**Vice President - Victoria Stead**

I first became aware of the Harper Adams Club when I saw a scholarship being advertised for students taking the extended foundation degree. I didn’t think that scholarships were awarded to students like me - in my thirties and with 4 children and no formal qualifications above a handful of poor GCSEs. But after some strong encouragement from one of my tutors, Nicky Hunter, I applied and miraculously to me, I was awarded my first ever scholarship. I also met Ros and Simon who from that day forward have extended the hand of friendship and support to me and many other scholars.

I would like to thank Ros and Simon for all the time and expertise they have given to the club over the years and although they are a very tough act to follow I hope that I can continue to serve the club in the same manner during my time as Club President and beyond.

The Club continues to support students through the scholarship program. You can read about these and what else has been going on at Harper further on in this edition of Harper Life.

Thank you to all the contributors to this edition of Harper Life, like our time at Harper it is the people and their stories that make it special and a truly unique place. Please keep your stories coming, it is great to hear what everyone has been up to. If you have any news you would like to include in the next Harper Life please send it to: theharperadamsclub@gmail.com.

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**The Harper Adams Club Committee 2023 – 2024**

- **President – Victoria Stead** – BSc Countryside and Environmental Management 2010-2015 / MSc Integrated Pest Management 2017
- **Vice President – Dale Allen** – BSc Countryside and Environmental Management 2011-2015
- **Committee Members** –
  - Ed Cooper – BSc Agriculture 1992 - 1996
  - Sarah Furness – BSc Agriculture with Land and Farm Management 1996 - 2002
  - Pam Jones – BSc Agriculture Food Marketing & Business 1999-2001
  - Alex Law – BSc Agriculture with Land and Farm Management 1999 – 2003 / MSc REALM 2007
  - Charlotte Playfair Hamney – BSc Rural Enterprise and Land Management 2004 – 2008
  - Sam Roskell – BEng Mechanical Engineering 2018-2022
  - Alice Whitehead – BSc Agriculture 2009 – 2013
  - Charlie Wright – BSc Agriculture 1992-1996
- **Ex Officio** – Honorary President – Ros Barsley – HND Agriculture 1970 - 1973
- **Honorary President – Simon Jones** – BSc Rural Environmental Protection 1996 - 2000

This year four esteemed Harper Adams Alumni retired as Trustees from the Harper Adams University Development Trust, Clarke Willis, Simon Jones and Joe Lawson had all served eight years on the Trust. Even better than that, through the Club, Ros and Simon have become the best of friends.

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**The Club’s Annual Lunch was held at Harper Adams on Saturday the 15th July 2023.**

Although the weather on the day was quite temperamental, the atmosphere around QMH was fabulous, so much so, some people were reluctant to leave at the end of the day.

With attendance approaching 80, it was the largest annual gathering for some years, Around 40 alumni stayed overnight in halls, spending the Saturday evening reminiscing in the Welly Inn.

Numbers were boosted by a fantastic flock of Poult’s from 1963, a herd of HND Agrics from 1973 and a further group of ex-students from 1983.

A superb lunch was provided by the Harper Adams University Catering Department and thanks were made to the University Staff who provided talks and tours around campus. Joint Club President, Simon Jones, welcomed all alumni to the event while the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Michael Lee, gave an informative update on developments at the University. Many thanks to Catherine Baxter, Doris Taylor and the student ambassadors for their guided Campus tours.

Here are a few pictures from the Club Lunch in July:

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**Next year’s Club lunch will be on Saturday 6th July 2024, giving all Harper Adams alumni a chance to meet up on campus.**
An update from Vice Chancellor, Professor Ken Sloan

It is fast approaching two years since I took on the role of Vice-Chancellor at Harper Adams University. I know they say time goes more quickly when you get older but this is going fast! Much has happened over the past year in terms of what we have done and what we are planning to do. Hopefully this short piece will bring you up to speed.

Firstly, we were awarded World Leading Specialist Teaching Status by the Office for Students. This is important because it not only affects our funding but it also stays with us for the next five years. Secondly, we were recently awarded Gold overall in the Teaching Excellence Framework. That makes three golds in a row – I don’t think we saw sustained performance like that before! We performed very well in the STEM cluster for the government’s Knowledge Exchange Framework which looks at our relationships with business and also the impact we have in our region and on our local economy. We were named Inaugural Specialist University of the Year 2024 by the Times/Sunday Times and we were the highest ranked modern university in a new league table produced by the Daily Mail.

What does all that mean? In reality, it reflects a lot of hard work, outstanding achievements and also the power of the relationships that have been built. Whether it is my academic, professional services or technical colleagues, our fantastic students, our committed governors, our talented and supportive alumni, our generous donors, or our impressive and varied industry partners, everyone has contributed to these moments of recognition and I am truly grateful. Every university hopes that the perceived value of the degrees they award increases in value over time. I hope that you can be proud of some of these achievements, as well as taking some credit for what you have done to support us in doing so.

Our students continue to impress and inspire us. There are too many awards and prizes won to list them here. Take it from me, they have continued the Harper tradition of taking on every university in every type of accolade and award and in most cases came out on top. I have enjoyed my many student interactions over the years, including fulfilling my role as President of Harper Ireland, I am Irish and British dual national after all. Our students have continued to raise funds for many different charities across the UK and the wider world. This year, perhaps the most poignant was the support they have given to the Eadon Family who brought Len’s Light to campus in memory of their son. Their actions have reminded us how many people from our communities are lost to suicide and also that we should encourage people never to go silent, and to reach out when times are at their darkest and loneliest.

In July 2023, the Board of Governors approved the University’s new Strategic Plan Together We Will Make The Difference. This sets out our ambitions going out to 2030. It confirms that our core purpose is excellent education and research with enterprise and impact. This is important because it continues Harper’s tradition of being naturally collaborative and focused on delivering real impact and change. The Plan also has five goals which are: Inclusive, Globally Connected, Influence, Community, and Sustainability. These are hopefully self-explanatory if you want to see how they come together, watch this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GoLJn2iQ7Q

In September 2023 we said goodbye to our University Secretary, Dr Catherine Baxter. Catherine has worked hard to champion our alumni in the University and to stay connected to many; she also served as Secretary to the Development Trust. I am delighted to confirm that Kate Baker has taken over as University Secretary and Doris Taylor is now the University’s Director of Development and Alumni Relations (including serving as Secretary to the Development Trust). We thank Catherine for her service and wish Kate and Doris well in their respective roles. Reach out to Doris if you want more information.

