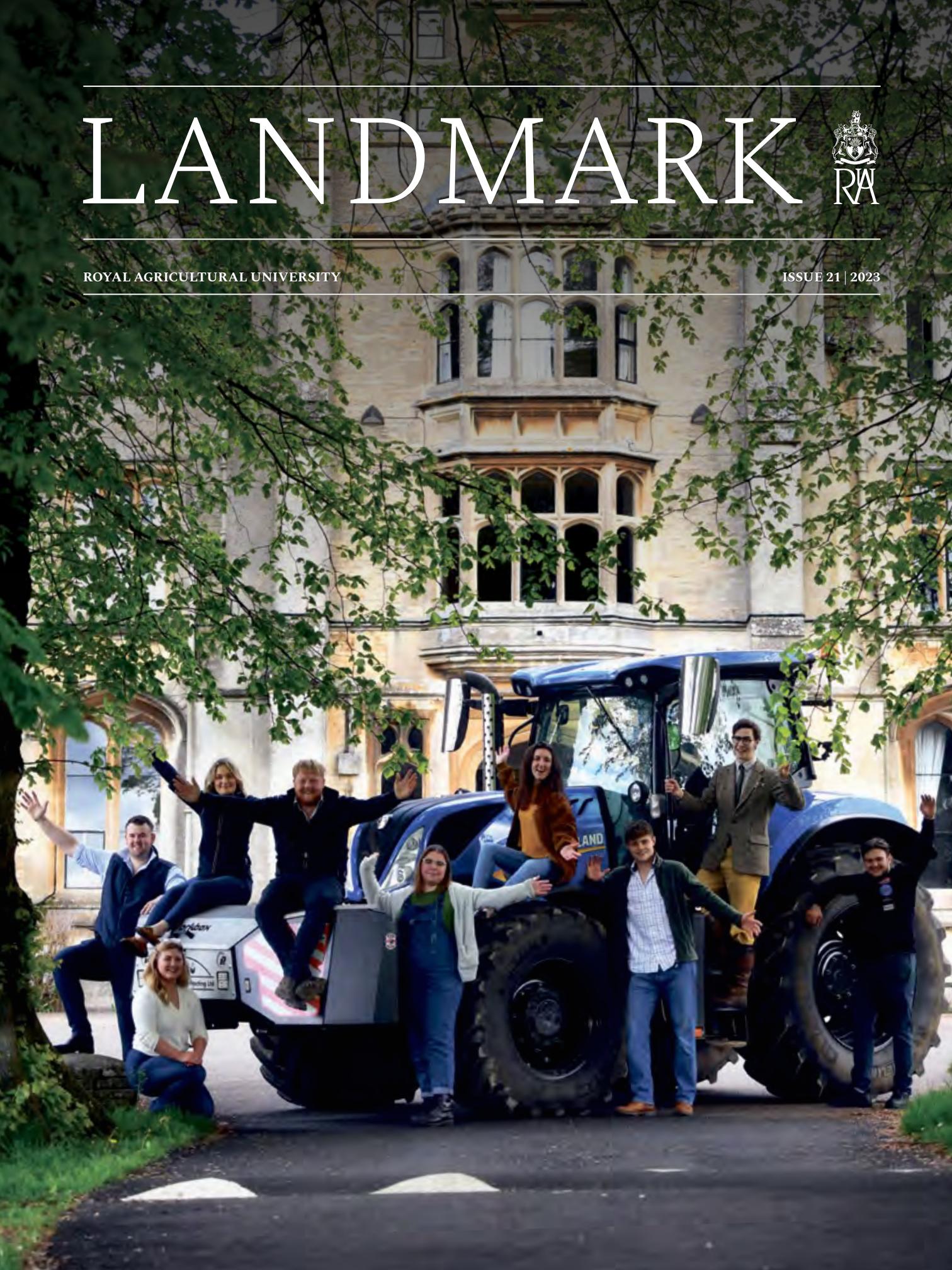

LANDMARK



ROYAL AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY

ISSUE 21 | 2023



Being part of the alumni community

As a member of the RAC/U alumni community, we will keep you up-to-date through regular e-newsletters, the official RAU Alumni Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn Pages and through RAU Connect, our very own alumni website. If your contact details change, please email alumni@rau.ac.uk so we can keep in touch.

Benefits include:

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INTRODUCTION



Welcome to Landmark 2023

A message from Professor Peter McCaffery the Vice-Chancellor

“Practice with Science” was the mantra of our founders in 1845, as Roger Sayce put it in The History of the Royal Agricultural College – that, and a curriculum that engaged “the hand, the heart and the mind” while nurturing “a fierce independence” – the “famous College spirit”. I would like to assure you that all these founding traits are flourishing in today’s RAU as we celebrate our tenth anniversary as a University.

We had stellar outcomes in the 2022 National Student Survey – ranked top in the UK as “a learning community”; the

Research Excellence Framework with over half of our research deemed “world-leading and international in quality” (we are the leading specialist university in England), and also the Knowledge Exchange Framework where we were second in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics subject cluster.

We secured £5.8m – the maximum available - from the Office for Students in their first capital funding round to develop a new Land Laboratory Teaching Centre for September 2025.

This year we also launched – with local and central Government support – our new £100m + project to establish an Innovation Village that will support industry, food producers, farmers, and landowners in developing sustainable solutions to food production while building resilience in rural communities. Centred on agriculture, food, and land management, this will be a first for the UK.

Re-accredited as a centre of national excellence by the Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurs, our Farm491

was recognised nationally as a case study of high impact in agri-food and agri-technology, and our Wild Campus initiative won the regional environmental project of the year while our vineyard, producing award-winning wines, is “a little gem” as the ‘Hairy Bikers’ put it!

A university on which ‘the sun never sets’, we co-founded – with the Uzbekistan Ministry of Agriculture – the new International Agriculture University in Tashkent in September 2022, established a new partnership with Sharjah United Arab Emirates, and have planned growth in post-graduate provision in China.

We are making good progress then, as I am sure you will appreciate, in realising our aspiration to be the country’s leading – indeed the UK’s global – university for sustainable farming and land management.

This is a busy and productive time for the RAU

Dame Fiona Reynolds
Chair of RAU
Governing Council

The Governors are delighted with our new strategy with its clear focus on quality, sustainability, and reach, and we’re already seeing the benefits it is bringing through a more joined up approach to all our work.

