

# HOLT & DISTRICT FARMERS' CLUB

FOUNDED 1948

President: Richard Brooks

Chairman: Martin Jensen

Vice-Chairman: Andrew Ross

[www.holtfarmers.club](http://www.holtfarmers.club)

## CLUB MATTERS November 2023

### 1. 14<sup>th</sup>, November, 2023

ROOT CROPS is my byline this month although Joe ROOT FLOPS along with the rest of our cricketers out in India might have been preferred. On **Tuesday at 7.30 Michael Sly MBE** is at Holt Rugby Club to give us his talk '*All Things Sugar and Spice*'. As Chair of the NFU Sugar Beet Board Michael, has been embroiled in the current crisis after British Sugar broke convention and approached growers direct over the price for the 2024/5 season rather than negotiating with the NFU. He is also Chair of English Mustard Growers and farms at Thorney near Peterborough so we are lucky to have him at such a critical time. **Andrew Ross** is his colleague on the board and NFU officers **Julie Frost** and **Flora Archer** will be joining us.

### 2. 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2023

The YIELD group at the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association has organised a full scale debate at The Forum in Norwich on the problems facing food and farming in Norfolk. It will be chaired by Jez Fredenburgh who spoke to us in the past and details of this free event are attached.

### 3. 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2023

**Henry Kilvert** is our speaker on *Rural Mental Health* – 7.30 on a Tuesday at the rugby club again. Henry is YANA's Chair of Trustees and farms at Little Dunham between Dereham and Swaffham. **Richard Brooks** made it one of the aims for his Presidency that we should promote the valuable services that the likes of YANA provide - especially after the *COVID-19* pandemic exacerbated the problems we were already facing. **Michael Pollitt** has also been a YANA trustee and spoke to us about his own battle with ~~the~~ depression in the past while remaining a strong advocate that help is out there.

YANA, Norfolk Showground,  
Dereham Road, Norwich,  
Norfolk NR5 0TT

**Helpline 0300 323 0400**  
Please leave a voicemail if unstaffed or  
send an email to [helpline@yanahelp.org](mailto:helpline@yanahelp.org)  
or [admin@yanahelp.org](mailto:admin@yanahelp.org)

by your side [yanahelp.org](http://yanahelp.org)

Registered charity number 1190443

You are not alone with YANA by your side.

- ▶ Building understanding of mental health
- ▶ Investing in mental health first aid training
- ▶ Providing confidential support and counselling

Confidential Helpline: 0300 323 0400

Email: [helpline@yanahelp.org](mailto:helpline@yanahelp.org) |

[admin@yanahelp.org](mailto:admin@yanahelp.org) | [pr@yanahelp.org](mailto:pr@yanahelp.org)

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### 4. 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner POSTPONED

The YANA talk has been inserted into our programme because our attempt to hold our 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner at Gresham's before Christmas simply ran out of time. **Martin Jensen, William Youngs** and others made a valiant attempt to co-ordinate speaker, venue, catering etc. and looked at innumerable permutations. However, for fear of the event going off half cocked, it has now been confirmed that it will be held at Gresham's on Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> April next year with **Viscount Townshend** as our principal guest as I advised previously. Apologies for the juvenile turnip references.

5. *9<sup>th</sup> January, 2024*

**Stuart Ross** has been a stalwart of the Holt Youth Project for the best part of 20 years and is now the Acting Chairman. **Julie Alford**, a familiar face as a local estate agent until recently, was a founder member of this charity which has an impressive list of supporters including Lord and Lady Dannatt, Sir Norman Lamb, Olivia Colman and Duncan Baker M.P. It creates a safe environment for young people to meet and socialise with a minimum of supervision. Gresham's raised £20,000 for them and many exciting sponsorship events have been undertaken including a paddleboarding one by Thurning vet Tom Hume who has raised even more and he will be recounting his adventure for us. It's a *Tuesday at the rugby club* and Stuart intends to hold a raffle which seems most appropriate in the afterglow of Christmas.

