



JOHN EDGAR TRUST

Spring Newsletter 2017



John Edgar

Diversify and thrive

Georgie Cossins reflects on the November course

As a graduate in English literature, my previous knowledge of farm management came only from Thomas Hardy's Wessex novel Tess of the D'Urbervilles and the scene in which Tess silently and ceaselessly threshes the corn without complaint or supervision. As you can see, I needed help.

Cometh the hour, cometh the John Edgar Trust Management Course. I don't need to go into detail about why the UK farming market is going through a period of deep volatility and uncertainty. Now more than ever, I need to have a keen-eyed vision of what I wish the future of my farm to be. The course has helped me shape that vision without ever being prescriptive; under the guidance of Professor John Alliston and Dr. James Jones, I have gained the tools I need to create and adapt ideas to suit my particular circumstances.

It was Chris Musgrave, Managing Director of Musgrave Managing Systems, who kicked off with a simple message: make your farm thrive independently from farm subsidy. That is to say, we've all got to run successful farm businesses even once the EU grants have gone. How to do this? Diversify, diversify, diversify.

This may mean an expansion in the range of crops we grow, or adding value to our

existing products. Or it might mean doing something completely non-agricultural such as office space or music festivals. We need to work out what suits our own farms and begin to implement these new projects.

New endeavours must all begin with a business plan. This was the advice of JET alumnus Jon Dearsley, who gave us insights into how to create a business plan with the right amount of structure and detail to successfully start a project. Christopher

Bowerman, of Tripos Consultants, followed this up with two crucial points: 1) take time to work *on* your business as well as *in* it and 2) take time with your family and have a healthy work-life balance. Once a new enterprise has germinated and the basic structure is in place,

marketing becomes the important thing. Simon Haley spoke about the significance of social media and its power in the modern world to promote farming and communicate our values and core messages.

And all that was just week one!

For me, the highlight of the course has been meeting my peers. They are an exceptional bunch. Farming can be a lonely business but I now feel that I have eleven other people on whom I can call and I feel confident they would be able to give me the best of advice.



Georgie and friends

JET Scholars up to 1994-5 are invited....

to an **Alumni Dinner**



at the

Grosvenor Hotel Stockbridge

on Wednesday, March 1st

Book a place with your JET friends! Price £35/person.

Book via the JET or RAU Website <http://shop.rac.ac.uk/> or use the booking form or phone **Elizabeth** at the RAU 01285 889879

Minette Batters

Alumni Dinner speaker on March 1st

Minette Batters, the Deputy President of the NFU, will be our after-dinner speaker at the March 1st Alumni dinner (see above). As well as her NFU role, Minette runs a diversified, mixed farming business that includes horse livery, a wedding and corporate events venue and a catering business specialising in home grown produce. Minette co-founded the campaigning initiatives 'Ladies in Beef' and the 'Great British Beef



Minette Batters

Week'. She has been an NFU member from grassroots through to County Chairman and Regional Board Chairman as well as being a member of NFU Governance Board and the agricultural representative on the SW Environment Agency Flood and Coastal Committee. She is also a focus writer and is regularly interviewed for local and national media.

Don't miss this great chance to listen to (and question!) an important figure in our industry. Book your tickets now! (See above for details)

Recent Alumni Update

Will Haupt reflects on his JET experience 2 years on

It's been nearly 2 years since the completion of the 2014/2015 John Edgar course that I was very fortunate to be offered a place on. Where has the time gone I asked myself quietly while I was recently sitting at the Alumni dinner in Stockbridge with the Scholars from the latest course.

Arguably, more than ever now, do I reflect on all the take home messages and depth of the course content that has left an ever-lasting impression. The 3 weeks were so much more than I ever expected and never did I ever envisage walking away with such a greater understanding of myself and how to pursue my career. This was owed greatly to the course and those that delivered it but equally to my fellow scholars. All 12 opened their doors and once we were past the initial blackgrass and wheat price chat, did the intriguing backgrounds, career journeys and reservations for the future rise to the surface. I found this of such importance and interest and it really bonded the team, a team I was very privileged to be a part of.

On arrival at the course I was employed as an Assistant Farm Manager on an arable Estate in West Berkshire. I was in my second year there and was very much finding my feet in a management role, determining my strengths and weaknesses and understanding myself as a manager. The John Edgar Trust came at the perfect time and effectively stitched me back together in such a way that inspired confidence and fuelled determination.

Since completion of the course, I went on to progress as Farm Manager within that role and complete my Agronomy qualifications. With an ever-greater appetite for Agriculture, in Dec 2015 I was offered the position of Farms Manager for Southill Estate in Bedfordshire, managing a farm of 3400 acres where state of the art technology meets Conservation Agriculture on an idyllic country estate. The objectives employed across a highly-charged team of professional managers for growth and sustainability are both rewarding and highly motivational.

Before I was involved in the John Edgar Trust, a role of this type felt a long way off. I was overwhelmed with the support from the course tutors and fellow scholars and could not be more grateful for the opportunity. I left the John Edgar course with lifelong friends and plan to support the trust in anyway I can, even if I'm no longer a Hampshire local!!



