

Professional:

Douglas
Bomford Trust



To help develop knowledge, new skills, techniques and capabilities,

Much is happening behind closed doors

Alan Plom, Secretary to the Douglas Bomford Trust, looks back over another three quiet months, although a lot has happened behind closed doors.

Keeping up appearances

The awards ceremonies and other opportunities, when we normally meet our sponsored students face to face, have either been deferred or held ‘virtually’. These are the highlight of the academic year when their hard work (and their tutors) is recognised and rewarded.

Cranfield’s annual ceremonies were held via Zoom in June and after an introductory video from Director of Education Tim Brewer and a welcome by Programme Director Monica Rivas Casado, sponsors and prize winners were invited to say a few words. At least I could congratulate Naomi Sandford-Dequincey who received

our prize for ‘the best student on an environmental theme course who best demonstrated the application of engineering and technology for sustainable agriculture’. Unfortunately, I was unable to ‘present’ our equivalent prize for an agricultural theme student to Inga Ósk Jónsdóttir due to a technical problem. We wish them successful careers.

Encourage young people into agricultural engineering

To encourage young people to consider a career in agricultural engineering the Trust sponsors IAgRE membership for more than 300 students each year. These include

postgraduate researchers and our Arkwright Scholars and we encourage them all to attend local Branch meetings. Barnabas met IAgRE’s President Paul Hemingway at the Western Branch AGM and enjoyed a technical talk on combine harvesters, so intends to retain his IAgRE membership.

The Trust is also looking for manufacturers to offer visits for our Arkwright Scholars (when permitted), or even discussions with company representatives, to give them an early insight into the industry. If your company can help, please contact the Secretary (details on page 39).

The Arkwright Engineering Scholarship Scheme



Sustainable agriculture was the theme of an interesting paper by Barnabas Pickford, one of our A- Level students sponsored through the Arkwright Engineering Scholarship Scheme. His thorough research and detailed report belied his age and stage of education. It is available on our website as an example of the quality of work being produced by our younger scholars. He maintained this high standard in his A-level project, designing and making a model of a 300-cubicle cow shed for his father's dairy farm. This will stand him in good stead for his MEng studies at Nottingham University and he believes our support helped him to gain his place.

As if remote schooling and waiting for A-level results to be adjusted were not enough of a mountain to climb, during lockdown Barnabas cycled the equivalent of the height of Everest (8848m), by riding up and down the hill near his school in Bath, in a single activity, without sleep.

Coincidentally, Trustee Richard Robinson has also ascended this hill (on foot!), so appreciates the sustained effort required over the 16 hours it took his 'mentee'. He raised over £2.2k for the charity 'Farm Africa'.

(See: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Barneys-EV-Attempt> .)

Mentoring

An important objective of the Trust is to help individuals develop and acquire knowledge, new skills, techniques and capabilities, as well as to maintain professional competencies. Trustees are allocated as mentors to all major projects and draw upon their industry expertise and knowledge to advise students (and their supervisors). They also hold review meetings periodically to monitor progress against agreed deliverables and milestones (assisted by the Secretary) to ensure 'value for (our) money'.

These meetings are being held virtually, and mentoring is not only carried out 1:1. For example, we held fortnightly (on-line) meetings with six Cranfield MSc students carrying out a Group 'horizon-scanning' project aiming to identify future innovations and priority topics for the Trust to consider funding. These culminated in another first for the Trust - a virtual 'Dragon's Den' when they had to 'sell' their findings to all our Trustees. They all admitted benefitting from the challenge. We look forward to working with next year's group on Phase Two.

The new aide-memoires developed to ensure consistency in selection and monitoring projects is reflected in the guidance on our website, explaining what we look for in applications. The assessment criteria and areas of interest were also publicised recently in an article highlighting sources of funding for postgraduate research projects in UK - see

<https://www.researchprofessional-news.com>

Trustees are mindful of the significant impact on individuals and academic institutions over the past nine months and as the potential for continued disruption worldwide is unknown, we will continue to be flexible on commitments in terms of outputs and completion dates.

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Meet a Trustee - Professor Mark Kibblewhite

As a long-standing Fellow and past President of IAgRE, Mark needs no introduction, but did you know he has also been a Douglas Bomford Trustee since 2014? This means he will have to stand down at our AGM in November, so now is an ideal time to say 'Thank You'. As our 'resident academic' on the Board, his wealth of research and business expertise has benefitted many students from around the world and he will be missed.

Mark's degree in chemistry, PhD in soil science and MBA from Cranfield University, led to a distinguished academic career. He became Professor of Applied Soil Science, Head of the Natural Resources Department and Director of the National Soil Resources Institute at Cranfield and is now their Emeritus

Professor of Soil Science. He is also Emeritus Research Associate of Landcare Research in New Zealand and well-known worldwide as a Chartered Environmentalist, Chartered Chemist and Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry. He chaired the European Soil Bureau Network of the EC Joint Research Centre and has authored more than 100 research articles, book chapters, technical commentaries and published reports.

On the business front, he was Head of Land Quality at the Environment Agency and MD of the Environment Division of Hyder Consulting Ltd (now Arcadis) in a former life, and is now a Director of his own company (MK Soil Science Ltd). His recent work has included technical support on soil management for the FAO

Global Soil Partnership, the European Commission, the European Environment Agency and the UN Economic Commission for Europe.

Mark would need an A4-sized business card to squeeze that lot in, but somehow he still found time between being a Trustee and vice-chair of the Dorset local Wildlife Trust and enjoying sailing to demonstrate a high level of commitment to the Trust and many of our sponsored research students. His own research is very relevant to many of our applicants and he has always been a quietly reassuring, positive and helpful mentor. We hope to be able to say 'farewell' to Mark at the next Board meeting in November.

Update on ex-Trustee, David White



We also hope to meet our ex-Trustee David White when (if!) we hold the Board meeting in November at Harper Adams, where he is a Senior Lecturer. Although David completed his term as a Trustee in November 2018, he is still acting as a project mentor and liaises with colleagues and students at HAU on our behalf.

Unfortunately, David suffered serious injuries in June, when he was hit by a car that had collided with another car further up the road. David was literally an innocent bystander - standing in a layby feeding his Shetland pony! He sent out this typically under-stated message from hospital soon after: "A bit crook but I am lucky to be alive. Broken arm and fractured ribs and sternum so replies from me might be a bit slow!" We later heard that he also suffered concussion, a

nasty compound fracture and nerve damage to his arm, as well as broken bones, ligament and soft tissue damage to his foot that may take six months to heal.

David is widely respected. In 2017 he received IAgRE's prestigious Award for his 'Contribution to the land-based Sector', recognising his (then) 35 years' work in education, training and research. During this time and since (including through the Trust), he has influenced many young agricultural engineers who have gone on to play key roles in design and management positions throughout the industry worldwide.

We are sure they will all join us in wishing David a speedy recovery. It will be a long time before he is 'firing on all cylinders' again, but he is already working with his students. Respect!

Twittering on.....

Please follow us on Twitter (**@BomfordTrust**) to keep updated, with links to relevant tweets, articles, webinars and other events.



Our website <https://www.dbt.org.uk/> has also been updated with our latest guidance on applications and new 'drop-down' menus to help access information on recent research and other activities.

You can also contact the Secretary by email:

enquiries@dbt.org.uk

or phone:

07951 527051