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Nuffield



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Returning Scholars engaged and entertained a 200-strong audience at the 2006 Winter Conference held in Bedford



News and reviews from the Nuffield Farming Scholarship Trust

Spring/Summer 2007



2007 Scholarship Award winners gathered in Calgary as part of the pre-study International Congress hosted by Nuffield Canada.

Full of VA-VA-VOOM to seek out the world's best in food and farming

For enthusiasm in bucket loads and a robust confidence in a bright future for British food and farming, you need look no further than the 2007 Nuffield Farming Scholarship Award winners. Soon to be outward bound on study tours to seek out the very best in food and farming around the globe, 19 new names from the farming, food chain and rural industries have been added to the Nuffield Farming national award scheme.

"Our 2007 Scholarships have been won by some energetic and enterprising individuals from across the country," announced John Stones, NFST Director. "They range from a young, ambitious free-range egg producer to a specialist in agro-terrorism and bio-security, from the MD of an award winning mail order gardening business to an inventive forestry adviser employed by national public utility.

"With their sights set firmly on the future, the study topics chosen by our 2007 Scholars are definitely challenging and reflect more than ever the complexity of today's food and farming industry, and an ever changing pattern of economic, policy and social pressures." Their study topics include:

- Agro-terrorism and bio-security threat, response and industry communication

- The value and role of trees in carbon accounting and the scope for mitigation
- Utilising bio-fuels and renewable energy to reduce the carbon footprint of agriculture
- Care farming as part of the solutions to health and social care needs in modern industrialised societies
- How to create a premium in the mass retail food service market
- Phosphates and agriculture
- Vermiculture opportunities for UK agriculture
- Ways in which poultry farmers can reduce their eco-footprint
- Extending the Cornish vegetable season and expanding production to reduce imports
- Social media and the opportunities it can bring to farming and farmers
- Easy-to-manage sheep and cattle systems

"We congratulate all of our 2007 Scholars on achieving an award - which is widely recognised as a unique personal and industry learning opportunity - and eagerly await their study findings which will be made available through reports and presentations, starting in 2008," said John Stones.

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF SERVICE TO AGRICULTURE

'ARE YOU READY FOR A CHALLENGE' has been the invitation sent out to enthusiastic individuals working within UK agriculture since 1947 by the Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust which celebrates its DIAMOND JUBILEE this year.

"It's fair to say that the success of the scholarship scheme has greatly exceeded the hopes and expectations of the original Trustees," explained John Stones, NFST Director. "The programme has grown substantially - with over 20 UK Scholars being awarded each year - and has expanded to become a truly international organisation forming a strong network of some 600 Scholars in the UK and over 1,000 worldwide. With 60 years' worth of success and farming inspiration under our belt, we have a lot to celebrate."



NFST Directors spanning 30 years of Nuffield Farming Scholarships: Captain John Stewart OBE (centre); Steven Bullock (left); John Stones (right).

2007 Nuffield Award Sponsors

Nuffield thanks its 2007 Scholarship sponsors who share our goals and whose contribution makes the Nuffield Scholarships programme possible.

Alan & Anne Beckett • BEMB (R&E) Trust • Central Region Farmers Trust
Dartington Cattle Breeding Centre • Frank Parkinson Agricultural Trust • HSBC Bank
John Oldacre Foundation • Newcastle University (Mac Cooper) Fund
Northern Ireland (Jimmy Young) Award • Oxford Farming Conference
Royal Agricultural Society of England • Royal Highland Agricultural Society
Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association • Royal Smithfield Club
Royal Welsh Agricultural Society • Studley College Trust • Thomas Henry Foundation (NI)
Trehane Trust • Young Nuffield (Bob) Maston Award • ...and many more!

2007 AWARDS



NUFFIELD AWARD
DR RICHARD BYRNE
(Market Drayton, Shropshire)

'Agro-terrorism and bio-security threat, response and industry communication'

Richard is married to Sharon. He is a senior lecturer, specialising in countryside management, at Harper Adams University College.

rbyrne@harper-adams.ac.uk



CENTRAL REGION FARMERS TRUST AWARD
DR NICKY CANNON
(Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire)

'Sustainability within the organic and conventional farming sector'

Nicky is married to Adrian. She lectures at the Royal Agricultural College, specialising in organics and crop production. Nicky also undertakes consultancy work and is a member of ACOS (Advisory Committee on Organic Standards) for Defra.

n.d.cannon@btinternet.com



ROYAL SMITHFIELD CLUB/ROYAL WELSH AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY FOOD CHAIN AWARD
RHYS DAVIES
(Ruthin, Denbighshire)

'Opportunities for hill and upland beef and sheep enterprises; to include alternative forms of land tenure, ownership and use that create new entrant opportunities'

Rhys, a land agent, works for Flintshire County Council managing their agricultural estates. He also runs a flock of Lleyn ewes and spends time on the family farm.

rhyspenbwch@hotmail.com



OXFORD FARMING CONFERENCE/NUFFIELD TRUST AWARD
BECKY FLOATE
(Presteigne, Powys)

'Phosphates and agriculture: How will an enforced reduction in phosphate pollution impact on animal welfare, local water quality and profitability of farming businesses?'

