

Professional: The Douglas Bomford Trust

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Looking back to the future?

Douglas Bomford Trust Secretary Alan Plom looks back over the winter months and forwards to the New Year and the next decade:

The end of the year is not a quiet time for the Trust, being a period of evaluation and reflection for our Trustees. We traditionally hold our AGM in mid-November, when we welcome new trustees, discuss our strategy and review completed, ongoing and potential new projects for funding.

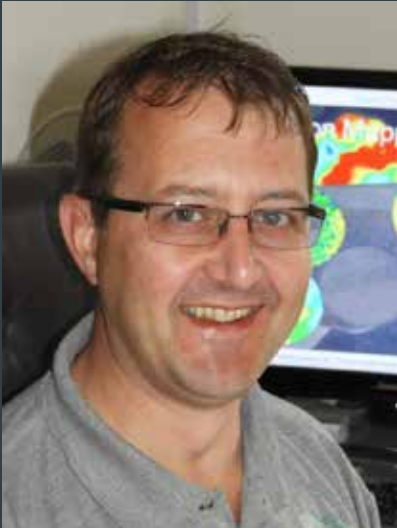
We traditionally allocate around two thirds (approx. £100k) of our total income (arising from around £5million invested by the Trust) to PhD research projects each year. These are usually co-sponsored with other charities, organisations or businesses. However, applications relevant to our core objective to develop and promote agricultural engineering have been declining.

As a result, the Trust will be taking a wider perspective and consider supporting more Masters' degree-related projects.

Reflecting the increasing breadth and interest in developing agricultural technology, we have recently sponsored projects at a wider range of academic institutions than those offering agricultural engineering courses - provided they are within scope of our broad aim, ie "to help advance the application of engineering and technology to achieve sustainable agricultural, food and biological systems for the benefit of the environment and mankind". [See www.dbt.org.uk for more information and application form.]

By Royal Appointment?

Our Board meeting in November was kindly hosted by the Royal Agricultural University (RAU), where we have sponsored a chair of Applied Farm Mechanisation and Management/lecturer in agricultural engineering, to encourage the integration of agricultural engineering into RAU's courses and research. Karen Rial-Lovera has been very effective in this role over the past two years and we are pleased that RAU will be retaining the post and continue working closely with the Trust after she moves on to pastures new, at Nottingham Trent University.



Meet a trustee...

Clive Blacker is our latest Trustee, having joined the board in November. He is looking forward to helping the Trust identify and mentor the next generation of engineers to shape our future and is obviously well-placed to do so. He is a Fellow of both IAgRE and the Council of the UK's Royal Agricultural Societies and is well-known as an advocate

of precision farming. Clive was an early convert, instrumental in his family farm adopting the technology in 1998 and he has continued to promote the benefits and explore the boundaries of what new technology can offer.

Following an Agriculture HND at Harper, Clive received a Nuffield Farming Scholarship to study precision farming in America and Australia in 2004. Through his own company Precision Decisions and in his role as the Department of International Trade's 'UK Precision Farming Specialist', Clive has supported UK businesses developing technologies and solutions to manage crops more profitably and has encouraged international investment into the UK.

Clive had the vision to support the development of 'Hands Free Hectare' and his advice to Kit Franklin that "there is no such

thing as a daft question" and "you don't learn until you try" were the foundations for their successful research, now evolving into 'Hands Free Farm'. Now working for Map of Ag, Clive is keen to see what can be achieved with data to unlock the real potential of machines and crops.

About The Douglas Bomford Trust

The objective of the Trust is to advance knowledge, understanding, practice, and competence in the application of engineering and technology to achieve sustainable agricultural, food and biological systems for the benefit of the environment and mankind.

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Awards and Scholarships

In addition to sponsoring an Award for 'Best Agricultural Engineering Dissertation' at RAU, this year sees our first scholarships awarded to RAU students. The Trust's Scholarship Scheme is intended to help develop individuals and encourage them into a career in agricultural engineering. We have awarded scholarships for many years to students at Harper Adams, but the competition is open to students studying a relevant subject, at any university.

It is always a pleasure to meet the applicants and explore their diverse ideas for projects and we look forward to meeting the 'chosen few' again at their forthcoming Scholarship/Award Presentation ceremonies. (More about them next time.) This is a competitive process and we can't sponsor everyone, although we have helped some in

other ways. Even those who are not successful find the experience helpful in preparing them for future interviews. We wish them all well with their career progression.

Some of the interesting projects funded by the Trust will be described in future editions of Landwards. A selection reflecting the diverse range of topics and projects funded by the Trust are also available on our website: www.dbt.org.uk.