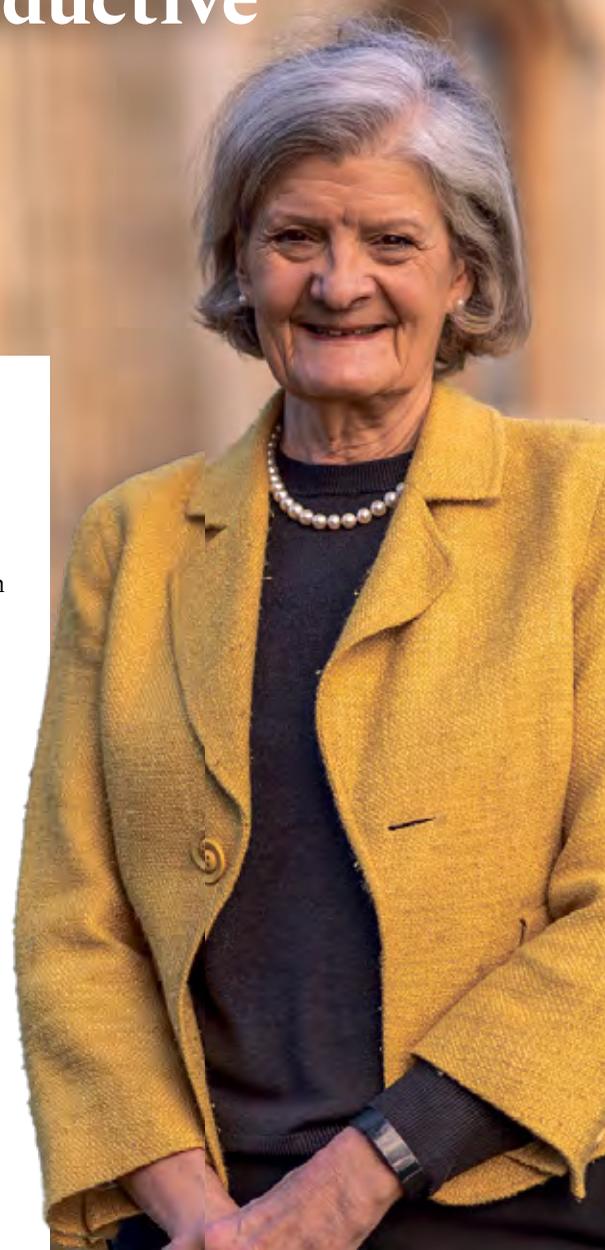
Our success in gaining a £5.8m grant from OfS to refurbish our laboratories has galvanised a much-needed improvement programme for our wider campus.

And our plans for an Innovation Village on our site, celebrating and developing the links between research and practice in the field of sustainable

agriculture and land management, have been greeted very positively by a wide range of stakeholders.

As our teaching and research activities, both here and increasingly abroad, grow in volume and confidence, we’re feeling optimistic about the future. Pressures on land, and the need for sustainable food production, nature recovery, and carbon net zero are constantly in the news these days.

The RAU is well placed to be at the heart of finding solutions to these issues.



A field of red poppies in the foreground, with a blurred background of a building and trees. The text "RAU NEWS" is overlaid in the center.

RAU NEWS

The RAU Student Learning Experience: Working in partnership with students

Dr Lorraine Thomas, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students)



We have had great success in the student learning experience since the last edition of Landmark and achieved the best ever results in the National Student Survey (NSS) 2022!



Associate Professor Ian Grange and Environmental students at the Neolithic village of Skara Brae

In partnership with students and the RAU Students' Union (RAUSU), we are continuing to further enhance the student learning experience. Please see a few recent examples of partnership work with students and the RAUSU in this article.

In March we celebrated International Women's Day and Women's History Month, with the themes of Embracing Equity and Celebrating Women who tell our Story. Speakers and contributors included students, alumni and the RAUSU.

Associate Professor Ian Grange and some of the RAU's Environmental students have been out and about, exploring the wilds of Orkney! The students played an integral role in the organisation of the study tour, developing wider skills and experience that employers also value greatly.



Congratulations to current student **Kenneth Obayuwana** for a successful application to bring the International



Association of Agricultural Students and other related sciences (IAAS) to the UK! Kenneth is now the UK National Director of IAAS. More congratulations go to



Alexandra Godfrey and to **Veronika Darabont**, who have been appointed as the UK Vice President of Communication and the UK Vice President of Exchange respectively.



The RAUSU Student Experience

Meg Stacey, SU President (22-23)

Student experience at the RAU stretches far beyond parties and nights out. Similar to our small, welcoming campus, our student community is incredibly close knit. This is partly due to the shared passions of agriculture, equestrianism, food and sustainability, as well as the fact our average student number is much smaller than bigger, city-based universities.

This year has been especially important for student experience. Post-pandemic we were able to plan a full social calendar with no restrictions. We partnered up with The Corn Hall Arcade in Cirencester to bring back Christmas Ball, and our infamous May Ball has made its second return since 2019.

In addition, by creation of the SU's talent bank, we have seen an increase in student

involvement in the running of our events, as well as the organisation of events. Tithes Friday has been hosted by student DJs each week, and for the first time ever we created a May Ball Committee to give two volunteer students organisational positions for May Ball. Steps like this ensure that students are at the forefront of our decision making and get to take part in creating the RAU student experience.





Achieving top results in research, student satisfaction and knowledge exchange

RESEARCH

Associate Professor David O'Connor, Senior Lecturer in Sustainable Land Management, and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning and Resources) Professor David Main, were both recognised in the 2022 Stanford University list of the top 2% of influential scientists in the world.

Associate Professor David O'Connor has been additionally recognised as a Highly Cited Researcher in Clarivate's 2022 listings of the world's most influential researchers. Of the world's population of scientists and social scientists, Highly Cited Researchers are 1 in 1,000.



STUDENT SATISFACTION

The University is seeing positive results for student satisfaction, some of achievements over the last year include:

- Top 10 Small or Specialist University in the Whatuni? Student Choice Awards 2023, an award which is voted for by students.
- 8th for student experience in The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2023.
- Excellent results in the 2022 National Student Survey including ranking 1st for learning community.
- We have moved up 22 places in the Complete University Guide 2024.



KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

The University has once again performed strongly in the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) with results highlighting the University's strengths in CPD (Continuing Professional Development) and Graduate start-ups amongst others.

In addition, the KEF also ranked the RAU as having high engagement in working with business, working with public and third sector, local growth and regeneration, and public and community engagement.

The University is awarded £5.8m to build new teaching centre on campus



A new Land Laboratory Teaching Centre, which will provide an integrated, state-of-art, facility to train our students in climate-smart, resilient agriculture and land management, is to be built after we won £5.8m of funding from The Office for Students (OfS).

Awarded in the OfS's Capital Funding Competition, the funding will allow us to develop the new centre in the ground floor of the existing Frank Garner lecture block as well as build a new "wet laboratory" extension by 2024/2025.



The new centre will house the latest equipment and technologies across a combined wet lab and IT-enabled learning environment covering a broad range of disciplines and skills.

We plan to be able to complete the initial phase – the refurbishment of the ground floor of the existing Frank Garner lecture block – between August 2023 and March 2024.

Phase 2 of the development – a new build extension to provide separate wet teaching labs – will require planning permission but we hope to be able to complete that in the summer of 2024.

Once construction of the new Teaching Centre is complete, our old wooden lab block will be demolished to create a vibrant "village green" at the centre of the main campus.

THE UNIVERSITY LAUNCHES
OUR VISION FOR **£100M**

INNOVATION VILLAGE



A concept for a sustainable, carbon neutral, Innovation Village which will be home to a community of entrepreneurs, policymakers, practitioners, and researchers committed to addressing the major global challenges we all face, has been launched.

The proposed £100m development, on a 29-acre site on campus is central to our vision and aims to support industry, food producers, farmers, and landowners in developing sustainable solutions for healthy land and nature, food production, and resilience in rural communities.

Outlining the concept at the launch event earlier this year, Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter McCaffery said: “A first for Gloucestershire – and indeed the UK – we are



delighted to be working with Cotswold District Council, GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership, Gloucestershire County Council, and the Department for International Trade to establish a rural Innovation Village here at the RAU, the UK’s global agricultural university.

“A £100M project, centred on supporting industry, food producers, farmers and landowners in developing new innovative practices while protecting land health and building resilience in rural communities, our Innovation Village will turbo-charge SME agri-tech enterprise activity with a distinctively rural feel. We anticipate we will increase the RAU’s current contribution of £52m to the local and regional economy by half as much again over five years when the project is up and running.”