Becky is a farm conservation adviser for FWAG (Shropshire).

becky.floate@fwag.org.uk



HSBC FOOD CHAIN AWARD
ANDREW GOODMAN
(Witley, Worcester)

'Successful farm enterprise development and profitable connection with the food chain'

Andrew is married to Ruth. He is a farmer/food producer in the family partnership, with enterprises including free-range geese and turkeys, arable and asparagus.

goodman.wal@virgin.net



ALAN & ANNE BECKETT AWARD
HEATHER GORRINGER
(Blakemere, Hereford)

'Social media and the opportunities it can bring to farming and farmers'

Heather is married to Philip. She is managing director of 'Wiggly Wiggles', a farm diversification mail order gardening business. Heather is the winner of the Farmers Weekly Alternative Enterprise Award 2006.

heather@wigglywiggles.co.uk



DARTINGTON CATTLE BREEDERS TRUST AWARD
FIONA HILMAN
(Llanellen, Monmouthshire)

'Vermiculture opportunities for UK agriculture'

Fiona is married to Tony. She is jointly managing the family dairy business, currently in organic conversion. She is also a founder member of the "Wye Graze" discussion group.

fiona@glanochran.co.uk



YOUNG NUFFIELD (BOB MATSON) AWARD
CHRISTINE JACKSON
(Belford, Northumberland)

'Developing and marketing the free-range sector within UK and Europe'

Christine has developed and runs a 32,000-bird free-range egg business, together with an organic egg unit. She sells direct to 10 Asda stores in the North East.

info@sunnyhilllegs.com



OXFORD FARMING CONFERENCE/NUFFIELD TRUST AWARD
PAUL KELLY
(Chelmsford, Essex)

'How to create a premium in the mass retail food service market'

Paul is managing director of the family's turkey business, franchising the Kelly Bronze brand to farmers throughout the country.

paul@kellyturkeys.com



RCS/RASE/ROYAL NORFOLK AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION
SARAH LONG
(Towcester Northants)

'Beef marketing and product differentiation; developing a toolkit for producers'

Sarah is a farmer's daughter working as the development manager for Assured British Meat. Her role includes advising members on assurance requirements and interpreting EC/UK regulation/legislation within the beef and lamb sectors.

sarah_long@abm.org.uk



STUDLEY TRUST AWARD
ELLIS LUCKHURST
(Truro, Cornwall)

'Extending the Cornish vegetable season and expanding production to reduce imports'

Ellis's partner is Jemima. He is an independent technical advisor to the fresh produce industry, together with an interest in growing traditionally less well known crops in the South West.

ellis@eluckhurst.co.uk



JOHN OLDACRE AWARD
LOUISE MANNING
(Ledbury, Herefordshire)

'The impact of water quality and availability on food production, with specific emphasis on poultry farming'

Louise is married to Robert. She is involved on the family farm and director of a consultancy providing support to businesses working within the food supply chain.

l.manning@btinternet.com



NORTHERN IRELAND AWARD
CATHAL MCCARRON
(Omagh, Co Tyrone)

'Utilizing bio-fuels and renewable energy to reduce the carbon footprint of agriculture'

Cathal writes for Farmers Weekly. He entered journalism on completion of a BSc (Hons) degree in agricultural engineering, which incorporated marketing and management, at Harper Adams University College.

mccarroncathal@yahoo.co.uk



JOHN OLDACRE AWARD
TIM OLIVER
(Penrith, Cumbria)

'The value and role of trees in carbon accounting and the scope for mitigation'

Tim is married to Penny. He is an operations manager for the Forestry Commission, delivering government objectives for 'forestry for the public benefit' through a combination of advice and grant aid to farmers and landowners.

tim.oliver@forestry.gsi.gov.uk



NUFFIELD AWARD
SUE SCOTT
(Sand Hutton, Yorkshire)

'Opportunities for the production and marketing of meats with health benefits to the consumer'

Sue is a freelance journalist. She writes for a number of trade and consumer titles and specialises in food and farming.

sue.scott1963@btinternet.com



BEMB (R&E) TRUST AWARD
MIKE TYERS
(Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire)

'Ways in which poultry farmers and other organisations can reduce their eco-footprint'

Mike is married to Clair. He is regional manager for Deans Noble Foods (South), a fully integrated egg production company - responsible for breeding, commercial rearing, cage laying, free range and organic rearing and laying farms, as well as feed milling, egg packing/distribution and egg processing.

mikeandclair@uptonbishop.wanadoo.co.uk



ROYAL SMITHFIELD CLUB/ROYAL HIGHLAND AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY FOOD CHAIN AWARD
CHARLEY WALKER
(Duns, Berwickshire)

'Easy-to-manage cattle and sheep; simplified, profitable and productive beef and sheep farming'

Charley is in partnership with his wife, Andrea. They farms a 625-acre upland beef and sheep unit in the Scottish Borders. Around 80 Welsh Black suckler cows and 800 Romney ewes are managed on a low input organic system.

andrea.charley@virgin.net



NEWCASTLE AWARD
DAVID WATSON
(Ongar, Essex)

'Improving arable farming efficiency'

David is married to Karen. He is an operations and resources manager with Farmcare Ltd.

david.watson@co-op.co.uk



NUFFIELD AWARD
DEBBIE WILCOX
(Shrewsbury, Shropshire)

'Care farming; the contribution being made by farming to solving the problems of health and social care needs in modern industrialised societies'

Debbie is project manager for 'Care and Rural Enterprise' at Harper Adams University College. She also acts as network coordinator for the National Care Farming Initiative (UK).

dwilcox@harper-adams.ac.uk

Canadian Congress



Nuffield Canada, supported by local sponsors, provided newly awarded Scholars from around the globe with a privileged insight into Canadian farming and Canadian life as part of the 2007 NFST International Congress.