Looking forward, there is a lot going on. We have announced the building of a new Institute of Animal Diagnostics and Health which we will locate on the NPeP just outside Newport. We are also developing a digital and data education hub as part of the new Station Quarter development which is being built next to the railway station in central Telford. We hope that by investing in our local area it will demonstrate the importance of our local community but also better connect them to the vital agendas we research and teach.

On the campus we are working through a new Master Plan to guide our development of the campus and the Future Farm in the years ahead. Whether we are installing new state of the art equipment, building new halls of residence, enhancing the lived and working experience that our community has, or working to achieve circularity in how we use the resources from the farm to heat the campus, we want to make sure that we are delivering a positive and engaging experience for everyone who lives, works and visits here.

We live in an age of contention. This relates to many things, not least to the choices we make as we work out how best to feed a burgeoning human population whilst enabling the planet and its inhabitants to thrive. The University has a major role to play in this. Firstly, to explore and innovate. That means extending the impact of what we already do and know, but ploughing into new areas. Some of which are likely to be contentious. The second is to cling to the evidence. We need to avoid spurious unfounded claims and what is good for us and what is not. We need to develop evidence and share it widely. That is what we have always done and we will continue to do so in the future.

I am pleased to confirm that work is almost complete on the new Peace Garden which has been built near to the Main Building. We hope that it provides a place for everyone to reflect on and remember those students and colleagues we have lost over the years, as well as providing a space for quiet time. It is available now but will be opened formally in the Spring Term.

I will end with a reference I shared at Graduation this year. I really do love graduations! I shared that we rediscovered in a wonderful scrapbook compiled by the College’s first Principal HF Foulkes, a Harper College Song was written in 1902 with music composed by the Principal’s wife, and lyrics by R.J. Hurdle, a staff member at the time. It was wonderful to hear our musicians playing the song in the 2023 ceremonies. Let me share the final parts of the song which, I hope, remind us 121 years later, what we still have in common. Before I do that let me thank Ros Barsley and Simon Jones for their dedication and commitment as part of the Harper Adams Club Committee as they stand down from their positions. They have certainly represented you well.

Little Dulce (1902)
So, as we work and play together,
May we always hold in view,
The motto Utile Dulce
May we always hold in view,
And with that gold untarnished,
And with that gold untarnished,
Those colours of blue and gold.
And with that gold untarnished,
And with that gold untarnished,
The colours gold and blue
And with that gold untarnished,
And with that gold untarnished,
That is what we have always done
And with that gold untarnished,
And with that gold untarnished.
I wish you happiness and success at what for many is a challenging time. We are here for you and if you have ideas or wish to support us in the development of the University, please reach out to me.

For now, Thank you for everything you do to support Harper Adams.

Professor Ken Sloan, Vice-Chancellor
Harper Adams Club Scholars 2023

Stuart Rowlands - Final Year Scholarship

Firstly, I would like to thank you and the Harper Adams Club members for their sponsorship during my final year. The confidence gained from being selected and the financial assistance was a huge boost in finishing my undergraduate degree in Rural Property Management.

I mention confidence as when I was applying to study at Harper Adams, I was not very confident that I would be successful with my application. I was looking to find a new career path after serving 10 years as a Royal Marines Commando, applying to university was a leap of faith. In fact, I applied for deferred entry, waiting to be accepted before putting in my notice. However, I was successful and my time as an undergraduate finished in an incredibly confident boosting manner having received a scholarship from the Harper Adams Club, gaining a BSc (Hons) degree, placing top of my year and receiving an award from Tillhill Forestry. These achievements were far beyond what I had hoped to accomplish, making it clear that I made the right choices in my choice of career path and in choosing Harper Adams University.

The financial assistance from the scholarship allowed me to focus on finishing the year strongly as it meant that I could spend more time on studying and exam preparation rather than spending time generating an income. At home I have a supportive wife and two young children so you can imagine the financial pressures that brings and the complex balancing act my family life demands. The financial assistance made a huge difference to me.

Combined, the confidence I have gained, and the financial assistance from this scholarship helped me achieve my potential at university. This has also afforded me the opportunity of securing a PhD studentship here at Harper Adams University.

My involvement with the RCF began after taking part in a roundtable discussion in collaboration with Aldi focusing on the barriers young people face when entering the agricultural sector. This topic holds a special place in my heart, having grown up in Croydon, South London, with absolutely no family or friend links to agriculture and starting my farming journey from the bottom up. Since then, I have spoken on their behalf at Groundswell Agricultural Conference and participated in their “Opening the Gate” webinar series, aiming to encourage school and college leavers to consider a career in agriculture.

The day started early with a 5:30am breakfast meeting at the charity’s office in Cavendish Square, London, and with many roads closed for the celebrations, there was an eerie feeling of quiet before the storm. By 8:30am we were seated in the Queen Victoria Memorial Grandstand directly opposite Buckingham Palace, with palpable, with people chatting, passing food around and encouraging cheery sing-alongs of Sweet Caroline and Beatles hits while we waited for the action to start. Despite the persistent rain and cold, the atmosphere in the crowd was palpable, with people chatting, passing food around and encouraging cheery sing-alongs of Sweet Caroline and Beatles hits while we waited for the action to start. At around 10:30am the King and Queen came past for the first time on their way to Westminster Abbey, and then again on their way back - we were astonishingly close to their gold carriage, and it felt as though they were looking directly at me.