The site will comprise a number of integrated areas including a Research and Innovation centre, live/work residential units, business start-up and support spaces, as well as business and conferencing hospitality facilities.

A cluster development of this nature, applied to agriculture, food and land management, does not exist in the UK and gives the proposed Innovation Village the opportunity to impact globally, addressing issues such as climate change, sustainable land use and food production, biodiversity loss, and heritage management.

The initiative, which has a GDV of between £80 and £100m and already has the support of the Department of International Trade (DIT), Gloucestershire County Council, and GFirst LEP, will provide a rural complement to the proposed developments in the urban core of the county such as Cyber Central in Cheltenham and Kings Quarter/The Forum in Gloucester.

Design principles include construction methods and materials that will minimise environmental impact of the development, enabling energy efficient and low carbon ongoing usage, operations and maintenance of the site. Low carbon transportation will be promoted in and around the site which will be designed to protect, and enhance, biodiversity and, visually, the construction will complement the local landscape.

Dame Fiona Reynolds, Chair of the Governing Council, said: “As well as benefiting the Royal Agricultural University, as a global centre for the future of sustainable farming and food production, this will also benefit the people of Cirencester and other local communities.”



WILD CAMPUS

The project in retrospect and looking to the future

Written by Rebecca Elton, Deb Govier and Rebecca Smith.
Artwork by Jessica Paget Illustrations.

As we near the end of the project, we would like to take the time to reflect on the project as whole, what we have achieved and look forward to what comes next.



At the start of the project in 2020, we joined forces with Cirencester College to begin creating a more wildlife friendly area by developing habitats, enhancing biodiversity, and investing in the health and wellbeing of the local community. Wild Campus was match funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and began with an ecologist from Wild Service doing an initial ecological enhancement plan, and the deliverables for the project were borne from this.

In 2020 plans were made to diversify the grass lawns, and 'no mow' areas were assigned. The summer of 2021 brought phase one of shrub planting, various wildlife surveys, building of hibernacula and hedgehog shelters and the beginning of installing the bird boxes. Conservation Club was started by Liam Collins and Rebecca Elton who joined the project in 2021, and students were encouraged to get involved with the project. Deb Govier joined the project team as Project Manager in November 2021.

In January 2022, phase one of the heritage orchard was planted, with students completing the work under the supervision of Rebecca Elton and Associate Professor Ian Grange.



2022 saw the first research projects with data collected from Wild Campus, the first research paper published was from Associate Professor Kelly Hemmings, Rebecca Elton, and Associate Professor Ian Grange. Wild Campus was also awarded Environmental Project of the Year by Cirencester Chamber of Commerce, Business and Community Awards.



Rebecca Smith and Angharad Webb joined the project, in the roles of Project Technician and voluntary Hedgehog Ambassador respectively. Angharad ran the Hedgehog Friendly Campus, for which we completed various tasks to be awarded our bronze level award at the end of 2022.

2023 brought about our last five months of the project with ERDF funding, and the heritage orchard and hardy shrub planting was completed

by students. Phase two of the hardy shrub planting was supervised by Rebecca Smith and included three botanical species, Chamomile, Lemon Thyme, and Elderflower with the intention to create more flavours of the RAU Gin. Along with this, extra lavender was planted and harvested, and a distilling station and introductory session was led by Dr Jonathan Code.

The end of the project had the team completing a summative assessment, for which a maintenance plan was written, that should keep the efforts from the project alive for 15 years, until 2038.

The Wild Campus team would like to thank all staff and students involved with the project and the Conservation Club for all their help and patience during the project.



On the Front Line with Sumy National Agrarian University



Professor Mark Horton, Pro Vice-Chancellor - Research and Enterprise describes how we came to be 'Twinned' with Sumy National Agrarian University (SNAU), located close to the Russian border in north-eastern Ukraine.

When the Ukraine war started on 24 February 2022, Russian troops poured over the border, and the staff woke up to tanks literally in their backyards. The university was shelled, and some of the student blocks and greenhouses were damaged while off-campus locations were occupied. But heroically, the university stayed in business, and eventually the Russians retreated across the border – although they are still shelling Sumy and the region periodically.

Like ourselves, SNAU is a small specialist university in agriculture and land-management. We were discussing a relationship before the war, so when a twinning scheme was announced, this seemed to be a natural fit to explore how we could work together. Initially, through the generosity of students and alumni, we sent £10,000 to help refurbish the greenhouses and fitted a solid fuel boiler. We were able to help Dr Iryna Skliar and her family to settle in the RAU while also appointing Dr Liudmyla Batsenko to an academic post. Dr Skliar has developed a dual degree MSc programme with SNAU starting in September 2023, to train a new generation of Ukrainian farmers in sustainable agriculture.

While the news agenda has largely focussed on the damage to the cities and the tragic loss of life, an equally large threat – to Ukraine and the world – is the destruction of the country's highly fertile farmland.



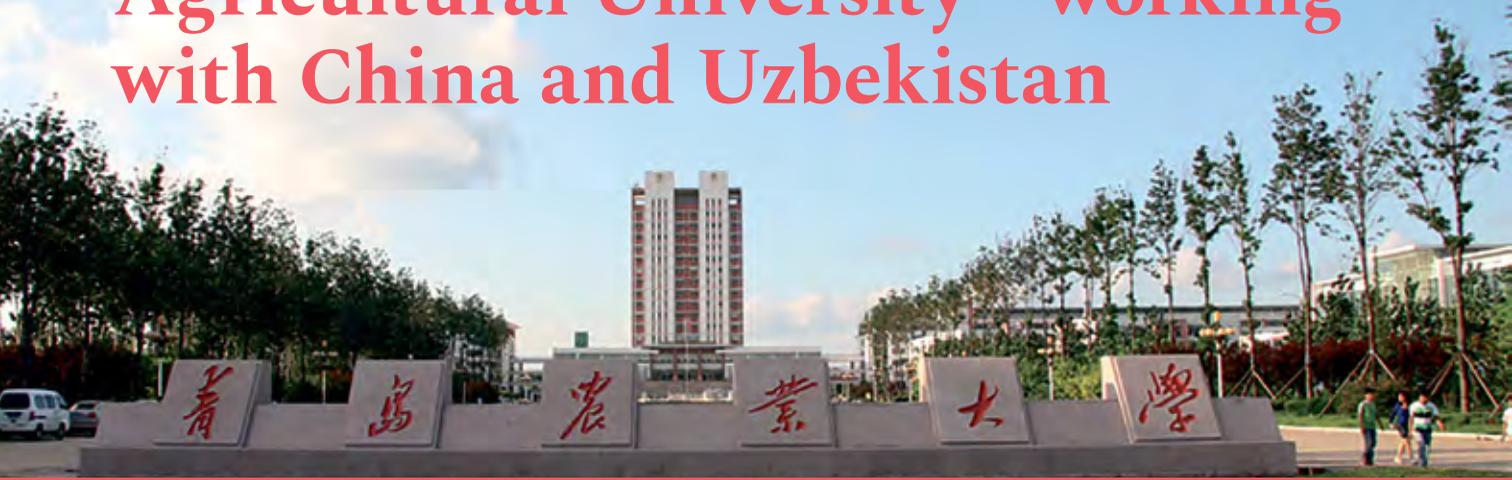
Ukraine is often described as the breadbasket of the world, with its production of wheat, corn, barley, sunflowers and mustard as critical global commodities. Farming has largely ceased along a 5-mile strip along the border, while back from the front line, fields have numerous shell-holes, bomb and missile craters. The debris from war is everywhere, from shell casings to abandoned tanks. Many farm buildings have been destroyed, machinery and livestock stolen by the Russians. Diesel spills pollute the land, the soil is heavily compacted by tanks and vehicles.