Brought together by Nuffield Canada, the week-long programme included a series of briefings on the future for agriculture, climate change, the global marketplace and agrosience innovation amongst a host of thought provoking topics.

They were combined with visits to highly contrasting local, regional and national businesses, with highlights including Spruce Meadows, the Canadian home of international show jumping; the extraordinary Hutterite Colony farms at Hussar; the pioneering Olds College, bringing a new face to agriculture, industry and community training; the state-of-the-art slaughter house facilities run by Rancher's Beef; and Dow AgroSciences, Calgary, highlighting the national and global dynamics of today's agriculture and the increasing importance of science.

"It was absolutely wonderful to see the Congress held in Canada this year, as we have always welcomed visiting Scholars," commented Wally Doerksen, President of Nuffield Canada. "It's been a great experience and helps validate the work that Nuffield Canada is already doing.

"The event has been valuable in attracting new scholars, whilst also keeping us 'old Scholars' rejuvenated. It has also provided new opportunities, exposure and networks for sponsors."

A Canadian solution to declining student numbers

"It is difficult to attract students into agriculture, yet never has the need for training been so high - the result of larger units, more technology and greater pressure, as increasingly agriculture is driven from a production to a consumer-orientated industry," explained Dan Fullerton, Director of Innovation, Olds College, Alberta, the venue for one of a host of fascinating farm and facility visits.



Dan Fullerton, Director of Innovation

The unique solution developed by Olds College is primarily based on uniting 'rural' and 'urban' students, whilst also offering far more flexible learning opportunities:

- A new industry-based programme of learning - offering courses from land administration to fashion marketing, from equine to energy - to meet the needs of a broad-range of learners, with a year-round schedule of distance and on-site part-time and full-time learning opportunities.
- A series of initiatives to help provide seamless transfers between high school, post-secondary and community, including the creation of an innovative 'community learning campus' to provide services for over 80,000 urban and rural residents.
- An urban-based transition campus located in the grounds of the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede in the heart of the city of Calgary.

The ambitious project - called the 2009 Capital Vision Campaign - doesn't come cheap, at \$40,721,600, and will rely heavily on fundraising and enhanced partnerships with the public and private sectors in Canada and abroad.

Dan Fullerton pointed out: "The fall-off in the number of agricultural students, particularly from a farming background, is no different in Canada than in many other countries. From around 70% in the mid-80s, the number attending the College has fallen to only 25% today. This is certainly not helped by the draw of the Canadian oil fields where students straight out of school can earn \$60,000 a year. But neither is it helped by ongoing farm restructuring and the growth of ever bigger units, with 20,000 acres not uncommon.

"The other reality is that, with government funding falling from 81% in 1981 to 48% today, the College has no option but to operate as a business - with far wider demands beyond adding value to agriculture, and within a far more complex and sophisticated global marketplace."

A global affair...



2006 Australian Nuffield Scholars with Peter Nixon (Chairman) and Jim Gelich (CEO).



2006 Eisenhower Fellow (USA), Hope Pjesky.



2007 Irish Scholars - Kevin Coffey, Eamonn Phelan, Eilish Broderick and Cathal McCarron.



2007 New Zealand Scholars - Les Keeper, Steven Sterne and Jane Mitchell.

Congress thanks...



Marilyn Sharp, Nuffield Canada, presented with a gift of congratulations and thanks by Art Froehlich (guest speaker) and Rod Bradshaw, Campbell Tweed, UK Chairman.



Presentations on the future of farming were given by Rod Bradshaw (guest speaker) and Campbell Tweed, Nuffield Canada.

Special thanks for organising the 2007 International Congress go to the Nuffield Canada working party, in particular Marilyn Sharp, Wally Doerksen, Rod Bradshaw, Iris Meck and Dawn Litzenger. Thanks also go to the generous tour sponsors, including UFA, Dow AgroSciences, Alberta Beef Producers, Rahr Malting, Big Rock Brewery and ABIC 2007 Calgary.

NEWS in brief



Campbell Tweed

From the chair...

It's a great privilege to be Chairman of Nuffield. Following the Calgary International Congress this year (2007), Scholars are well under way in planning and progressing their study and travel.

The 2006 cohort group have the Jubilee Conference in Harrogate (on 9/10/11 November) firmly in their sights, along with the completion of their reports. I hope that if you haven't already noted the dates and plan to attend - with at least some of your contemporaries - that you do so soon.

The latest Frank Arden Study has been commissioned to effectively address the carbon footprint pressures facing the industry. There will be an interim report at the Harrogate Conference, with the final launch of the report being held at Stoneleigh in April next year.

