

Poultry Study Group Meeting – June 2006

Julian and Nichola Madeley hosted the 24th Poultry Study Group spring weekend this year (2nd-5th June). The objective was to change the traditional format of the weekend by hosting a chicken free event.

This, however, did not mean that the group were idle. After gathering on the Friday evening in the appropriately named Feathers Hotel in Ludlow, they headed off to the Hay Festival where they listened to an interview with Monty Don. Despite his clashes with the planners over modern agricultural practices, Monty was promoting the benefits of communing with the soil and nature.

The group then moved on to visit the delightful Broadfield Court Estate, at Bodenhan, where they were treated to a superbly theatrical tour of the gardens and vineyard by the owner, followed by a tasting of English wines and a lunch of locally grown food.

The highlight of the weekend was a banquet held at Overton Grange, near Ludlow, where numerous guests and potential Nuffield Scholars joined the group.

The Sunday was spent looking at the Madeley farming enterprise, which has made the conscious decision to diversify into new areas, whilst maintaining the existing arable and egg production business. The strategy started by developing farm buildings for holiday lets and residential use, which has now further developed into event management as a result of demand from the holiday let customers. The resulting business has an impressive occupancy rate and continues to grow with new properties being developed on an ongoing basis.

On Monday, the proceedings were completed with a private tour of Powys Castle. The weekend succeeded in bringing together existing scholars and potential candidates in a relaxing and enjoyable weekend.

Steven Pritchard (2002 NSch)