As we have expertise at the RAU in measuring and remediating contaminated land, this seemed to be a natural joint research project. Working with Dr Olena Melnyk from Sumy, we secured grants from Universities UKi, and the Academic Sanctuaries Scheme to undertake a large-

scale programme across north-eastern Ukraine. Our Ukrainian colleagues have now bravely collected hundreds of samples from numerous craters across 20 farms close to the border which are being analysed in Ukraine, Switzerland, and at the RAU, using a variety of methods that identify rare and toxic heavy metals that may have been left behind from the explosions. So far, some of the results are alarming.

We all hope that the war will end soon, and Ukraine can begin its reconstruction. However, for the agricultural sector, the urgency is now, to repair the farmland, and resume food production. For our twinned partnership, we are both in this for the long term, and it's been a privilege for the RAU to do its little bit to help.

Becoming the UK's International Agricultural University – working with China and Uzbekistan



CHINA

In 2020, the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Beijing launched a new policy to encourage Universities in China to develop Postgraduate level education collaborations with the universities in developed countries, and UK universities are preferred. This collaboration will allow the students to enjoy the benefits of British Higher Education without travelling abroad or sacrificing their jobs if they are currently employed or running businesses.

We have been running two undergraduate programmes with Shandong Agricultural University (SDAU) for over a decade. Through this collaboration, we have upgraded the Real Estate programme to a double degree, from both SDAU and RAU. There are 93 and 142



students registered for the Real Estate double degree programmes in 2021 and 2022 respectively.

The most significant transnational education partnership is the establishment of the RAU Joint Institute of Advanced Agritechnology at Qingdao Agricultural University (QAU). The Joint Institute is made up of four BSc (Hons) programmes which are

Agriculture; Environment, Food and Society; Food Production and Supply Management; and International Business Management (Food and Agribusiness). There are 780 students registered in 2022 and an estimated 1,100 in 2023.

By mutual agreement, we continue to develop MSc and PhD programmes, along with academic research collaborations between QAU and RAU.

UZBEKISTAN

Uzbekistan's new International Agriculture University, a partnership with the RAU, officially opened in the nation's capital Tashkent in October 2022.

Just days after welcoming the first 200 students to its new courses, the grand opening ceremony took place attended by Uzbekistan's Deputy Prime Minister Jamshid Khodjaev, Minister of Agriculture Aziz Voitov, as well as Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter McCaffery and Dr Munira Aminova, Acting Rector of IAU.

Speaking at the ceremony, at which the new first year students made a "student pledge" as part of their Matriculation ceremony, Professor McCaffery said:

Today's launch of the International Agriculture University (IAU) opens up an exciting new chapter in our history.

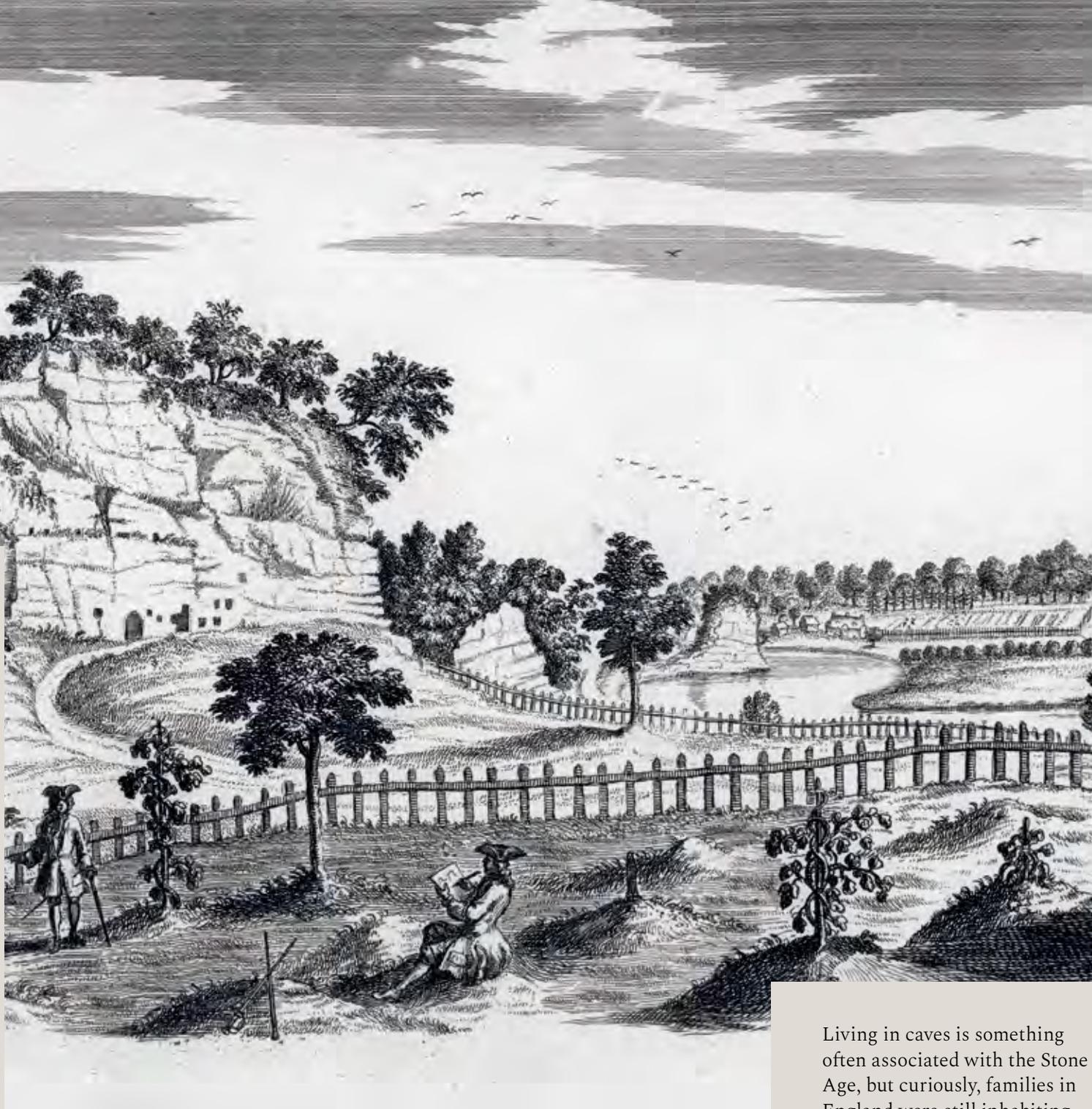
That the RAU was chosen as the founding partner by the Uzbekistan Ministry of Agriculture, against competitors from North America and Europe, bears testament to our mission, vision and approach to agricultural education.

The aim of the new International Agriculture University is to lead the reform of higher education in agriculture in Uzbekistan and secure international recognition for agriculture's role in Uzbekistan's transitional economy and society.

The partnership will give IAU students an equivalent educational experience to that of students at the RAU, with IAU students accessing a blend of face-to-face and online lectures and resources, by franchising some of our existing degree programmes, and developing new degrees and modules to suit Uzbekistan's conditions and its international trade ambitions as the new university grows and develops.



LIVING IN THE ROCKS



Edmund Simons, Senior Research Fellow in the Cultural Heritage Institute describes his project studying the rock-cut buildings of Britain.