Plans are well advanced for the 2008 World Conference and Tour to be staged in Ireland - starting in Belfast (5th June), proceeding via Dublin to Kilkenny for the formal conference session (13th June) and the post-conference tour from a Killarney base. Scholars are then invited to Scotland (19th-22nd June) to the Royal Highland Show at Ingleston and a Scottish tour.

The NFST Board are working hard on the recommendations of the external review and the need to ensure that the Trust remains in good heart with sufficient suitable candidates, particularly farmers emerging from the industry and that the Trust is properly funded to meet its objectives.

I look forward to meeting you in the course of the year.

Campbell Tweed OBE

Nuffield EXTERNAL REVIEW

Fit for purpose and fit for the future is the firm ambition of the Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust.

To this end in April 2006 the Executive Board commissioned an external review to look at its structure and key activities against a background of dramatic shifts in farming fortunes - namely falling commodity prices, increasing business diversity and involvement in up-stream processing and marketing, and new land management pressures.

Headed up by Steve Ellwood, HSBC Head of Agriculture, the review panel included Norman Coward (NFST President) David Bolton (Cheffins) and Meryl Ward. Some of the specific recommendations include:

- A greater emphasis on the personal development of Scholars, with an 'action plan' being produced as part of the Scholarship programme
- To further extend the scope and activities of the Trust beyond production agriculture - to 'food' and all aspects of the 'land-based economy' in which many diversified farmers are already engaged
- To continue to improve the profile of the Nuffield brand, with funds from the Scholarship bursary being deployed for promotional activity and a personal development module
- To seek and engage greater external input for all of the Trust's activities, particularly its governance

All for grass and grass for all!

"Grazing musketeer" was a phrase which dominated the 2007 Dairy Study Group's visit to the Emerald Isle, where 'milk from grass' rules the day.

Rockwell Farm, one of three farms visited as part of the tour, was where they met their first musketeer. He walked, measured and budgeted the grass every three weeks to gain an increase of £2.70 per cow profit every extended day.

Calling also at Moorepark Dairy Research Centre, they were stunned by the quality of farmer-controlled research carried out, with 3000-5000 - yes, 'thousand' - people expected at one of their open days.

A highlight for the entire group was a trip into County Wexford to Ballyshannon Farms, where the 21 attendees were shown around Carrigbyrne Farmhouse Cheese and sampled the soft, wonderful product. Paddy Berridge then explained the detail and economics

behind his biogas digester which culminated in an ignition demonstration of a 1942 British-built eight-foot flywheel engine to harness the power.

Yorkshire is the venue for the 2008 study tour. Details from JOHN ALVIS (johnalvis@alvisbros.co.uk) to be supplied nearer the time.



Bullock Award for NUFFIELD INNOVATION

Scholars who have achieved the most in relation to their study since returning to the UK - either in developing their own business or in helping the industry as a whole - are now to be recognised with the introduction of a brand new award, the 'Steven and Gill Bullock Award for Nuffield Innovation'.

Steven and Gill, who enjoy reading so many Scholars' reports, are keen to find out "what happened next" and to highlight to the wider agricultural community those who have best acted on their study findings or experiences,

particularly those Scholars who have recognised an excellent idea or opportunity and run with it.

This might be through business innovation or implementation, through their adoption of technology or skills, or through their effective involvement in industry representation, politics or rural community.

In the belief that a Scholar's success is most likely to take some years to manifest itself, the first award is open to Scholars selected in the years 1995 to 1998.

Scholars can be nominated or can put themselves forward for the



Steven and Gill Bullock

Award, with entries being sent to the Director no later than 22nd June 2007 (nuffilddirector@aol.com).

An independent judging panel - chaired by Norman Coward, NFST President - will select a winner, who will receive a cash prize of £1,000 to be presented at the 2007 Jubilee Conference in Harrogate.

We are pleased to report that Farmers Weekly has kindly agreed to be the Trust's media partner.



Best Scholar report

John Barker, HSBC Agriculture, and Peter Kendall, NFU President, presented Juno McKee with the HSBC Silver Salver and Annual Award for the Best Scholar Report - entitled 'The scope for adding value in the UK wheat food chains through plant breeding' - at the 2006 Winter Conference dinner.



Presidents all...

Overseeing the work of the Trust is Presidents Committee that meets twice a year. The '05/06 committee comprised Norman Coward (President), Chris Bouchier, Sir Don Curry, Henry Fell CBE, Chris Older and Richard MacDonald. Picture includes John Stones (NFST Director), Campbell Tweed, (Chairman) and Tony Pexton, (Vice Chairman).



Star communicator

Guy Smith NSch took the Guild of Agricultural Journalists 2006 Netherthorpe Communicator of the Year Award for outstanding services to agricultural journalism, through writing and broadcasting. Tony Pexton, Nuffield Vice Chairman, presented the award at the Royal Show in July 2006.



Miliband thumbs up

David Miliband gave his full support to the 'Tractors in Schools Project', managed by Ian Beecher Jones NSch. The project forms part of Ian's campaign to show children modern farm tractors in a way that meets curriculum requirements and encourages learning in a fun way.



