

Alan Plom, Secretary to the Douglas Bomford Trust (DBT) reports on recent activities and says "One of our objectives is to enable and encourage personal development and this article illustrates the diverse range of topics undertaken by students sponsored by the Douglas Bomford Trust.

## 'TIS THE SEASON FOR AWARDS . . .

The Trust's Award for the student on an Environment Theme course at **Cranfield University** who 'best demonstrated the application of engineering and technology for sustainable agriculture' this year went to **Eleanor Chandler**. The title of her project was '**Climate change impacts on macadamia production in Malawi**'. Unfortunately, she was not able to receive her prize in person.

At the **Royal Agricultural University (RAU)**, DBT's Chair, **Nick August** presented the Trust's annual prize for '**Best Agricultural Engineering Dissertation**' to **Oliver Pritchard**, for his undergraduate dissertation on '**Use of thermal cameras to accurately detect changes in body temperature of**

**young calves**'. Oliver was commended for his enthusiasm, skills and knowledge throughout his studies and he has provided the baseline for three new projects, to continue this exciting area of research at RAU. Oliver, (who suffers from profound deafness) said that he was looking for a future in technology/precision farming, but alongside his studies, he is a member of the GB triathlon team, and would also like to turn professional. We wish him great success, whatever path he follows.

**RIGHT: DBT Award recipient Oliver Pritchard with RAU's DBT-funded Chair of Agricultural Engineering, Dr Karen Rial-Lovera.**



Another DBT-supported student following a track of a different kind is **Matthew Torok**, who received a DBT Scholarship grant at **Harper Adams University (HAU)** this year to enable him to develop a **Lawn Mower Racing team** and share his expertise and enthusiasm for engineering with other students through this particular vehicle. He has spent a lot of time after his exams improving his racing mower including an extra 700rpm from the engine, new exhaust system and new tyres all making it more stable and roll less.

Obviously not one to let the grass grow under his feet, Matthew has also found time to work as a mechanic fettling racing cars including a Cooper Chevrolet at the Masters Historic Motor Race weekend at Brands Hatch, an Aston Martin DB2 at Thruxton, and HAU's rally car at the Goodwood Festival of Speed.

Another DBT **HAU Scholar Sam Scales** has also spent his prize money to boost his performance - by buying an iPad Pro with Apple Pencil Portfolio keyboard. This has made a major difference during a difficult year by helping Sam to integrate and improve how he records information, writes reports, produces sketches, presentations and design calculations.

**Liliana Castillo-Villamor** is a Geography and Earth Sciences PhD student at Aberystwyth University, aiming to develop a method to identify anomalies within crop plots using satellite imagery as part of a four-year, international collaboration funded through the International Partnership Programme run by the UK

Space Agency. She has just returned from an enjoyable and educational (DBT-funded) field trip to Colombia and Perú where she was also able to exchange knowledge and train local agronomists on intelligent monitoring of crops using 'satellite earth observation'.

A copy of Liliana's interesting report will be posted on the Trust's website. [www.dbt.org.uk](http://www.dbt.org.uk).



## MEET A TRUSTEE:

**Nick August** (Trust Chairman)

Nick has been Chair of the Board of Trustees since November 2018. Involved in farming all his life, he grew up on the 400ha family farm which he now owns and manages. Located in The Cotswolds he also runs a local contracting business, providing a wide-range of services. He is passionate about the land, soil health and carbon sequester, and has actively embraced conservation agriculture for the past decade, pioneering the use of Precision Farming by converting to Controlled Traffic Farming in 2008. Nick is a consultant, guest lecturer at UCL and RAU, and actively promotes this technology around the world. He is also a member of the 'PrecisionStory' team based at San Jose in California, promoting the benefits to businesses of the 'Internet of Things' and 'Big Data'. Nick has regularly attended workshops on precision farming and carbon sequester in Brussels and was a keynote speaker at the European Conference on Precision Agriculture in 2017.

Nick continues to be an active sportsman, playing for his local hockey team, climbs mountains and loves 'back country' skiing. In between all this, Nick has been an active Trustee since 2015, becoming Deputy Chair in 2016 and took over as Chair from Malcolm Crabtree in November 2018. He brings his enquiring mind and sound practical farming perspective to the Board, as well as his experience and enthusiasm for agricultural engineering and technology.