Living in caves is something often associated with the Stone Age, but curiously, families in England were still inhabiting rock-cut dwellings or artificial caves right up to the 1960s. I have long been fascinated by them, having lived on Kinver Edge (Staffordshire) for much of my life, where perhaps the best-preserved examples are now cared for by the National Trust.

I am originally a “building archaeologist” used to working on and understanding more conventional structures. So I adapted the techniques we use on normal buildings to these rock-cut dwellings. It soon became apparent that there were no proper studies for these buildings that number several hundred all over the British Isles, and range in date from the prehistoric to the 20th century.

By going back to basics, understanding where they were, how they were made and what we already know about them, I developed ways of analysing the fabric and understanding how we can interpret a structure made of voids within voids. I used the RAU laser scanning and drones to compile records of often inaccessible and remote sites.

One of these case studies got international media attention. It was an investigation into an isolated cave by the River Trent at Anchor Church near Repton, Derbyshire. Historic England described it as being a “natural cave made by the Trent” and as being 18th century in origin. The locals, however remembered it was once the home of a hermit and the analysis proved they were right. The clue was in the name “Anchor” (an anchorite) and “Church” and features survived from this early monastic use, and this work may even be as early as 9th century and associated with the deposed Northumbrian king and saint, Hardulph.

As such, it may be the oldest domestic interior to survive in Britain.

Many more case studies are soon to be published and a monograph is in preparation. It is innovative work, on some of our most intact (and, by far, our least understood) ancient buildings. The RAU’s Cultural Heritage Institute specialises in understanding and managing these rural historic sites and this work is a good example of what our small institute can do.



INDUSTRY & LEADERSHIP

A group of people, including men and women, are walking away from the camera on a dirt path that winds through a grassy field. In the background, there is a dense forest of tall trees. The scene is captured in bright, natural light, suggesting a sunny day. The overall mood is one of a group journey or a shared experience in nature.

5 YEARS OF CREAK CHAIR

The Elizabeth Creak Charitable Trust was founded in memory of Elizabeth Creak, a pioneering farmer. I am fortunate to hold a professorial chair funded by the Trust. As I near the end of my initial five-year term, this is a good moment to reflect on what the funding has achieved.

Professor Tom MacMillan,
Elizabeth Creak Chair

My brief has been to enhance the university's impact. In a context where fragmentation can feel like one of the big barriers to tackling the challenges facing farming – within the industry, policy and research – I've approached that by getting us involved in projects that try to make connections and break deadlocks.

The most visible of these was the National Food Strategy, led by Henry Dimbleby. This reported in 2021, making 14 recommendations to get the UK's food and farming on track to feed the nation healthily and sustainably. I was one of the team who worked over two years to help develop the evidence and recommendations.

Before that, and since, I and others involved in the RAU have supported another independent inquiry, the Food, Farming & Countryside Commission.

It finds common ground among farmers, conservationists, nutritionists and rural communities. One of the Commission's key contributions has been to advance proposals for a land use framework in England, a version of which is now being put into practice by government.

Alongside initiatives such as these where the RAU's role has been to lend a hand, the Creak Trust's funding has also enabled others where we have taken a lead. The most significant is founding the Centre for Effective Innovation in Agriculture (CEIA), jointly with the Creak chairs at four other universities. It aims to make sure that the effort and money invested in the name of agricultural innovation and 'transformation' actually makes a useful difference on the ground.

The Trust's funding has also helped the RAU strengthen its own research programme by providing a springboard for our involvement in wider projects. These range from the National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise, to the Agri-Food for Net Zero Network, each joining up research efforts across the country around their respective themes. We also lead a project investigating what one emerging technology, cultured meat, could mean for UK farmers.

I'm hopeful that these efforts make good on my initial brief, increasing the impact of the RAU and universities in our sector. If they do, it is thanks to the freedom afforded by the Trust's support, which has allowed the RAU to help or step forward as the circumstances demand. I am delighted, and grateful, that the Trust has renewed its funding for the post for a further five years.



Working in partnership through innovation and research



CENTRE FOR EFFECTIVE INNOVATION IN AGRICULTURE (CEIA)

Since establishing the Centre in 2021, we have been focusing our efforts on trying to increase impact in key focus areas. First, we have targeted investment. We have been working closely with DEFRA and Innovate UK's innovation funding teams where they have been developing the Farming Innovation Programme, particularly those funding streams that will target support to farmers and growers to get involved in investigating their research priorities. We have advised on the evaluation of funding programmes and projects to support the funders to capture impact in more effective ways.

Another area has been to utilise the networks in our cross-university partnership to help understand the different activities and issues facing knowledge exchange and innovation in agriculture. There is substantial, well documented, fragmentation of research and farming knowledge, which hampers producers' effectiveness to innovate - if you can't easily find trusted (and relevant) evidence, it becomes much more of a challenge to improve your farming business. We work closely with groups working to make this landscape less fragmented, including running projects such as The Agricultural Universities Council (AUC) research strategy, mapping the innovation landscape to identify weaknesses and opportunities, and trying to connect the dots between initiatives.

At CEIA, our goal is to serve as a proactive force, pushing ideas into action when others may lack the time or mandate to do so.

JOINT RESEARCH STRATEGY FOR AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITIES

The Agricultural Universities Council (AUC) started in 2018 representing universities (including the RAU) that both teach and research agriculture. Alongside strategic research institutes, we deliver the lion's share of agricultural research

in the UK. Yet, while groups of universities team up on projects all the time, agricultural universities have not worked before as a whole sector. Over the past year, an investigation led by CEIA (on behalf of AUC) analysed industry and policy priorities, current research activities, and the sector's strengths and weaknesses. The AUC has developed a shared strategy that sets out, for the first time, steps they have agreed to take together to make our research as effective and efficient as possible.

The strategy responds to the major challenges facing agriculture. Research is vital, helping understand these challenges, and supporting innovation to address them.

While UK research is recognised as being world-leading, farmers and other stakeholders have longstanding concerns about the impact of publicly-funded agricultural research. So, rather than produce a wish-list of recommendations, AUC has set out the actions they are taking or intend to take, many with others, as a result of this process.

Scan the QR code to read more about the AUC and research strategy.



Executive Education and Professional Development



For over three decades the RAU has delivered world-class executive education programmes to professionals in the agricultural and land-based sector, in partnership with some of the industry’s leading organisations.

The University and the Institute of Agricultural Management have enjoyed a long-standing history together delivering the Leadership Development Programme. This unique three-week executive level policy programme takes delegates to Cirencester (leadership orientation), Brussels (global leadership insight),

Wageningen University and Research, Netherlands (agricultural policy and strategic leadership) and Westminster (leading through networking).

Last year was the 71st Advanced Course in Agricultural Business Management delivered on behalf of our partner, The Farmers Livery. It is the

industry’s leading management programme for business owners and senior managers.

In December the bi-ennial John Edgar Trust Management Development Scheme begins, which we organise and deliver over three weeks on the Trust’s behalf. The aim is to develop an individual’s skills and



abilities as they enter into rural business management.

We are also entering into a new partnership with the Agricultural Law Association (ALA) and will shortly be launching an Introduction to Agriculture & Forestry for Rural Professionals – a two-day residential course for ALA members. The purpose is to provide delegates with a fundamental understanding of the land-based element of the agricultural industry.

Our reach extends to organisations outside the sector and includes a number of banks. The RAU has worked with Lloyds Bank for over twenty years, delivering an Insight into Agriculture and the Rural Sector course to enable their relationship managers to better support and interact with their agricultural and agri-business clients.