Doing the rounds

During her tour around the Royal Smithfield Christmas Fair in December 2006, HRH The Princess Royal stopped off at the NFST stand. She spoke to Roger Trehwella NSch, Crediton, about the Trust's work and the opportunity it offers to study worldwide food and farming.



A CARBON BLUEPRINT FOR UK FARMING

2007 Frank Arden Award

A carbon blueprint for UK farming was the chosen topic of study for the 2007 Frank Arden Memorial Award. Widely promoted in 2006, four candidates were selected and invited to study different facets of this important subject from a breadth of studies proposed.

Sustainable development now sits firmly at the centre of UK and EU government policy, bringing with it the threat of green taxes, targets for reducing greenhouse gases and carbon accounting at farm level. Agriculture, like every modern industry, needs to embrace the concept of resource efficiency and a low carbon future to the full - and to its advantage.

Designed to inspire and educate the UK agricultural industry, the opportunity to help farmers and land managers face up to the challenges ahead - including strategies for carbon saving and capture, for intelligent and renewable energy production and for the mitigation

of direct emission of gases - is offered by this special award.

Four studies

From the substantial number of applicants received, the Trust has selected four studies which will contribute to a significant project to understand the carbon footprint of UK agriculture and to formulate recommendations:

Professor Chris Pollock, retiring IGER Director, has agreed to write an overview of the subject, bringing together a mass of already published data, supported by his own research looking at examples of best practice.

Chris Morgan, Chief Executive of Bioganix (Herefordshire-based farmer-owned recycling and composting business), has been invited to consider opportunities for farming to sell recycling and carbon mitigations services to the wider community and provide a financial background to the project.

Nuffield Scholar, **Jiggy Lloyd**, has been given the task of examining

scenarios for arable, dairy and one intensive farming sector.

Nuffield Scholar, **David Hugill**, as an upland farmer himself, will prepare a report considering the future of the uplands.

Studies are now under way, the findings of which will be presented at a major industry conference planned for April 2008.

The award is generously sponsored by the Frank Arden Memorial Fund. It was open to UK residents working in the fields of food, farming and forestry.

We are grateful to Professor David Leaver, Principal of the Royal Agricultural College, and Caroline Drummond, Chief Executive of LEAF, for their assistance in the award selection process.

UK FARMING
... Providing the solutions,
NOT the problem

Organic Study Group up and running

First class examples of organic land management, food production and retailing were visited as part of the first meeting of the Nuffield Organic Study Group held in Gloucestershire in October 2006.

Intended for Scholars who are already engaged in the organic sector - or who may be thinking of converting in the near future - this new group provides a superb forum to learn more about all aspects of organics in the UK.

Visits included the Royal Agricultural College, Duchy Home Farm, Sir Anthony Bamford's Daylesford Estate and Lodestone Farming. The evening speaker was Guy Watson from Riverford Organics.

TOM RAWSON (trawson@hotmail.co.uk) has been appointed group chairman, with **STEVE LOFTHOUSE** taking up the post of secretary. The new study group will meet again in June 2007.



Business Group - learning from real life experiences



Sharing their business experience and their future ambitions, Nuffield Scholars from across the country gathered in Ledbury, Herefordshire, in March to take part in the 2007 Business Group meeting.

The two-day briefing had some set objectives; to learn about other profitable ventures, to find answers to specific operational problems and to create a free-thinking environment and mindset.

Brought together by group coordinator, **MATT SWAIN**, Scholar participants included

Martin Ritchie, John Strawson, Neil Rowe, Chris Fogden and Nicola Madley. All from real life experiences, amongst the many focussed discussions and annual business updates were:

- The imperative of good marketing
- Staying in pigs - the pros and cons
- Planning and polytunnels
- The future of voluntary milking
- Short rotation coppice - where to now?
- Retaining and motivating staff
- The growing pains of going national.

Many thanks go to the briefing hosts, Bruce and Alison Gilbert, and to all participants for bringing and imparting their wisdom.

Lincolnshire is the venue for the 2008 event to be held on 14/15th March. Contact **MATT SWAIN** - Tel.01255 86216 (Email. farmbusiness@aol.com).



Poultry Study Group spring weekend

Julian and Nichola Madeley hosted the 24th Poultry Study Group spring weekend in early 2006. The objective was to change the traditional format of the weekend by hosting a 'chicken free' event in the West Midlands incorporating the Hay Festival, Broadfield Court Estate (Bodenhan), a banquet at Overton Grange, (Ludlow), Powys Castle and a visit to the Madeley farming enterprise.

The weekend succeeded in bringing together existing scholars and potential candidates in a relaxing and enjoyable setting.



HSBC hospitality

In 2006, HSBC support and hospitality extended to a buffet lunch and reception for would-be scholars attending the Royal Show, Stoneleigh. On hand to answer questions were John Stones (NFST Director) and Campbell Tweed (NFST Chairman), pictured with Steve Ellwood, HSBC Head of Agriculture.



Trehane trustees

Celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Trehane Trust, Scholars and industry stalwarts attended the Trust's Annual Scholars' Dinner in London in April. New to the top table of appointed Trustees were John Alvis and Professor Wynne Jones, who takes up the reins as Chairman. (Pictured with Campbell Tweed.)



