

Alan Plom, Secretary to the Douglas Bomford Trust (DBT) reports on recent activities of the Trust, sponsored students and other recipients of the Trust's welcome financial support.

TRUSTEES MEETING

Our bi-annual Board Meeting on 10 April was kindly hosted by Nottingham University and Trustees toured the extensive research facilities incorporated in the new Dairy Centre at Sutton Bonington campus, to see how the linked projects (co-funded with EPSRC) on 'image-driven' animal monitoring of dairy cows will work in practice.



MEET A TRUSTEE

Richard Robinson became a DBT Trustee at our AGM in November 2018. He immediately took on the role of mentor for one of our Arkwright Scheme (A-level) Scholars, Barnabas Pickford, who impressed Richard on a visit to his company Autoguide Equipment Ltd, justifying Barnabas' selection for our sponsorship.

Richard joined IAgRE in 1970 and was President from 2008 to 2010. He was awarded the title of Honorary Fellow in 2011, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the agricultural engineering industry ["for making interesting and unique products"!] and service to the Institution. He has also been involved with IAgRE's Young Engineer's Competition, as an organiser, sponsor and judge for many years.



AGRI-FOOD CHARITIES PARTNERSHIP STUDENT FORUM

The 'post-Brexit World' was the theme of Lord Curry's keynote speech at this important biennial event in DBT's calendar when he emphasised future career opportunities in agriculture. Held at the University of Reading's School of Agriculture, Policy & Development on 11 April, this provides an opportunity for students sponsored by AFCP's member charities to present their findings, meet and network with others.

Three of our successful PhD students gave presentations: Cranfield's Dr Alexandra Cooke (research on 'soil filter socks' and now working for Severn Trent Water) and Dr Iain Dummett ('strip tillage and soil ecology', now at Rothamsted), and Harper's Dr Anthony Millington ('using

X-Ray tomography to investigate soil properties', phase one of HAU's ongoing 'Tillage and Traction' project). They were joined by Reading's Nikolaos Koukiasas (who is nearing the end of his research on 'plant-specific weed control using an autonomous robot for pesticide application').

I also enjoyed a tour of the School of Agriculture's interesting greenhouse-based projects, studying crops ranging from tomatoes to cocoa and the impact of climate change.



ABOVE: Nikolaos Koukiasas, Iain Dummett, Alex Cooke, Alex Ansell, John McDonagh, Dimitrios Mallis and Alan Plom

WOMAN IN AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING

We are pleased to see further developments at HAU, with the launch of the 'Stellar Harper Engineers' (SHE) group in March. This group is the "brainchild" of Mech Eng student Anita Woolf, who was inspired by her research into women in engineering after

receiving a DBT Scholarship in 2018. Further DBT funding enabled her to attend the Women's Engineering Society (WES) Centenary Conference (at the Hendon RAF Museum, 15 March), "Celebrating the Past, Transforming the Future".

AGRI-TECH EAST 'POLLINATOR' EVENT

DBT-co-sponsored this event at Cambridge (25 April) on the theme of "Swarm Robotics – The agri-workforce of the future?" - or "fleet robots" as one speaker, 'Trustee-elect' Clive Blacker (CEO, Precision Decisions) prefers to call them as he prefers to avoid stigma associated with the word 'swarm'. This well-attended event generated useful discussion and contacts with leading researchers and businesses working on what was dubbed the 'Fourth Agricultural Revolution' and we look forward to supporting Agri-Tech East's forthcoming 'Young Innovator Forums' relevant to agricultural engineering too.

And finally....

If any of these projects might be of interest for a Branch meeting, please contact me via enquiries@dbt.org. More information on some of them will appear on our website and the criteria and form to apply to the Trust for funding are available on our website <http://www.dbt.org.uk/>.

You can also keep informed of the latest news on DBT-funded projects and related topics via Twitter @BomfordTrust and Linked-In. [Please tag us into anything that would be of interest to our contacts too.]