



# JOHN EDGAR TRUST

## Spring Newsletter 2014



John Edgar

### Visit to Highclere Estate

*On Thursday May 8<sup>th</sup> from 2p.m.*

Our reunion this year will give us an insight into how an historic estate is adapting to meet the challenges of changing times..... And no, it's not Downton Abbey, but the real Highclere Castle, just south of Newbury where we will meet by kind invitation of the Earl of Carnarvon and his estate manager James Phillips who was a pioneering JET Scholar back in the early days in the 70s.

The estate extends over 5000 acres of spectacular rolling to steep north Hampshire countryside, and includes over 2000 acres of arable farming, some

On arrival (quietly, please because the Downton Abbey crew are filming) and over coffee the Earl and Countess of Carnarvon will tell us about the history of their family, the Castle and the Estate, and then we will set off on a tractor and trailer tour with James Phillips and his staff. After a couple of hours

we will return to the Castle's picturesque cricket pavilion for a gourmet barbecue.



Highclere Castle, a View from Beacon Hill & Manager, James Phillips

of it on quite challenging land, and 1500 acres of woodland. The parkland and steep downs are grazed by a flock of 2000 mule ewes. A thriving horse-feed business has been established producing haylage and processing home-grown oats. Arable productivity has increased remarkably over time, but not at the expense of the wildlife which thrives under the active conservation management programme.

Numbers are strictly limited for this unique opportunity, so if you would like to attend please book in early. The price is £40 per head to include everything except booze at the bar.

*If you would like to come, please book now via the JET website.*

### Diary Dates

2014-15



Reunion Visit	8 <sup>th</sup> May
Applications Close	31 <sup>st</sup> May
Cirencester Course	10 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup> November
1 <sup>st</sup> Stockbridge Course	12 <sup>th</sup> - 15 <sup>th</sup> January
Alumni Dinner	13 <sup>th</sup> Jan
2 <sup>nd</sup> Stockbridge Course	3 <sup>rd</sup> - 6 <sup>th</sup> March
Alumni Dinner	4 <sup>th</sup> Mar

### The Next JET Course

*Applications are invited before May 31<sup>st</sup>*

After decades in the doldrums it has been encouraging to see an increase in agricultural student numbers in recent years. The first of this wave are now established in their careers and are just at the stage when participation in a John Edgar Course could help them take that next important step.

Our aim for the 2014/15 Course is once again to assemble a diverse group of motivated people who will be able to benefit from the formal and informal parts of the John Edgar Experience.

**Please help to spread the word!**

We are fortunate that John Alliston

remains our Lead Tutor and James Jones has been persuaded to leave his beloved Devon farm to assist him. The Course will follow the well-tested format with 5 days at Cirencester in November and 4-day sessions at the hallowed Grosvenor in Stockbridge in January and March.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## One Year On.....

### *Jamie Williams reflects on his JET experience*

It might be better to get my wife or indeed Matt ( farm worker or lifesaver to be more accurate) to write this as they have had to deal with the changes first hand.

Having been constantly referred to as 'Grandpa' on the course it is a lesson to us all that you are never too old to learn. I took more out of the three week JET course than two Degrees, a professional qualification and numerous 'how to run a business' books.

Friends and relatives wanted to know what I had learned and why was it so good. I struggled to answer this until I realised that the one thing I had learnt about more than anything else was myself. I now describe it as being stripped down and then being put back together again in the right order.

The farm has changed since the course and so have I. I realised I wanted to keep a leg in the professional world and thanks to a colleague on the course I am now working as a rural planning and development consultant for Gasson Associates. This give me breathing space from the farm and allows me to have far more perspective on it. ( Lesson 1 'step back') I love this role and I am getting a huge amount from helping my clients and learning a lot from my colleagues.

The farm has changed, it is tidier (most of the time) for a start. Monday mornings we have a proper 'morning prayers' and decide the jobs for the week, we have

rotas, assessments, brain storming and Matt and I have been on more courses that I care to imagine since I discovered how good it felt to be learning again.

It feels wonderful to be more in control of the farm and myself and to have made some very good friends ( all be it it younger than me....) We had a very good mob in our year and the bonds formed is illustrated by when I was ..... 'up the creek' and needed some emergency feed storage one of my JET colleagues ran two grain trailers over 30 miles to my rescue and seemingly didn't think anything of it. I can't wait to repay the favour.

We have had our first reunion, I am helping a couple of our alumni with planning work and I see one of them almost every week at work. I wouldn't hesitate to pickup the phone to any of them to ask a question or offer some help.

For the first time lambing starts in two days and we are greeting it with hope and expectation rather than with a feeling of 'I think I have forgotten something'. Even the accountant commented on the state of the books, not the profit I hasten to add, that is for next year!

*When not working as a consultant, Jamie Williams farms free-range poultry, pigs and sheep near Hurstbourne Tarrant, Hampshire*



Jamie Williams in farm mode

## JET Quiz Night

### *Fun & Funds*

Towards the end of the rainy season on February 7th the JET fund raising committee organised a quiz with an agricultural twist at Itchen Abbas's palatial village hall.

The evening was a great success, with £1200 being raised. The quiz master, Seumas Foster did a fantastic job with questions ranging between agriculture, sport, general knowledge and a picture round which definitely had everyone scratching their heads! The winners were our very own Henry Wilson, Hugo Lee, Geoff Elliot and Peter Baughen.



Philip Arkell with the victorious team

A fantastic ploughman's supper was served and the Trout pub ran the bar and very kindly donated a generous amount of their profits from the night..

A huge success of the night was the meat raffle which rose well over £500 by itself. Joints of meat, sausages and chickens were kindly donated by supporters and proved very popular. It may however be indicative of what JET people get up to in the winter in that the prize soap selection was chosen before the prize pheasant.....

Thanks go to Philip Arkell, Sam Burge, Hannah Foster and Harry Yorke for all their hard work in organising what even they accept should now be an annual event.

### *Next Course (Continued from page 1)*

There is a fee of £500 per participant. This charge only covers a fraction of the cost of the Course and was introduced last time to ease the strain on the Trust's finances. It did not prove to be a deterrent to applicants. Bursaries are available to those who would otherwise be unable to take up an offer of a place.

To ease administration and to help save the planet, only digital application forms downloaded from the website and emailed in after completion at the keyboard will be accepted this time.

All the information is on the website.

*Please do get in touch NOW with anybody who you think would appreciate and benefit from the "JET experience". Refer them to the website, and pester them repeatedly to get the application in by May 31st*