Class of '83

Scholars of the 1983 cohort - the renowned 'Dream Team' - held their annual gathering at the 2006 Winter Conference, Bedford, to toast former NFST Director, Captain John Stewart OBE, and his wife, Eileen. John Stewart led the first Scholars' briefing to Brussels in 1983.



Milk maids

Diana Allan, Emma Rutter and Lucy Andrews - all 2005 Trehane Scholars - gave their interim presentations at the 2006 Trehane Trust Annual Scholars' Meeting and Dinner, with invited industry guests. Topics studied, respectively, were 'increasing profit through cow comfort', 'key messages for milk marketing' and 'knowledge transfer to farmers'.



Visits from down under

Reciprocal visits between Nuffield UK and Nuffield Australia and New Zealand remain a strong part of the Nuffield learning and networking experience. Continuing the tradition, Caroline Brown from Maitland, South Australia, visited John Strawson's Koolfuel biomass enterprise in 2006 as part of her global study of renewable energy.

WINTER CONFERENCE 2006

A stimulating set of papers and good company formed the basis of a very successful 2006 Winter Conference held in Bedford in November. Engaging and entertaining a 200-strong audience, returning Scholars presented a series of thought provoking and professional reports, culminating in a host of key industry recommendations.



John Stewart Shield

Guy Smith, Nuffield East Anglia Chairman, and Jack Ward, NFST Executive Member, present Matt Naylor with the John Stewart Shield. His paper was judged to be the best amongst 24 excellent presentations.



East Anglian hosts

Thanks go to the East Anglian working party for their behind the scenes work on the Bedford-based Winter Conference. Special guests included two 'locals' - Baroness Gillian Shephard of Northwold (former MP for West Norfolk and past Minister of Agriculture) and Peter Kendall, NFU president.



Go forth and vary

"I'll set the scene. I was in a small street on the outskirts of Beijing and suddenly sensed that everyone was looking at me. This seems strange, I thought. Surely they don't get the Farmers Weekly here! Then I realised that I was the only non-Chinese person in the whole crowded area. I was experiencing the power of being different, explained **MATT NAYLOR**, Lincolnshire flower and potato grower, and farming journalist.

"Agriculture in the UK is just like that crowded street. If you cannot differentiate your products then what reason is there for anyone to buy them? The most sensible course of action for a medium-sized commodity producer is to start looking for a point of difference which they can charge a premium for. Unfortunately, finding a point of difference is often incorrectly interpreted by many farmers as copying their neighbour's new idea. They also believe it's not relevant to them, stating that they have only got poor land and that they can only grow wheat!

"After nearly 50 years of being driven by government policy, farmers have become homogenised. It's time to rediscover the customer and their thousands of different needs."

"But it's still possible to differentiate a wheat crop. If it is marketed as wheatgrass seed, for instance, it is worth around £5 per kilo, instead of the 8p, like most farmers get. So, shall we all go off and copy the wheatgrass idea and crash that market? Or could we find another idea? I'm printing my report on paper made from wheat straw. Bloody expensive way to prove a point, it is too.

"From my studies I have identified some key areas in which a point of difference can be developed. These are 'process', 'place', 'product', 'prestige' and 'promotion'.

"Considering all five, it is perhaps promotion that can provide the best results. I have met some remarkable marketeers in the last year. In New Zealand I had dinner with Lisa Cork, a world-renowned food marketing expert, originally from California. George Bush senior famously said: "I don't like broccoli and, now that I'm the President, I'm not going to eat it". Lisa Cork said: "Yes you will" and had 10 tonnes of it dumped on the White House lawn. As a result, sales of broccoli went up by 20%.

"I also spent a morning with Wilfred Emmanuel Jones. He is successfully marketing a range of food under the brand 'The Black Farmer'. He explained how consumers are strongly reassured by a face on packet that they recognise. He was one of the original marketing brains behind the Lloyd Grossman products.

"Using endorsements by famous faces and brands to sell farm products must be one of the sharpest tools for our project of re-building consumer confidence in food."



Fertility farming

Could the declining health and wellness of the nation, and the similarly declining standards of crop and animal health be linked? This was the initial question posed by **BEN MEAD**, dairy farmer and Cornish Yarg producer.

"What did I find? Soil fertility and crop, animal and human health are very definitely correlated. I also discovered simple, low cost farming practices - involving balanced soil, increased pasture diversity and compost teas - that were able to reduce fossil fuel usage and increase carbon dioxide sequestration, dramatically boosting the humus and fertility of the land, without forfeiting production or the environment.

"My first area of study was the soil. William Albrecht in the 1920s discovered strong correlations between specific medical conditions and locality. Albrecht's soil tests, which I use myself, measure 17 minerals to give a more comprehensive picture than the dumbed-down NPK analysis. He also devised a system of calculations governing how to combat excesses and deficiencies, bringing the soil into a balanced base saturation to grow nutrient dense food.