Will Haupt



John Alliston collecting his award

'The Prof' picks up industry award

Prof John Alliston claims prestigious accolade

It is hard to think of a more suitable person to receive the Farmers Weekly Lifetime Achievement award for his services to agriculture than Professor John Alliston. His leadership, empathy, and understanding of people have given him a key role in producing agricultures' best professionals. John's commitment to the John Edgar Trust has been tireless and each and every person who has benefited from his guidance and leadership speak of his compassion and relentlessness to help others achieve their goals.

Through John's reputation and friendship with industry leaders, the John Edgar Scholars have had the opportunity to visit some of the most interesting and forward

thinking farms and listen to some of the best speakers available all of whom are willing to freely share their knowledge and experience. From all at The John Edgar Trust we would like to congratulate John on this simply outstanding achievement and thank him for all his ongoing hard work.

Stay connected with JET!

In our eternal drive to keep in touch with as many JET Alumni as possible we still need more current email addresses please! So, if you are not receiving emails from us please let the Hon. Sec. (see below) have your address and he will add you to the list. No spam guaranteed!

You can also connect with us on Facebook and Twitter to keep up to date with all things JET and other industry news.





Enhancing leadership and management skills within agriculture and the land based industries



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The JET Scholars of 2016-17



Crispin Alexander

Currently, I assist my father in managing a highly diversified farm in North Kent, a business that I have been involved all my life and which I hope to continue developing into the future. I studied Natural Sciences at Cambridge University before completing a PhD in biochemistry at University College Dublin. I also maintain interests in travel and photography.



Tom Bishop

Having grown up on the family farm on the Berks/Oxon border, I now practice as a land agent for BCM LLP, together with my position as a Director at HBH (Farming) Ltd. Both these roles allow me to be involved within a number of sectors across the property, land and agricultural industry.



Lucy Blackwell

I currently run the family farm near Wantage. We have suckler cows, sheep, 120 acres arable and a holiday let. I also do farm assurance audits and relief milking. I love most sport and enjoy working my dogs and shooting. I am director of the Irish Moiled Cattle Society. I would like to see my farm thrive for another 5 generations.



Chris Butler

I have recently finished working at Sydmonton Court Estate to start as Farm Manager at Testbourne Estate, Hampshire. I studied Agriculture at Sparsholt College and the University of Reading. My school holidays were spent working on my Uncle's farm on Dartmoor. In my spare time I play football and enjoy DIY.



Graham Collett

I farm with my family at Westlands Farm, near Wickham/Fareham in Hampshire. I studied Agriculture at Sparsholt and gained experience on local farms and also The Royal Farms Windsor. I have been working at home since completing my Ag course in 2001. I come from a farming (mixed/mainly livestock) background and today I run the farming element of the family business.



Georgina Cossins

Georgie Cossins currently works on her family's mixed farm in Dorset. Having completed a degree in English literature and pursued a career in journalism, she decided upon agriculture as her chosen vocation. She is keen to expand her experience and skills in managing a medium-sized business.



Peter Harding

Following Raleigh International, the RAU and after five years Scottish farming as assistant farm manager on a large mixed farm, I currently manage and oversee the day to day operation of our family herb farm. We grow 1200 acres of herbs for steam distillation and dehydration in Hampshire supplying the cosmetic, medicinal, food and flavouring industries. I look forward to meeting and working with the other people involved with the John Edgar Trust.



Ben Jeans

Based in Broad Chalke and married to Zoe, I studied Geography at the University of Exeter followed by the Graduate Diploma in Agriculture at the RAU. After 7 years shipbroking in London I made a career change to farming and, following a trainee role in Hampshire, am now jointly managing the family arable and dairy farm in partnership with my father. I'm keen to future proof the business through adding new income streams but with farming remaining at its core. I enjoy shooting, skiing and cricket.



Ben Kelly

Bought up in the Essex countryside, I studied in Cambridge, Wisbech, and Nottingham and ended up managing music venues without ever really finding my true calling. I was lucky enough that my family bought a farm in the heart of Hampshire, and a job offer came my way to move down and manage the farm. 9 years on and there hasn't been a second where I have regretted the move. I hope to further my career in arable farming, and feel the time is right to step up to the next level and become the best I can be in my job, and in my life also.



Mark Lancaster

I live in St Mary Bourne and currently work as an arable manager on 2100ha between Winchester and Newbury. I've recently become BASIS qualified and I am actively looking to gain FACTS and advanced modules too. Outside work I enjoy socialising with friends and playing football, tennis, hockey and cricket.



John Martin

I currently live near Salisbury with my wife, Naomi, and our daughter, Otilie. I studied Agriculture at Reading University before returning to our family-run 750 cow dairy farm as the herd manager in 2013. I hope to develop our farm by adding value to our milk and selling it locally. Outside work I enjoy playing a variety of sports including hockey, golf and shooting.



Sarah Symes

I am an Agronomist working for Hampshire Arable Systems covering the Hampshire and Surrey areas. I was brought up on an arable farm on the Isle of Wight and have a degree in Agriculture & Crop Management from Harper Adams and would like to one day be farming in my own right whilst continuing to work as an Agronomist. My main social interest is clay pigeon shooting.