

## **The 2004 Nuffield Dairy Study Group meeting in Wales**

**13th to 15th April**

Jim Harrison writes:

The tour was organised by John Weston-Arnold, Kevin Green, Will Pritchard and Matthew Watkins.

We arrived on the 13th April at lunchtime at the Carmarthen Mart which we were shown round and then given an excellent lunch. We then moved off to Puton Castle Farm where John Weston Arnolds daughter and her husband had just set up a joint venture with another couple and had built a new swingover parlour and a bark pad compound to keep and milk 300 cows that together with some excellent cow tracks gave us plenty to see and talk about.

We then went back to the Wolfscastle Country Hotel where we held the Group AGM where I told members that because of a low turnout, only 23, that I thought there would be a deficit on the tour.

Next years tour will be in Cheshire to be arranged by Matthew Dobson and I handed over the secretaryship of the Group to John Alvis after 20 years of involvement.

The following morning for the Bluestone Entertainment Park in the Pembroke National Park where the development of the original park was explained and the plans to build 300 log cabins and other facilities was set out by Mr MacNamara. We then moved on to Stackpole where we were met by Chris Jones who explained his set-up of 1000 spring calving cows in two herds on this virtually frost free costal farm. We inspected the rotary parlour and bark pad area and there was a good debate!

We then had a pub lunch and in the afternoon visited the Smith familys operation where a new swing over dairy unit had been installed and we met three generations of the family all dedicated to dairying. We returned to the Hotel and welcomed our fifteen guests to dinner with a fascinating speaker who had left farming for health reasons aged 40 and had decided to try for the franchise of a MacDonalds. He explained his problems and successes in breaking into that field where he now had four restaurants and had gained many prizes for his management and achievements.

On the 15th we visited the Raymond Bros. large mixed operation at Fishguard where, because the weather was poor, we had a very lively debate in Mansels dining room and ended up with a quick tour of the buildings where they were considering updating their dairy facilities.

We finally trekked over to the Horeb Food Hall where we were again treated to lunch after a tour of the numerous food processing facilities they had for potential processors to try out their products, before making bigger investments.

In all a very successful tour enjoyed by all participants