"Jerry Brunetti, an animal nutraceutical specialist of 27 years standing, stresses the importance of soil mineral balance, but he also highlights the beneficial effects on pasture quality, production and animal health of introducing herbs. Most graziers, myself included, have lost out on the benefit of herbs... some might call them weeds. We observe, but rarely question why cows graze them in preference to the latest hybrid ryegrass. Yet you can prove in the lab that the nutritional, medicinal and phytochemical value of many herbs and weeds dramatically exceed the values in domesticated pasture species. Don't believe me? Then Google James Duke USDA phytochemical list.

"At home I have already been overseeding with herbal mixtures. These include chicory - for its deep-rooting mineral accumulating and sub-soiling ability, drought resistance and palatability to cattle - and plantain or ribgrass which is also highly palatable and an anthelmintic. Others include burnet, alsike, yarrow, sheep's parsley, American clover and purslane, the richest terrestrial source of Omega-3, essential for health and never out of the news for long.

"Compost teas, the third ingredient, can also produce dramatic improvements in pasture quality by increasing numbers and stimulating the beneficial activity of soil microorganisms that make plant nutrition available

"Ben Dowling, an applied biologist and agronomist in South Australia, makes excellent compost from native bush compost, local kelp and seaweed, slaughterhouse paunch, worm compost and fish waste. His list of local, originally sceptical chemically-dependent growers are steadily switching to his non-toxic brews because of their low cost and ultimately their effectiveness."

1. The 2006 Conference presentations were ably adjudicated by Jack Ward NSch and Guy Smith NSch.
2. Masters of the Conference sound system and powerpoint presentations for a third year were Sean Beer NSch and David Homer NSch.



Big future for biogas

Biogas to electricity production offers a reliable, simple and established technological route for farmers to improve their environmental credentials, but also offers farmers a realistic alternative market for crop and livestock production, believes Dorset dairy and arable farmer, **OWEN YEATMAN**.

Exploring biogas production in the United States, Canada and Germany, Owen was so impressed with the potential he decided to apply for planning permission to build the first UK biogas plant powered by maize, grass and slurry. The unit is set to become a demonstration plant to showcase the technology to UK farmers.

“Biogas powered by silage offers added value opportunities for all farmers - whilst utilising existing crops and rotations, as well as existing skills and technologies.”

“Over the last decade, Germany has become the home of farm biogas production and biogas technology. There are now over 2,500 on-farm units, with 500 a year being constructed. There are also over 150 biogas companies and numerous research establishments working to improve all aspects of the technology.

“The single biggest development which helped to propel the country’s biogas industry was the higher payment rate for electricity generated from fermenting biomass in the form of silage, either maize, grass or whole crop. This transformed the biogas industry from a focus on waste treatment, only able to produce gas from available waste, to one where output can be controlled, regulated and sized according to the amount of feedstock a farmer wishes to allocate to energy production.

“As a direct result, many German farmers have found that energy production from their biogas plant is more profitable than their livestock businesses and have now moved over to 100 per cent energy farming, running their biogas plants with no feedstock manure at all.

“In Germany, biogas production is now set to become one of the key methods of providing renewable energy, with the government’s ambition being to produce 12 per cent of their electricity requirements by the year 2030.

“Here in the UK, renewable energy from biomass is lagging somewhat behind, but has the potential to become a huge market with new measures that will move the renewable premium from existing sources - such as land-fill gas and on-shore wind - to off-shore wind and biomass, including biogas.”



VMS - the way forward

The reasons for the high failure rate of voluntary milking systems (VMS) in the UK are multi-functional and include farmers’ lack of knowledge, leading to poor choices of equipment and perceptions of what is and is not possible. But there are very good reasons why the UK industry should invest in VMS, argued Oxfordshire organic dairy farmer, **NEIL ROWE**.

“Many failures happen when a robot is sold to a farmer to simply fix a labour problem, or a system is chosen only on a lowest cost basis. An understanding of cow psychology can also be a problem, leading to poor cow flow, reduced performance and disappointed farmers.

“Other factors leading to a high failure rate include the low profitability in the UK dairy sector, a high percentage of cows milked by paid staff compared with some EU countries, poor development and back-up on the part of manufacturers and a complete lack of teaching on the subject in our colleges and universities.

“But the reasons why the UK industry should invest in VMS remain strong and are becoming increasingly relevant:

- Financial - correctly designed and managed systems have a higher retained profit than a conventional system with herds of 60 to 4,000 cows
- Lifestyle and working environment - a flexibility in the working day and shorter working hours unheard of in dairy farming, combined with a cleaner and more pleasant environment, with less manual labour
- Welfare and consumers - both cow and human stress associated with a modern dairy farm can be removed in a well managed free-flow system

“The dissemination of knowledge - through presentations and the media - continues to be a large part of my Nuffield experience, which has subsequently turned to influencing and working with organisations to further progress the VMS system. The possibilities are exciting:

- Joint venturing - a single, but shared VMS unit, allowing two or more farmers to work together
- Contract milk harvesting - VMS milking contracted out to a specialist on a cost per litre basis
- In-field milking - provided by a mobile unit moving with the cows around the pasture
- Remote management - combining the technologies of web cams, wifi, broadband and laptops with remote access software

“Do you still want a future tied to a cow’s tail?”