Another highlight was seeing William, Kate and the children waving as they made their way past. My day ended with a live appearance on BBC News with Stacey Dooley and Katty Kay, discussing my involvement with the RCF and my research with Farms for City Children (FFCC), sponsored by the Worshipful Company of Butchers, evaluating the impact FFCC has on the young people who visit their farms. This was my first time on TV, and although extremely nerve wracking to have my face broadcast live all over the world, it was a thrilling experience which will absolutely stick with me forever. We discussed the coronation, the £4 festival poncho I’d invested in for the day which did a brilliant job of keeping me dry, and the impressive horsemanship of one of the riders with a runaway horse in the procession.

This experience would not have happened without Harper Adams - it was originally Harper who put me in touch with the RCF and began the chain of events. As I heard in a speech recently at my master’s graduation ceremony, Harper Adams University is like the Hotel California – you can check out, but you can never leave.

I’d like to take this opportunity to thank the Harper Adams Club whose generous support in awarding me the Postgraduate Scholarship has provided me with invaluable support when completing my studies.
News of old students

Emma Bailey-Beech (nee Beech) 1998

I recently took my elderly mother to visit her friend from university - their alumni news helped jog her memories of times long forgotten. Most of her friends, who are all into their 90’s weren’t able to submit anything - a mixture of ability and the bewildering technology, so it sadly just indicated if they were still alive or not. This got me thinking about marking 25 years since I left Harper with a brief update from me!

After 11 years working at Defra in London, I moved to Wales (Montgomery). I secured home working posts at AHDB and then NSF, and after being made redundant, found myself back at Defra in 2019. I’m currently on an outward secondeement to Red Tractor, which I am completely loving - I had no idea how much work goes on behind the scenes to ensure British produce is safe, traceable and farmed with care... whilst remaining achievable to the majority of producers instead of being a very niche scheme (no matter how much farmers complain!), RT also sponsors a Harper Student, which keeps the network fresh.

My girls (12 and 9) have two ex-Harpers as their godparents – Jenny (Booth), who is again finding favour with cereal varieties which was shown almost inevitable. Eg: Triazole fungicides, pyrethroid insecticides.

1: The repeated use of pesticides with similar modes of action have and continue to show that ‘resistance’ or at least ‘tolerance’ is almost inevitable.

2: The adoption of ‘blends’ of cereal varieties which was shown to be an unsuccessful practice in many trials in the 1980’s and early 1990’s and yet is again finding favour with some farmers.

If we do not learn from our mistakes we are doomed to repeat them!

I wish the current and future farming generations every success but urge them to learn from our mistakes.

Harry Harrington
Pen-y-lan, Tregoyd, Brecon, Powys LD3 0SS


Those from my era will either have reached the end of their tenure or shortly be doing so.

I’ve had almost 50 years in agriculture and whilst I view this time with considerable pride and satisfaction I am rather concerned that the current farming generation has not learnt from our mistakes and consequently appear to be heading for similar outcomes. Two examples in the arable sector spring to mind:

representatives from HAAC
L-R back Row: Ed Roach, Simon Jones, Kate Aspey, Ed Cooper (Cooperman) Keith (Keithy Keith) Younger, Beezy Rees Williams, Rachel Lea (Dizzy) and her husband Ian Lea. Front row: Charlie Wright (Rockstar), Tim Whitworth (DJ Tim).

Charlie Wright BSc Agriculture 1992-1996

Adding to the recent trend of Harper grads holding birthday bash’s for their 50th’s, Charlie Wright held a gathering for old HAAC mates, his local farming fraternity, school mates and locals - it all went swimmingly...

Live music provided by Sneaky Feelin’, a rock and indie covers band, the hog roast provided by Allen Farms Ltd (next door neighbours) and held at The Lord Nelson in Winthorpe, near Newark. As per tradition several buckets of Sneaky B started in the evening, and some of us drank past sunrise until 4.15am after we were thrown out of the pub.

Until the next time folks!

Iain Skinner BSc(Hons) FRICS FALA MAPM (REALM 1993)

I was one of the first cohort of students to graduate from the BSc(Hons) REALM course in 1993 (30 years ago...) where did that time go!

Having had a career as a Chartered Surveyor, working in private practice and for the Ministry of Defence, Forestry England, Surrey County Council and the Environment Agency, I took the opportunity to set up Skinner Holden Property Advisors in 2016.

Based near Midhurst in the South Downs National Park we provide planning, valuation and strategic real estate advice to Charities, trustees, executors, companies, governmental organisations and families across the south east of England.

I became a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in 2021 and a Fellow of the Agricultural Law Association in 2022.

In 2022 I also took on a directorship of the South Downs Commercial Organisation, currently focusing on turning around the Seven Sisters Country Park near Eastbourne.

The new website www.skinnerholden.co.uk will launch this week.

It does provide potential customers with information about the services we offer. However, in addition it regularly provides articles and information useful to all those studying in the rural land sector.

Anne Emerson, Don Walls, Maggie Powell (NDP 1984/86)

Left to right Anne Emerson (Stubbbs ), Don Walls, Maggie Powell (Teague) Anne was staying with Maggie and we met at the Swan Inn Aston Midsnow. We were students in 1984/86 taking the NDP.

The 1958-1960 intake

I thought you might be interested to learn that of 10 friends from the above intake 6 of us are still alive and kicking! Of the four who have sadly passed away, three: Mike HoodCree from Kent, Chris Sardeson from Lincoln, and Hayden Lloyd from Hereford all died earlier this year. The six of us left are:- myself (Geoff Payne), Michael Oliver, Robert Hewitt, Neville Beeston, Brian Chorlton and David Wain.

Until Covid and the lockdown hit us we had been meeting up on a regular basis since 1961. I might add that we all look upon our time at Harper with a fondness together with many memories of the fun and camaraderie that we experienced in our two years, Should anyone from the same intake wish for more info of the friends mentioned I would be only too pleased to oblige: payne120@btinternet.com or write to: Geoff Payne, Cranebrook Farm, Hilton, Lichfield, WS14 0EY or phone 01543 480744.