The Insight into Agriculture (Farming for non-Farmers) course is aimed at business professionals with some previous knowledge or experience of farming, wishing to gain more insight. It combines classroom-based and practical learning, with field-based sessions forming an essential part of the course.

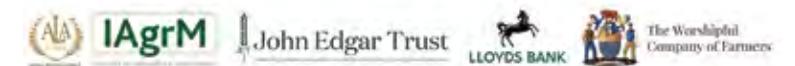


Our Wayleaves Officer courses (introductory, intermediate and advanced level) introduce delegates to the practices of the modern agricultural industry. Commodity prices, working methods, profitability and values of reasonable damage and loss are covered, as well as topical issues affecting land owners and managers.

In addition, we are working with RuRALink – a veteran-owned organisation created to provide consultancy services, career transition support and networking opportunities to ex-military personnel who aspire to work in the rural business sector.

We welcome all enquiries, whether you are an aspiring applicant or an inquisitive, prospective partner. Email: professional.development@rau.ac.uk

Scan the QR code for more information





We're all going on a Summer Scholarship

The Lycetts Summer Scholarship, now in its seventh year, has become a fixture in the RAU calendar. Founded as a way of offering students an insight into the world of commercial research and projects, as well as an insight into the insurance industry.

Ed Dillon and Molly Williams were our very first scholars in 2017, paving the way for the future with projects that addressed insurance for unforeseen weather events, and mitigating the psychological impacts of flooding on insurance claimants and their families.

2018's scholars drew on their own backgrounds, with Maisy Moseley's research looking at family farms and Harry Phipps's experience as a jockey informing his research into where stable staffing may come from in the future.

Lily Walker looked into the use of agri-tech to mitigate climate change in 2019, while Thomas Ind's focus was on rural crime and some of the measures that can be cost-effectively introduced to deter offenders.

In 2020 Rosie Smith delved into the psyche of farmers to answer the question "Insurance for the farming industry – what do farmers really want?"

Giovanna Boothby's 2021 project tackled the pitfalls and problems of insurance for contract works, home improvements and renovations,

highlighting the need to get the right policy for your project.

Last year Millicent Pardoe took on a topic about sustainable and environmental land management and the opportunities for Lycetts, while Sarah Orr considered the thorny issue of succession planning on family farms.

This year's scholars are tackling a new challenge; helping to research and launch brand-new Lycetts cover for carbon sequestration (Alexandra Godfrey) and rider protect (Destiny Tait).

Our partnership with Irwin Mitchell

Over this past year Irwin Mitchell has become an invaluable partner for us, helping us to provide some fantastic events for our alumni community.

THE NOVEMBER MEETING BREAKFAST

With Irwin Mitchell we were able to provide guests with a pre-race breakfast at The Ivy in Cheltenham before going off to enjoy the racing. This was a small event, allowing alumni invited to benefit from a valuable networking session over breakfast.



WOMEN IN RURAL BUSINESS

This was an inspiring event giving alumni the chance to network with like-minded professionals over afternoon tea at The Goring Hotel in London. Through some fantastic speakers guests gained an insight into a variety of topics with a focus on women in rural business.



ENGLEFIELD ESTATE WALK

In April alumni working in areas including estate management and land agency joined us at Englefield Estate home to Richard Benyon, Under Secretary of State at DEFRA and RAC Alumnus (class of 1987).

Estate Director, Edward Crookes and Head of Rural Property and Land James Meade led the group around key areas of the grounds including the Estate Yard construction project, the deer park, private water supply and the kitchen garden.

Celebrating the African Fellowship Trust

Founded in 2006, the African Fellowship Trust (AFT) was established to support agriculture and better land management in Africa through the award of fellowships for MSc study at the RAU. The ambition was to further their careers and influence in agriculture by strengthening leadership in agriculture and rural enterprise across Africa.



Attracting over £2million in funding from individuals, companies and government, they supported more than 90 students at the RAU, but after being dormant since 2017, the Trust is now winding up. The ethos and work of the Trust will be continued in a scholarship to support MSc dissertation research and travel for African students.

Here some past students share their experiences of the African Fellowship, and what they have gone on to do since leaving the RAU.

**Afonso Pedro Chibalo,
MSc Sustainable Agriculture
and Food Security (2013)**

“My career has been fantastic in terms of employment and participation of the development projects in Mozambique and in decision making for the project that I used to be leading. Since 2014 I have been involved in managing development projects related to livelihood restoration programs, which is mainly the resilience of agriculture producers facing dramatic climate change effects and other factors affecting food production in Mozambique.”

**Masimba Nyamanhindi,
MSc International Rural
Development (2015)**

“My career has progressed well, and this is wholly attributable to my qualification at the RAU. I am happy to share that I am now working with the Food Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations Palestine as a Reporting and Communications Specialist, based in Jerusalem.”

**Kagywabali Peter Bay,
MSc Sustainable Agriculture
and Food Security (2015)**

“My Study in the UK provided me with an opportunity to

network with friends across the globe, not only my cohorts; as for now, we remain connected, where we share developmental ideas. It is worth mentioning the AFT scholarship has made a great change in my life and in the community I live in.”

**James French,
MSc International Rural
Development (2016)**

“After leaving RAU, I have worked for various International Non-Governmental Organisations in Sierra Leone. Firstly, I worked for the

International Rescue Committee as Senior Human Resource Manager for seven years. Currently, I work for the Aberdeen Women’s Centre as the Human Resource Manager.”

**David Cheruiyot,
MSc International Rural
Development (2014)**

“The course provided me with a deep understanding of the challenges facing rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa. Career wise, I am now a rural development practitioner mostly undertaking monitoring and evaluation,

and social and environmental safeguards of projects implemented to change the rural communities.”

In November 2022, we were sad to hear the news that our alumnus, Honorary Fellow and Chief Executive of the AFT David Campbell passed away, you can read his full obituary later in Landmark.

Schöffel Country on Campus

At the end of last year, we had the opportunity to host Schöffel Country as part of their Schöffel Country on Campus campaign. The focus of the campaign was to encourage more school leavers into higher education in the land-based sector.



Check out the video Schöffel Country created



Kaleb Cooper launches new agricultural bursary with the RAU



The team spent time with four current students to learn what it is about the RAU and their course that they love so much. Students Anna, Dylan, Connie and Harvey are all from non-farming/agricultural backgrounds but are passionate about their love of the countryside. They want to help inspire the next generation to consider land-based subjects at university by sharing their experience at the RAU and why their degree courses are so valuable for the future of the industry.

The team at Schöffel Country followed the students around to discover what a typical day was like for a student at the RAU; attending lectures,

a farm walk, society meetings and drinks in the Tithe.

It was a fantastic experience collaborating with Schöffel Country on this campaign, particularly as their focus

was inspiring young people from non-farming backgrounds, which is an area we focus on through our widening participation work with UK schools and colleges.



Credit: Schöffel Country



Kaleb Cooper, the farming contractor who shot to fame overnight when he appeared on Prime Video's Clarkson's Farm, has joined forces with us to launch a new bursary for those looking to launch a career in agriculture.



Self-made agricultural entrepreneur and farm contractor, Kaleb, has been working in and around farms since he was a schoolboy and is a passionate supporter of UK agriculture and opportunities for young people to enter the sector.

Launching the bursary to students, he said: "Launching this bursary means so much, as it can support students who

want to pursue an agricultural career or who might be struggling to get into farming."

