1982–2010 - Served on the management committees for the three Directors of the Nuffield Framing Scholarships Trust. Also participated in various study groups and international conferences.