Representatives from HAAC

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John M. McBride, NIPH and HAAC 1959-1961

At a recent New Zealand Poultry Industry conference, held under the auspices of the NZ Branch of the WPSA, I was honoured to receive the New Zealand Poultry Award for 2022, acknowledging my contribution to the industry since I and my family arrived from Northern Ireland in 1973.

This coincided with a paper I presented outlining the history of the New Zealand poultry meat industry from the first introduction of chickens to the country by the explorer James Cook in 1773. Quite a challenge! In my reception speech for the Award I was able to confirm that my attendance at Harper Adams and the National Poultry Institute really fired my enthusiasm for poultry production, and prepared me thoroughly with the ability to both adapt and still contribute to the fast changing nature of the industry.

At the age of eight-seven I have now ‘officially’ retired, but the memories of my days at Harper are as fresh as ever, and remind me of how valuable they really were.

New Zealand Poultry Award 2022

John Marshall McBride

John Marshall McBride is an independent poultry consultant based in New Plymouth. In 1969, I achieved the National Diploma in Poultry rearing of a two-year full-time course at the National Poultry Institute in the UK. I was involved in most aspects of poultry production in New Zealand until 2017, when I, as the requests of the National Poultry Association, returned to New Zealand. During his time with the Corporation, new legal reforms, he held several management positions in the Taranaki region, helping to develop many of the new poultry management practices that were then shaping the industry.

In 1965, he formed his own advisory business, specializing in Resource Management issues and Welfare Management, and negotiated on behalf of the industry with Regional and District Councils during the drafting of their Resource Management Plans. Between 2005 and 2013, John was an author with the WPSA for its ‘Birds 101’ standard programmes for poultry operators around New Zealand, and, working on the newly launched training modules available for poultry farmers throughout the region and assisted in the marketing of these programmes. From 2013 to 2016, I represented the industry on the NZ High Deficiency Management Board, although the impact of interest towards on the poultry industry, as a Minister of the WPSA, I had presented papers at the Association’s conferences, initially on Resource Management schemes, and, in 2013, I had been a speaker twice at the National poultry industry in the environment.

John has undeniably given magnificent service to New Zealand poultry industries and I am a very deserving recipient of this highest award.

Khaloud Ali, Master of Science Degree (MSc) in Entomology at Harper Adams in 2016

I completed a Master of Science Degree (MSc) in Entomology at Harper Adams in 2016 and graduated with Distinction and with the Royal Society of Entomology Award for Excellence in Entomology. I then moved to Canada to pursue a PhD program in Plant-insect Ecology at the University of Saskatchewan (USask).

My doctoral journey was also rewarding, as I received ten awards from numerous Canadian institutions throughout. I graduated from USask with high honours in 2022 and based on my academic merits, I was offered a Post-Doctoral Fellowship from the Department of Plant Sciences (USask) right after graduation.

As a postdoc, I carried out more research studies in the field of Plant-Insect Ecology in addition to mentoring and supervising both undergraduate and graduate students. I was soon promoted to a Research Assistant and Lecturer position based on my competence as a postdoc.

I am currently conducting more Plant-Insect ecological studies, supervising more undergraduate and graduate students, and teaching Entomology and Plant Protection courses in the Plan Sciences Department. I am also aspiring to hold a professorship in Plant-Insect Ecology once I gain enough research and teaching experience.

David Pearce

NDP 1988-60

Is there anyone from the NIPH NDP course in 1958 to 1960 still around? Would love to hear from them.

Ian Michell - SU Bar Manager 1992/3

While talking with Harper friends at my 50th, it has been 30 years since some of us started at Harper and now I have just completed 27 years with Flamingo Group as the Group Technical and ESG Director.

We talked about what we have done in our careers, we got on supporting and developing others in the world.

Luckily at Flamingo our motto is making a difference in Horticulture every day and doing the right thing has been in our DNA from the beginning.

We are looking for new Technical and ESG people in our Global business supporting 25,000 people and feeding/educating over 6000 children per day. If you are a current or past student looking for an exciting career in Horticulture, Flowers, Plants and Produce please get in touch: www.Flamingo.net

Chris Morris HND 1971-74

I retired from Genus breeding early in 2020 and have developed several other interests – a regular walking group and Ashbourne Probus Club, a group for retired and semi-retired businessmen from all walks of life – this has ‘widened my world’ and I became President and am now currently Membership Secretary. Also volunteering for two farming charities within Derbyshire.

Sincerely hoping that 1971-79 HND will have a reunion over the Alumni weekend, 6th July 2024. If you have been ‘off the radar’ and would like to reconnect, please email cgmorris2011@gmail.com.

Eileen Clark 1963-1965

I have lived in Cumbria for the past 40 years arriving here to work in ADAS (Poultry Husbandry) in Carlisle and then retiring to remain in the County. Our 60th anniversary celebration took place at Harper this year which I missed owing to house moving. I have downsized to an apartment still in the same Village.

I was deeply sorry to learn Barbara Tapper (nee Hunt) attended the celebration but died a few days after returning home. I convey my thoughts and good wishes to colleague/students of those days,

Eileen Clark

Pictures from 1962 – 64 – Who do you recognise?

Khaloud Ali, Master of Science Degree (MSc) in Entomology at Harper Adams in 2016

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Is there anyone from the NIPH NDP course in 1958 to 1960 still around? Would love to hear from them.
Harper Life Nov 2023

Cath Smith BSc, Ag An Science 93-97

A meet up in Wales for the weekend of 16th September 2023, 30 years since starting at Harper Adams. Fantastick weekend catching up with good friends, plenty of laughs and stories shared.

L: R: Sarah Pennington (nee Wiadon) BSc Agri Food 93-97, Geoff Lawrell BSc, Ag 93-97, Caroline Goodchild (nee Boyle) BSc REP 93-97, Maria Carpenter (nee Bull) HND Ag, Eng 93-96, Cath Smith BSc, Ag An Sci 93-97, John Booth BSc, Ag An Sci 93-97, Anna Booth (nee Goringe) BSc Ag An Sci 93-97, Hadleigh Kirby HND Ag 93-96, Linda Kirby (nee Ashdown) BSc Ag An Sci 93-97

John Hazell 1963-65

Having served 5 years in the RAF working on aircraft, I went to Kesteven Farm Institute to do my NCA. Agriculture had been part of my life having grown up on a small family farm. After a short time as assistant farm manager near Taplow, I joined Unilever’s Research in the cattle nutrition unit at Colworth House in Bedfordshire.