The annual bursary will provide £3,000 to support a student in exploring different paths into agriculture, as well as the opportunity for a work placement with Kaleb himself, or one of his industry partners, either during the course of their University studies, or as a gap year placement.

Open to RAU undergraduate students who are living in the UK, the bursary will open for applications in September with the first student receiving their award in early 2024.



A long, straight path lined with bare trees leading to a large building in the distance. The path is flanked by a grassy area and a fence on the left. The trees are tall and thin, with no leaves. The building in the distance is a large, multi-story structure with many windows. The sky is a pale blue, suggesting a clear day. The overall scene is a peaceful, well-maintained park or campus walkway.

ENTERPRISE

GRAND IDEA WINNER 2023



An innovative and sustainable project which will help wild swimmers and cold-water dippers to access cold water safely has been named as this year's Grand Idea award winner.

Set up by student **Chris Baker**, **Water Mate™** will offer a range of durable, effective and sustainably produced products, built from organic materials and recycled ocean plastic, to enable wild swimmers to know exactly how cold the water they are entering is, and how long they have been in for, thus keeping them safely within their own

limits while receiving all of the physical and mental wellbeing benefits being in open water provides.

Chris said: "The £5,000 Grand Idea prize will mean I can properly launch my business and take it from a concept to a reality. I am aiming to manufacture and market

Water Mate's first products in the UK this summer."

Now in its 16th year, the Grand Idea competition is part of our award-winning Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Programme which provides a supportive environment for students to develop and launch their ideas. The competition invites

students to pitch their business ideas to a panel of experts in a Dragon's Den-style event.

This year's Grand Idea judging panel consisted of retail consultant and Honorary Fellow Christine Cross; Former Dragon's Den contestant, food entrepreneur, and Honorary Fellow Levi Roots; and Graham

Pollard, Chief Executive Officer at the RAU; alongside two alumni, previous Grand Idea winner eco artist Jen Winnett, and previous Grand Idea finalist Scott Hill from Old Mill Accountants, which also sponsored the runner up's prize.

The runner up, who received a prize of £500 investment in her business, was Applied Equine Science and Business student Morgan Dutton whose business, Blazing Browbands, makes and sells bespoke equestrian products including various types of browbands, stirrup covers, and soundproof ear bonnets for horses.

Morgan said: "I started making browbands for fun back in 2014 when I was 12 years old. After I made a few for myself

and friends I decided to start advertising them on Instagram and they were really popular.

"I am really pleased to have been selected as the runner up in this year's Grand Idea competition. The support and access to resources that the Enterprise and Entrepreneurship team provides is exceptionally helpful for a young entrepreneur."

Chair of the judging panel, Christine Cross, said: "As ever, this year's contenders for the Grand Idea surprised, amazed, and delighted our panellists. In particular it was great to have two alumni of the RAU Grand Idea amongst the judging panel – proof of the impact this event has on young people's lives and fortunes."



News from the Vineyard

Earlier in the year you may have seen our very own Cotswold Hills Vineyard near Down Ampney featured on the Hairy Bikers' new series 'The Hairy Bikers Go Local'. In the series, Si King and Dave Myers travelled across the country connecting local restaurants to innovative local suppliers.



In the Cotswolds episode Si and Dave were on the hunt to find suppliers for a fine dining restaurant and hotel in Upper Slaughter. They visited the vineyard looking for a local wine that would pair well and balance out the rich ingredients on the restaurant's menu.

The Cotswold Hills project, part of the University's Enterprise and Entrepreneurship programme, gives students the opportunity to gain first-hand enterprise and employability

skills. The Hairy Bikers were impressed by the project calling it "a great idea" and were pleased to hear we are "looking to the future [of wine production at the vineyard] with the students' involvement."

The episode was great exposure for both Cotswold Hills and the RAU. Within just a few hours of the programme airing the Cotswold Hills team had sold almost £1,200 of wine and received many emails, social media followers, and orders.



Updates from Farm491 and the Cirencester Growth Hub

By Sarah Carr, Head of Business Innovation and Growth

Farm491 continues to provide bespoke support to AgriTech entrepreneurs across the UK. Our membership has continued to grow, and we are supporting a range of exciting businesses.

A big part of what we do here at Farm491 is joining the dots – we cannot support our members without our active network of investors, academics, advisors, students and many more.

We always love to collaborate and so any RAU alumni who would like to get involved with us would be more than welcome – whether you would like to get involved in testing and trialling, be a mentor to our members, or potentially even look to invest or partner with us.

Since opening in July 2018, the Cirencester Growth Hub has directly supported more than 500 local businesses, hosted over 200 business events and workshops, and is currently providing professional workspace to 40 SMEs.

If you'd like to learn more about either Farm491 or the Cirencester Growth Hub please get in touch: farm491@rau.ac.uk or scan the QR code.

We continue the theme of collaboration and "joining the dots" at the Cirencester Growth Hub which is co-located with Farm491 in the Alliston Centre.



A landscape photograph of a field at sunrise or sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. In the foreground, there is a low stone wall. In the middle ground, a goalpost is visible. The background shows a line of trees and a clear sky.

COMMUNITY & PARTNERSHIPS

Gloucestershire & District Agricultural Valuers Association Centenary Dinner



On Wednesday 15 March 2023, the Gloucestershire & District Agricultural Valuers' Association (GDAVA) celebrated its Centenary year with an AGM followed by drinks reception and dinner at the RAU.



In recognition of this milestone, members were joined at the drinks reception and dinner by Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal and Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence.

The GDAVA also welcomed the President, Junior Vice President and Secretary & Adviser of the CAAV, Deputy Lieutenant of Gloucestershire and Vice-Chancellor Peter McCaffery.

The incoming Chair, Mark Webb, said 'the GDAVA was delighted to welcome HRH The Princess Royal and Sir Tim Laurence to our dinner and for The Princess Royal to give a very informed speech about current matters of importance within our industry.'



The GDAVA is one of the largest of the 29 Local Associations of the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers (CAAV), which covers England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. It has many close links with the RAU, including a number

of student members. The GDAVA also co-hosts an annual tutorial for undergraduates and postgraduates alongside the RAU's Simon Smith where members tutor students on subjects relevant to the Land Management courses.





congrats

YOU DID IT CLASS OF 2022





Caroline Drummond MBE Obituary

Caroline Drummond was a pioneer of sustainable farming and food production, and the driving force behind the global charity LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming), which she led from its founding in 1991.

She was awarded the MBE for services to the agriculture industry in 2009, and served as a Governor of the RAU, then the Royal Agricultural College (RAC), from 2007 to 2013.

She was made an Honorary Fellow of the University in 2018 for her work as a passionate advocate of the greater public understanding of farming and of encouraging sustainable farming practices.

Throughout her long career with LEAF, she was widely trusted and always willing to take on even the trickiest issues faced in farming.

She was a driving force – a knowledgeable, caring,

and inspirational leader who dedicated her life to the agricultural industry and was a champion of sustainable farming.

One of her biggest achievements was the development and 2002 launch of the LEAF Marque initiative, the UK-based farm assurance scheme that recognises and labels fresh produce, meat and arable crops that are grown to approved environmental standards.

It is now in use in 19 countries, certifying 48% of all UK-produced fresh fruit and vegetables, with Waitrose backing the marque from 2007 and Tesco also adopting the scheme in 2021.