6. *12<sup>th</sup> March, 2024*

**Carl Sayer**, our Norfolk David Bellamy but now also a Professor of Limnology (the study of inland aquatic ecosystems), is back to address us on *Norfolk Ponds: Restoring the Ghostly and the Ghastly* – apparently he is afraid of Black Shuck. He runs the Pond Restoration Research group as well as the Norfolk Ponds Projects with which several members are already engaged. There is also the work he has done on the Glaven which went towards him winning the Conservation Award given every two years in memory of Dr Sydney Long who formed the country's first Wildlife Trust at Cley between the wars. *7.30, Tuesday, rugby club.*

8. *11<sup>th</sup> April, 2024*

**HOLT & DISTRICT FARMERS CLUB 75<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY DINNER at GRESHAM'S SCHOOL**  
See 4. above – further details to follow.

9. *29<sup>th</sup> May to 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2024*

**TRIP to SWEDEN** (*hat trick of root vegetables*)  
*Wednesday to Saturday – see below*

10. *Resume of 73<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING on 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2023*

Thank you for providing a good turnout of about 35 for last month's AGM. Treasurer **Laurie Hill** confirmed that our Club continues in good financial health. With **Pat Cubitt** having stepped down, although still very much present as our IT guy, there was a vacancy on the committee. **Peter Perry-Warnes** and **Mark Cook** were both up for re-election and our remarkable President Emeritus **Bill Poortvliet** was ready to return to the fray only two years after standing down. With no other candidate these three were elected without the need for a vote. Bill and **John Cragg** were then thanked by **Chris Borrett** for their excellent work in chasing up 46 samples for our Barley Competition. With **Bob King** having retired from Crisp Malt we were fortunate to have their new CEO Stuart Sands to present the prizes based on the judgment of his colleague Rebecca Gee. The winner of the Sir Charles Mott-Radclyffe Tankard for Spring Barley was **Jim Alston** t/a Calthorpe Farms with the perennial Maris Otter. **Chris Harrison** t/a E G Harrison Farms, also growing Maris Otter, was runner up while **Jack Hammond** t/a Aldborough Farms was third with Flagon. The winner of the Hammond Cup for Winter Barley was **Melton Harrold** t/a G W Harrold & Partners with **Andrew** and **Stuart Ross** t/a W J F Ross Ltd. as runners up. They and **Martin Fisher**, who came third, all grew Laureate and it was Melton who was judged to have grown the best sample overall to win the Rothermere Cup – pictured with Chris Borrett and Stuart Sands - and it was thought credit should also go to Melton's long time and successful manager Bruce Lockhart. Mr Sands then gave a most informative summary of the grain

trade on a world scale and how Crisp Malt fit into it as part of Richardson International, a Canadian conglomerate. He appreciated the excellent quality of the 2022 Norfolk harvest and while the next year might not be as profitable he was optimistic about malting barley's prospects. He confirmed that planning permission for their major re-development at Great Ryburgh had finally been granted; Peter Perry-Warnes was right to remind him that it was necessary for local farmers to be fairly rewarded alongside this expansion.



Our new Chairman then provided another update on the relief work he is facilitating in Ukraine. This centres around a new refugee centre in the village local to his farm where a part time teacher has been recruited and great work is done with rehabilitating natives who have been injured, orphaned or harmed in other ways by the awful war and deprivation. Women are playing a large military role in their Home Guard as well as in the regular army. Ukrainian losses are over 70,000 and half as many again have been wounded – maybe 15,000 with lost limbs. Mind you the Russian losses are reckoned to be almost three times these figures. As for Martin's own farming he had been able to build a new grainstore and it was surprising how many things carry on normally in spite of the war with GNP in fact rising by 3.5%. Sugar beet, soya and buckwheat had done well but wheat and maize had been a dead loss. With the Russians blockading the ports exports were being moved down the Danube to Constanza on the Romanian Black Sea. Richard Brooks thanked Martin for this as well as for stepping up to the plate as Chairman. He had met Viscount Raynham and assured us that he was a good choice for our Anniversary Dinner and the vote of thanks was given by Peter Perry-Warnes.

Now, one month later, our programme is finally falling into place. Gresham's have capacity for 120 diners including partners and guests for our Anniversary Dinner on 11<sup>th</sup> April and seating and other arrangements are to be advised in good time. Before that Martin and Peter would like to get at least 29 takers for the Trip to Sweden from 29<sup>th</sup> May to 1<sup>st</sup> June. This was the number that flew to Finland with Martin in 2011 when he arranged a great trip in remarkable 30 degree temperatures. Sweden is, like all Nordic and Scandinavian countries, expensive so every effort should be made to book air tickets sooner rather than later. I attach the draft itinerary and ask for names on Tuesday or sometime next week please.

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