This was more like a university without students. Wanting to teach science to agricultural students it was not a big step to become Experimental Officer at the Mechanised Unit of the National Institute for Research in Dairying at Shinfield.

Institute for Research in Dairying at Shinfield. My next post was Deputy Head of Agriculture, I did the first year teaching practice at Ashkan Bryan, where I was later to lecture.

Having realised that I was more interested in the Science of Agriculture, I did the first year BSc Agricultural Science at Leeds. With no expected grant I left after a lovely 1st year of Chemistry, Botany and Zoology, and so became Experimental Officer at the Mechanised Unit of the National Institute for Research in Dairying at Shinfield.

As I had thought I would like to teach science to agricultural students it was not a big step to move into prep school science, which was just becoming an important subject for prep schools. I should have been able to teach biology in secondary schools as some of the Cet Ed students did, but for some reason they said I had to do another 3 years training! As the Science ‘Expert’ in the school I certainly learned a lot of Science.

My next post was Deputy Head of a larger school, head of Science as well as computers, which I loved, when they came along. I have followed the progress of Harper over the years plus a 2015 visit. I still read New Scientist, but have to pay for it myself! At 86, I still keep a watch on the changing fortunes of agriculture, as well as keeping up with the advances of the broad spectrum of all the sciences.

AMBA 1982 Reunion after 40 years

Dave Allsop, Anne Glassford, Ken Greetham, Mark Lee, Sue Menhenwick, Martin Peace, Ann Rees, Ticky Fletcher, Tim Scott, Mark Stephens, Helen Strange, Owen Woodfield.

The Black Tie Breakfast Club

It was formed primarily as an excuse to keep connected when we left Harper. It’s certainly achieved that, 40 years on.

What does the meeting involve?

laughs, fines, numerous complicated rules, plus much more much. Perhaps we will have our 40th meeting back where it started at Harper.

Andrew Farr, 0417 940346 Afarr@crg.com

Nick Green Agri Food Marketing & Business Studies 1995 - 99

During my first year as Head of Commercial at LettUs Grow, an aeroponic technology company based in Bristol, we’ve participated in many events as far afield as Dubai and Las Vegas, as well as some closer to home too. However a recent event we were invited to present at in Bordeaux came with a twist. Their Royal Majesties King Charles and Queen Camilla were in attendance!

We were informed that the Department for Business and Trade had highlighted our company as a shining example of exporting Agri-Tech from the UK to France and the EU more widely.

Aeroponics has the ability to address water scarcity problems, which are a current concern for the French Government, and so our presence seemed like a good fit for the event.

Then came the tricky part! We had no more than three weeks to plan, could tell no-one what the event was, and yet somehow had to get ourselves and our equipment to the Place de la Bourse in the centre of Bordeaux. Set up was another fraught few hours which involved what3words, secret pass-phrases, and attempting to evaluate whether our basil was fit for a King (it is). But by the time the gates were open, everything was running smoothly.

We landed a lucky spot, sandwiched between free samples of Pernod-Ricard and Tyrells Grapese! The event itself was very well attended by politicians, business leaders and, of course, Their Majesties. It was brilliant to be able to talk through our technology, the issues surrounding agriculture in the region, and the potential impact aeroponics could have.

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The Place de la Bourse in the centre of Bordeaux. Their Royal Majesties King and Queen of the UK had been invited to attend the event by the French Government, and our technology was seen as a shining example of agri-tech from the UK.

Angela Lerwill (1977 to 1980 AMBA)

Angela Lerwill published her first book in June 2023, Tales of a Sussex Family Farm. It details her parents’ enduring battle to keep their heads above water, on a small mixed farm between 1949 and 1997 in West Sussex.

Quitting was never an option, they just soldiered on regardless.

Graham Harvey, the former Agricultural Story Editor of the Archers describes it as ‘funny, sad and inspirational’.

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AMBA 1982 Reunion after 40 years

Dave Allsop, Anne Glassford, ken Greetham, Mark Lee, Sue Menhenwick, Martin Peace, Ann Rees, Ticky Fletcher, Tim Scott, Mark Stephens, Helen Strange, Owen Woodfield.

The Black Tie Breakfast Club

It was formed primarily as an excuse to keep connected when we left Harper. It’s certainly achieved that, 40 years on.

What does the meeting involve?

laughs, fines, numerous complicated rules, plus much more much. Perhaps we will have our 40th meeting back where it started at Harper.

Andrew Farr, 0417 940346 Afarr@crg.com

Nick Green Agri Food Marketing & Business Studies 1995 - 99

During my first year as Head of Commercial at LettUs Grow, an aeroponic technology company based in Bristol, we’ve participated in many events as far afield as Dubai and Las Vegas, as well as some closer to home too. However a recent event we were invited to present at in Bordeaux came with a twist. Their Royal Majesties King Charles and Queen Camilla were in attendance!

We were informed that the Department for Business and Trade had highlighted our company as a shining example of exporting Agri-Tech from the UK to France and the EU more widely.

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YOUR HARPER LIFE -

Reminiscences of student experiences over the years – if you would like to submit something or know of someone who we should include in the next edition of Harper Life, please send it to: theharperadamsclub@gmail.com

How Harper changed my life and created Warner’s Distillery - the world’s leading Farm Born distillery!

My first Harper experience was the 1995 summer ball, I was 17 and the event blew my mind. I knew Harper Adams was the place for me and I started in 1997 for an HND in Agri Food Business which I somehow managed to pass and then top up to degree. You get out of Harper what you put into it, and I loved my time there. The experiences, friendships, comraderie and revelry with a group of like-minded people from around the British isles and beyond.