Affectionately known as “CD”, Caroline was also the pioneer behind Open Farm Sunday, the annual opportunity to show the true farming industry to the wider public, and as a champion of all things sustainable farming was rightly celebrated and cherished by the whole sector, receiving the British Farming Awards’ inaugural award for outstanding contribution to British agriculture in 2017. In 2019 she was named one of the Women Economic Forum’s “women of the decade”; the same year she received the Farmers Weekly Lifetime Achievement award.

Caroline passed away after a short illness in 2022.

David Campbell OBE FRAU Obituary

David, an alumnus of the RAC, studied the Diploma in Agriculture (1962). Subsequently becoming a journalist at Farmers Weekly, David later worked for OXFAM as Field Director in South and East Asia and Director in East Africa.

In 1985 he co-founded and then became Executive Director of Farm Africa. David and co-founder Sir Michael Wood started the organisation in response to the famine in Ethiopia with the firm belief that developing small-scale agriculture was the key to reducing rural poverty.



David was appointed a Visiting Fellow of the RAC in 2001, and helped establish the African Fellowship Trust (AFT) charity in 2006, that has since supported over 90 African Fellowships for postgraduate study and professional development.

David was Chief Executive and a Trustee of AFT from its inception.

In 2000, David was awarded an OBE for services to African farming. He was awarded an Honorary Fellowship for his significant and distinguished

contribution to the industries and professions associated with the work of the Royal Agricultural University in 2013.

David passed away peacefully on Sunday 27 November 2022, he is survived by his wife Caroline and four children.





A fond farewell to our Patron, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and welcoming a new King

Over this last year we said goodbye to our longest serving patron Queen Elizabeth II who became the Patron of what was then the Royal Agricultural College, in 1952, having taken on the patronage following the death of her father King George VI.

We have been delighted to welcome Queen Elizabeth II to our campus twice, most recently in March 1996, when she and Prince Philip visited for the College's 150th anniversary.

With the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, we welcomed a new King, His Majesty King Charles III. We have had the opportunity to host the then Prince Charles on a number of occasions over the years, in his role as President.

To commemorate the important roles they have played in the University's history, here are a selection of photos from the archives, taken during their visits to the campus.

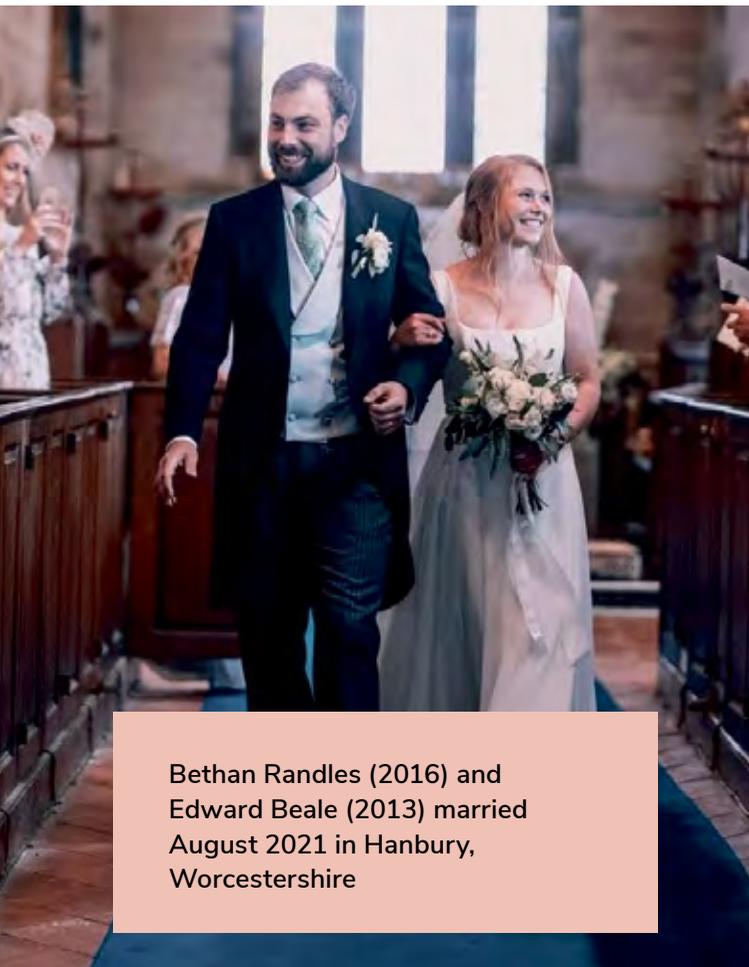


Just Married

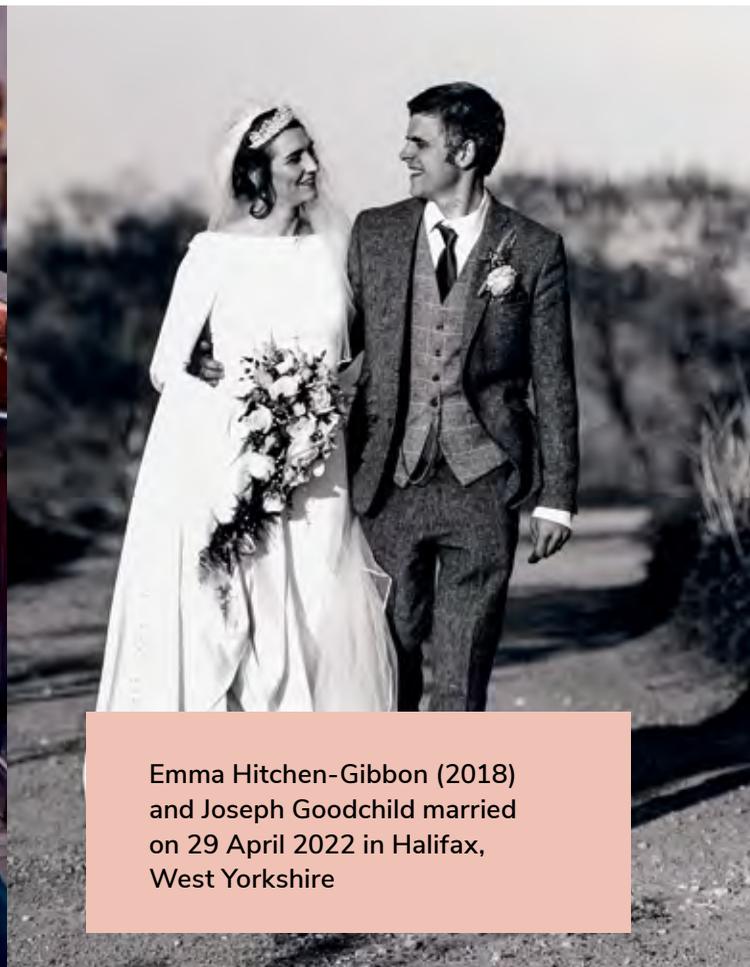
A highlight of Landmark magazine is sharing the weddings in the alumni community. We are delighted to announce the following alumni weddings which have taken place since the last edition of Landmark.



Teenu Thomas (2017) and her husband married in 2021 in India



Bethan Randles (2016) and Edward Beale (2013) married August 2021 in Hanbury, Worcestershire



Emma Hitchen-Gibbon (2018) and Joseph Goodchild married on 29 April 2022 in Halifax, West Yorkshire



Grace Reed and James Lindsay-Smith (both 2018) married on 14 August 2021 in Holt, Norfolk



Theresa Istenes and Ludwig Schinzing (both 2017), married on the 3 September 2022 in Styria, Austria

If you would like your wedding to be included in a future edition, please email landmark@rau.ac.uk