The next generation of agricultural workers

Where is the next generation of agricultural workers going to come from? How should we engage the young in agriculture? And, how best can we recruit our own staff? Looking to America and New Zealand for the answers, **IAN BEECHER JONES** returned with his own vision for the future based on improved engagement with the educators at all levels, improved and coordinated industry support for existing education programmes and better targeted recruitment, including improved recruitment aimed at the ‘Generation Y’. Amongst his wish list for the UK was:

- A specific programme of agricultural education for secondary school teachers, a role undertaken successfully in the USA by the National Association of Agricultural Educators.
- A centrally supported resource of approved, school teacher advice and materials - following the example of the USA’s national ‘Agriculture in the Classroom’ programme, a government supported initiative.
- Structured career days for 15-16 year olds, based on existing professional, hands-on ‘taster’ events run in New Zealand - ‘Windows to Dairying’ and ‘Outstanding in the Field’.

“Creative, demanding, confident and ambitious, ‘Generation Y’ is our future workforce - but how do we understand and target them successfully?”

- An ‘Agrikids’ fun campaign - based on New Zealand’s young people’s competition for 11-15 year olds, allowing kids in schools and/or shows to engage in agriculture in a fun, dynamic way.
- To create a far better understanding of ‘Generation Y’ customers, so our marketing and recruitment programmes are more in line with their expectations.
- To support and increase investment in school and city farms where a very high percentage of the students go on to work in agriculture - an estimated 90% in New Zealand and 80% in the UK.
- To gain full industry support for the UK’s own 2007 education initiative - the ‘Year of Food and Farming’.



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The NUFFIELD FARMING SCHOLARSHIPS TRUST awards study grants to enthusiastic people to further the practice of agriculture, horticulture, forestry and countryside management through travel. On their return, Scholars impart their newly gathered knowledge widely and provide leadership for their rural industries.

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nuffield calendar

2007

June 21/24	Royal Highland Show
July 1-4	Royal Show, Stoneleigh Park
July 12	SE Scholars' joint event with the Worshipful Company of Fruiterers, Malling
July 23/26	Royal Welsh Show
Sept 20/21	RABDF Dairy Event, Stoneleigh Park
Sept 22-28	Horticultural Study Group visit to Belgium
Oct 12/13	Pig Study Group visit to Lincolnshire
Nov 9/10	Diamond Jubilee WINTER CONFERENCE , Old Swan Hotel, Harrogate
Nov 9	Nuffield JUBILEE GALA DINNER , Harrogate
Nov 13	SE Scholars' Annual Meeting, followed by SEAS Conference, Ardingly
Nov 15	CLOSING DATE for 2008 Award applications
Nov 30/1	Royal Smithfield Christmas Fair
Dec 13	Royal Ulster Winter Fair

2008

Jan 21-23	2008 Scholarship Award interviews, London
May 13/14	Pig and Poultry Fair, Stoneleigh Park
June 5-17	2008 WORLD NUFFIELD CONFERENCE - Belfast, Dublin, Kilkenny (see box below)
June 19-22	Nuffield Reception, Royal Highland Show, plus short programme of farm/site visits

A whole island experience...

Plans are well advanced for the 2008 WORLD NUFFIELD CONFERENCE AND TOUR with organisers determined to show you Ireland at its very best and provide a programme for both young and old that will give lasting memories.

Starting in Belfast on 5th June 2008, moving to the Dublin area and then Kilkenny, the tour concludes on 15th June, allowing delegates to cross the water to Scotland, to visit the Royal Highland Show on June 20th, as well as take part in a short programme of visits. The two-day Conference will begin on 13th June.

Further information from Orla Murphy:
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Overseas news

AUSTRALIA: Global Focus Programme

Going from strength to strength, the Global Focus Programme (GFP) run by Nuffield Australia has recently added two new destinations to its itinerary - China and Brazil - offering detailed visits and new insights into overseas farming businesses and cultures in these fascinating countries.

The long-established six-week programme for newly awarded Scholars runs twice a year, with the full list of countries visited including New Zealand, USA, Canada, Philippines, Ireland, UK and France.

Further information from Jim Geltch, Chief Executive Officer (www.nuffield.com.au).



Peter Nixon (Chairman) and Jim Geltch (CEO).



Scholars old and new took part in a fascinating visit to China in March 2006, courtesy of the Global Focus Programme and tour organiser and guide, Angus Cristian (Austrade).

CANADA: New President appointed



From left: Wally Doerksen (NSch 1988), Marilyn Sharp (NSch 1985) and Rod Bradshaw (NSch 1994), at the Calgary-based International Congress for new Scholars.

Nuffield Canada (www.nuffield.ca) has appointed Wally Doerksen, from Steinback, Manitoba, as their new President.

Wally spent 30 years in the chicken industry (broilers and hatching eggs) and as a direct result of his Nuffield studies went into direct marketing with a deli and store. He was active in provincial and national poultry politics for ten years.

Sponsoring one Scholarship on an annual basis since the early 1990s, Nuffield Canada is now looking to 'up the anti'. Wally's ambition is now to select and sponsor three Canadian Scholars each year.

Harold Perry, from of Calgary, Alberta, is the latest recipient of the Canadian Scholarship. He is a director of Potato Growers Alberta and chairs the research priorities committee. His study topic is soil health.