I was lucky enough to have a placement year in Tanzania and Kenya buying coffee which became my summer job also in the subsequent years. I somehow managed to pass and then top up to degree. You get out of Harper what you put into it, and I loved my time there. The experiences, friendships, comraderie and revelry with a group of like-minded people from around the British isles and beyond.

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It was an amazing year that really set me up for work due to the wide variety of situations and tasks required from the role, from event management, academia and student welfare, no day was the same.

I also met my wife Tina who is also now my business partner like many agricultural couples. Tina comes from a potato farm in Ireland and forged a career in finance before deciding to come and help me at the distillery.

We launched Warner’s Distillery in 2012 as a farm diversification project, with a mission to save the world from mediocre gin. We are now the world’s leading Farm Born distillery, exporting to over 30 countries and growing as much of our ingredients on the farm as possible, with a focus on increasing biodiversity. What we do is not rocket science; we use the best ingredients, the best equipment, and the best process to make epic drinks in harmony with nature.

We created the flavoured gin explosion in the UK with our seasonal natural gins, most famously the first Rhubarb gin in the world, often copied but never beaten! We go toe to toe with the global giants like Diageo and who specialise in value engineered, mass produced products with huge marketing budgets, so the deck is not stacked in our favour but I am a firm believer in authenticity, quality and doing business right which hopefully resonates with consumers.

We recently acquired our BCorp status putting us in a handful of businesses globally with that accreditation, which holds us to the highest standards of corporate, social and environmental practices. Hopefully you have found this interesting, and if you would like to know more about the business please take a look at the website www.warnersdistillery.com

Also Christmas is coming so make sure you support farmers, independents and local producers!

Cheers!
Tom

Marriages—

Ian and Mary McKenzie

Mary and Ian McKenzie got married on the 24th June, at Treworgans Farm, Laddock, Cornwall, Mary’s family farm. I studied REALM and graduated in 2013, Mary unfortunately went to the RAU!

Kim & Jonathan Kinston (nee Hodgson)

Myself and Johnathan Kinston got married this June. We met at Harper in 2017, we studied the same agric course and lived on the same floor in Harris. Must have been made to be.

We are both very grateful for all the friend’s and connections we made at Harper. And so glad so many of them could join us on our special day!!

Harper Adams Club Annual Lunch 2024
Save the Date

The Harper Adams Club Lunch will take place at Harper Adams on Saturday 6th July, 2024.

The Club looks forward to welcoming as many alumni as possible and as usual extends a particular welcome to any groups who would like to celebrate a special anniversary in 2024 such as Diamond 60 years (1964) Golden 50 years (1974) Ruby 40 years (1984) and Silver 25 years (1999).

Further details on how to book will follow in due course. If you have any immediate queries please contact theharperadamsclub@gmail.com.
Clare is a graduate of Plymouth Uni and worked for the Marine Biology Association in Plymouth after graduating. They have 2 children, William (10) and Amy (5).

In typical farming tradition, the wedding reception was held in a marquee in his grain store, with hog roast for the evening reception.

Charlie Wright (Rockstar) served as best man and in time honoured tradition Harper drinking and dancing antics were experienced by all.

We all hope that they have a long and happy marriage in a beautiful part of the world. There will be no more kids!

The best man provided a matched pair of bricks and included instructions so that Clare doesn’t trap her thumbs!

Chris Wilton to Clare Buckland

I’m pleased to announce the wedding of Chris Wilton to Clare Buckland at Rame Church, Rame peninsula, Cawsand, Cornwall on the 8th of September 2023.

Chris was a BSc Agric starting in 1992, but after 1 year moved closer to home and finished his course at Seale Hayne. Chris is still an arable farmer on the home farm with the ambitions of expansion.


My husband, both Harper alumni, married on 29th October 2022. We were married at Claverley Church in Shropshire and held our wedding reception at Davenport House with a number of Harper Adams alumni present.
Tributes have been paid to a Harper Adams University alumnus who was killed while on holiday in Uganda.

David Barlow (Agri Food Marketing & Business Studies 1994-98) and his wife Celia died in an attack on their vehicle while on honeymoon in the country’s Queen Elizabeth National Park.

As the news broke, Minister of State (Development and Africa) the Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP, said he was ‘shocked and saddened by the horrific attack’ and added: “My thoughts are with the victims and their families.”

A keen sportsman, David played both cricket and rugby at Harper Adams and was involved with the coaching of the harper ladies Rugby team during his time at the University.

Senior Lecturer in Farm Business Management Alastair Johnston, who was at University with David, paid tribute to his friend.

He said: “He had a real interest in developing and running businesses - he was very determined, resilient, and a real zest for life, managing to treat each challenge as an opportunity.”

“Dave was an extremely loyal and caring person who will be missed by all those who knew him.”

Harper Adams Vice-Chancellor Professor Ken Sloan expressed his sorrow at the news.

He said: “In recent weeks we have witnessed the destructive effect that terrorism has on innocent populations when it strikes.”

“The tragic deaths of David and Celia have brought this home directly to our work at Harper Adams, and laterly a fresh produce & logistics company, completing 5 years with a European cereal production, something that is already well established in Europe. It is at Northop that she set about pursuing further treatment options, and helped to balance and weather the difficulties with Clare’s health. Our world is definitely the poorer for her passing. Her humour, her knowledge, her smile and cheerfulness, for all the rich ingredients of her character which she so generously dispensed to each of us. Her legacy continues through Colin & Connor who are determined to carry forward what she started. For her passing. Her humour, her knowledge, her smile and cheerfulness, for all the rich ingredients of her character which she so generously dispensed to each of us. Her legacy continues through Colin & Connor who are determined to carry forward what she started.

Peter Chance (HAAC 1953-56)

Peter died peacefully on 24th August, after a short illness.

Peter attained both the N.D.A. and the N.D.AgeE. and enjoyed a successful career in NAAAS and ADAS.

In the autumn term of 1958 he joined the soil science department of NAAS in Cardiff, participating in crop variety trials. This continued until July 1960 when he moved to Oxford as a trainee advisory officer. Fully qualified as such he moved to south Cheshire in 1963, based in Crewe, staying there until autumn 1972 when he was seconded as Agricultural Adviser to the States of Guernsey. Six years later he moved back to the mainland, joining the Dorchester office of ADAS where he stayed until retirement in October 1995. It was a partial retirement because he ran a private practice in Dorset for several years afterwards.

To Peter’s wife, Susan, and their sons, Stuart and Philip, sincere condolences on the loss of a dear husband and father. May I add a personal thanks to Peter for a close friendship of almost 69 years lasting through student days and throughout adult life.

from Geoff Warren (HAAC 1953-56)

Fred Harper


Fred moved from Harper Adams in 1988 to become College Principal at Scale Hayne and oversaw the challenging process of the merger of Scale Hayne with Plymouth Polytechnic which subsequently became Plymouth University.

Fred was the first Dean of the Scale Hayne Faculty of the new University.

Dick Shaw Studied at Harper 1964-65

Please can you report my best friend at Harper Adams, Dick Shaw passed away last weekend (7th October 2023) surrounded by his family. We were at Harper Adams in 1964 and 1965. Close friends I have no contacts for were the President Keith Henton (Dick was Secretary).

George Dean, Olive Bott, John Tellam, and myself had a 50 year reunion with Dick at his home some years ago now. Great if you could contact me.

Many thanks
Nick Towers (Australia)

Claire Mewburn Mercer (nee Morris-Eyton) 23/12/1967 to 09/11/2022

Claire was born on 23rd December 1967, the fourth child of John Reginald Morris-Eyton (Calvington, Newport) and Jane Elizabeth Morris-Eyton. She died on the 9th November 2022, aged 54 years, after an 18 year fight with ovarian cancer.

Claire grew up on a large dairy and sheep farm close to Broughton in Furness, Cumbria. Initially educated locally in Cumbria, her sixth form took her to Quebec, Canada, followed by a HND AMBA at Harper Adams, and laterly a Masters of Business Administration in Switzerland. Something she did between and during her various chemotherapy cycles, making best use of her precious time.

After graduating from Harper Adams, Claire spent 3 years working with Minnaat Ltd, of Earth, a fresh produce trader to the supermarkets. She then moved onto a similar role, completing 5 years with a European fresh produce & logistics company, Giachetti SAS of Turino, and then helped establish a family farm equipment, hire & repair business which she championed until shortly before her death.

Claire met her husband, Colin Mewburn Mercer, whilst at Harper Adams where he was studying for a HND Ag Eng, graduating in 1999. They were married on 16th October 1998, having formed the foundations of a lifelong partnership over several years of courtship around Harper, and beyond. 16th October 22 was their 29th wedding anniversary, they would have been happy to have many more.

Married life took Claire abroad to Europe, 15 years between France, Italy and Switzerland, before returning in 2013. During those 15 years abroad, Claire gave birth to their son Connor in France, supported his infant and junior years in Italy, and senior years in Switzerland. This was alongside her ongoing commercial responsibilities. Her overwhelming target after diagnosis, was to see her son’s 21st birthday celebration. She achieved that goal in May 2022. Connor starts his final year at HAU studying for his BEng in Agricultural Engineering in October ‘23.

Upon Claire’s return to the UK, she chose to take on a small farm, at Northop on the Welsh borders. Her dietary needs had cultivated a lasting interest in ancient grain / cereal production, something that is already well established in Europe. It is at Northop that she set about growing selected crops and fruit that she had learned about abroad. Whilst it has taken time to establish, and work is still very much in progress, the activity has developed a constant focus for the family unit and helped to balance and weather the difficulties with Clare’s health.

Being outside in the fresh air was Claire’s tonic, a sun drenched beach or a wet and windy shoot day, she loved simply being in the great outdoors. She had a keen eye for the subtle details of nature, working with animals, tending to her bees, studying the progress of her cereals, or garden herbs or simply pruning the roses.

Claire died whilst in the USA, pursuing further treatment possibilities. Her fight, like her broader approach to life, did not recognise boundaries, she didn’t accept ‘defeat’ or a ‘no’ easily. She succumbed to her illness reluctantly, defiant in the face of extreme adversity, but like all things she did, she did so with great tenderness, great love, great dignity in the face of tremendously difficult choices.

Our world is definitely the poorer for her passing. Her humour, her knowledge, her smile and cheerfulness, for all the rich ingredients of her character which she so generously dispensed to each of us. Her legacy continues through Colin & Connor who are determined to carry forward what she started.

From Ursula Gilmore (Barth)

Some readers of the Harper Life Magazine may not be aware of the deaths of four alumni from the 1961-1963 courses. They are:

Richard May (NDA) died in November 2020

His wife Mary May (Turner) (NDP) died in March 2023

Janet Bradshaw (Bird) (NDP) died in December 2020

Wendy Nicholls (Evans) (NDP) died in January 2023

They were good friends of mine and it is with great sadness that I am passing on this information.

Harper Adams University has been revealed as having secured Gold in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) for the third time. The University also secured Gold status in both 2017 and 2018. This rating was awarded in 2023, for four years.

The Gold rating is a significant vote of confidence in the University’s teaching and learning, and the positive outcomes its students achieve from their studies. It draws upon metrics including Harper Adams University’s National Student Survey data, its Graduate Outcomes data, and more – as well as other evidence submitted by the institution.

The announcement follows a series of other accolades for Harper Adams, with the University being named the Specialist University of the Year by the Times and Sunday Times, as well as being the top-rated Modern University in the UK in the Daily Mail University Guide and taking home an award for Career Prospects at the WhatUni Student Choice awards for the seventh time in a row.

Harper Adams was also rated a world-leading specialist English university by the Office for Students in December 2022 - the only one in its specialism granted this status, and one of just 16 institutions overall.

The aim of the walk was to raise awareness of mental health within the rural community.

Olivia has set up a page on Instagram Let’s Get Talking @letsgettalking2022 to direct people to the mental health support available, as well as brightening up people’s days with some positivity!

The walk was therefore called “Let’s Get Talking and Walking,” to encourage others to get outside for a walk with a friend and start talking about their mental health.

The amount of support we have received has been overwhelming from everyone. There really are so many kind people out there in this world and completing this walk has really highlighted that to us.

We have currently raised £4,100 for such a worthwhile charity, which helps so many in the rural community and we couldn’t have done it without all this support!

Let’s keep trying to raise awareness - “Let’s Get Talking”

Alumnae raise more than £4000 for Farming Community Network charity

Two Harper Adams alumna have completed the 102-mile-long Cotswold Way to raise money for the Farming Community Network.

BSc (Hons) Rural Enterprise and Land Management graduates Olivia Meredith and Caryss Pickavance, who now both work for Carter Jonas LLP, decided to take on the challenge to raise awareness of mental health in the agricultural sector.

“You walk 123 miles over five days all in aid of The Farming Community Network. It's such a worthwhile charity, which helps so many people out there in this world and completing this walk has really highlighted that to us. We have currently raised £4,100 for such a worthwhile charity, which helps so many in the rural community and we couldn’t have done it without all this support! Let’s keep trying to raise awareness - “Let’s Get Talking”

Harper graduate wins Farmers Weekly Agricultural Student of the Year 2023

Harper Adams University student Harry Davies has been named as this year’s Farmers Weekly Agricultural Student of the Year.

Originally from Ross-on-Wye in Herefordshire, fourth-year BSc (Hons) Agriculture student Harry secured the prize at the annual Farmers Weekly Awards ceremony in London last night. On winning the award Harry said: “I was over the moon to be a finalist, let alone win Ag Student of the Year. Yeah it’s a fantastic way to end four great years at Harper.”

Having been hugely committed to his family farm, Hopes Ash Farm in Herefordshire, his hard work ethic didn’t go unnoticed by the judges, nor the skills he developed during his time at Harper.

In the article by Farmers Weekly announcing his award, he said that without the skills learned at University, such as building design, partial budgeting, project organisation and people management, the projects he has been involved, including the installation of a slurry-only anaerobic digestion plant, would have been significantly more challenging.

As well as the academic learnings at university, he says exposure to different people and systems has also broadened his awareness and led him to re-evaluate everything on the home farm.

Fellow Harper Adams student Isla Soutter, a BSc (Hons) Agriculture with Animal Science student was also shortlisted – once again seeing two of the final three taken by Harper Adams students.

Margaret Boonas has received an Honorary Doctorate from Harper Adams University.

Past Master of the Worshipful Company of Butchers, Margaret Boonas, has received an Honorary Doctorate from Harper Adams University.

The award was made at the inaugural Harper Together staff conference at the University, with Margaret as a Guest of Honour throughout the day before receiving her award at a ceremony in the afternoon.

Margaret is Chairman of the International Meat Association, a former Vice President of the European Meat trade Association with responsibility for International Trade, and a member of the new Government Food and Drink Export Council, which was set up earlier this year by the Department of International Trade (DIT) and DEFRA.

Margaret became a Liveryman in the Worshipful Company of Butchers in 1997, and in 2021 was the third woman to become Master – with Harper Adams University Chancellor, Her Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, and Professor Capper said: “I should note that the support offered by Margaret and the Worshipful Company to Harper Adams has been invaluable, with five Masters of Research posts currently funded at the University through initiatives which began while Margaret was Master, including one related to her nominated charity, Farms For City Children.

“A fellow Liveryman of the Worshipful Company I can vouch for her excellence, but it’s not simply my opinion - another liveryman recently commented that Margaret was a truly great Master, not least because of her humanity and commitment to the industry.”

Presenting Margaret Boonas to Harper Adams Vice-Chancellor Professor Ken Sloan for her admission to the Degree of Doctor of Science, Honoris Causa, Professor Capper said: “Margaret will say that she is only here because of the immense support and mentoring she’s had from people in the industry – I would argue that she has paid this forward a hundred times over. She is a brilliant example to women of all skillsets and ages - throughout her career she has mentored and actively encouraged countless other women to achieve and fulfill their potential.”

Past Master of the Worshipful Company of Butchers, Margaret Boonas, receives her Honorary Doctorate from Professor Ken Sloan, Vice-Chancellor of Harper Adams University.
The Scholars started their 10-week short course at Harper Adams in May.

Among the nations represented in this year’s cohort are Ghana, India, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya and Zambia. Each Scholar was selected to take part in the course by the charity partners of the Marshal Papworth Fund, including Ripple Effect, Leprosy Mission, ADRA Ghana, Hands Around The World, Tree Aid and Teyu4Peace. Speaking to assembled guests at the event, Marshal Papworth Fund Chairman Tom Arthey explained how its eponymous founder had been deeply affected by the plight of communities he had visited in Africa and Asia – and how, after his untimely death, his legacy has lived on through the Fund.

Mr Arthey said: “Marshal’s vision – helping students develop skills they can take back to their homelands and use for the benefit of their own communities – stands as true today as it did while he was alive, and through our work, continues to enrich the lives of people from developing countries around the world. Marshal hoped that his legacy would allow just one, or maybe two, at best, students to come over to the UK and study agricultural and horticultural practices.

"To address this problem, we are working to develop a lure to attract vine weevils into a monitoring tool and to combine this with a ‘smart’ camera system that automatically detects the presence of this species and then alerts the grower. This project brings together agronomists at Zest ICM, crop protection company Sentomol, and academic collaborators at the Natural Resources Institute at University of Greenwich.

"It was a pleasure to show Her Royal Highness this work.” Following this, the Chancellor proceeded to meet guests at a seminar on Sustainable Agriculture, including this year’s Marshal Papworth Scholars, representatives of the charitable organisations they are working with and diplomatic representatives from the students’ home countries.

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Got some news you want to share with ex-Harper students?

Brilliant! Let us know and the Harper Adams Club will gladly share the news.
Email us at: theharperadamsclub@gmail.com

www.facebook.com/harperadamsalumni
@HAClub

Save the date -
Harper Adams Club Annual Lunch 2024

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