

HOLT & DISTRICT FARMERS' CLUB

FOUNDED 1948

President: Richard Brooks

Chairman: Martin Jensen

Vice-Chairman: Andrew Ross

www.holtfarmers.club

CLUB MATTERS

December 2024

Sad to relate but we have now lost **Colin**, the last of the famous (and occasionally infamous) **Ross** brothers who have been such a feature of our club over the last sixty years. Colin, at 83, was the youngest; John died in 2016 and Ian, the eldest, in 2020 while Colin's wife Veronica died eighteen months ago. This is something of the end of an era since, although John's wife Cara and their son **Andrew**, our Vice Chairman, together with **Stuart**, son of Ian & Lorna and one of our past Chairmen, are still going strong none of the next generation look like keeping W J F Ross Ltd., the family firm, going. Colin was an active and loyal member who served on our committee for many years and prided himself on going on every club trip since John Shrive started them in 1970 and vying with Walter Callaby for that honour until age took its toll on both of them. He farmed at Hurricane Farm between High Kelling and Lower Bodham where he demolished the farmhouse before settling at Manor Farm in Little Snoring between his brothers at Walsingham and Edgefield. He liked his motors both for farming and recreation but suffered an appalling tragedy when his youngest son Jamie died in a farm accident on Ian's Valley Farm at Edgefield in 1978 when aged only 11. Colin could be found at most agricultural gatherings throughout the county and attended Stalham and Probus meetings as well as Holt Rugby Club. Latterly he spent his winters in New Zealand where his daughter Helen lives and we send our commiserations to her along with Billy and Thomas, Colin's other sons.



Hugh William (BILL) van POORTVLIET

Born 1944

On a happier note, Bill Poortvliet celebrated his 80th birthday last month and is also being allowed to drive again. You can't keep a good man down and I have previously observed that no-one has done more for our club than 'The Potato Prince from Poppyland'. Bill has approached Orsted to see if they can give us an update on the rather concerning situation regarding their existing and proposed schemes. Orsted are the world's largest developer of offshore wind power not to be confused with Worstead where seeds of the industrial revolution were sown - and had a terrible 2023 when they withdrew from two multi billion dollar schemes in the United States. Consequently the Danish company is trying to divest a 50% stake in Hornsea 3 which is the current £8.5 billion project to erect 231 turbines 75 miles off the Norfolk coast and 100 miles from Yorkshire. These should generate 2.9GW sufficient to provide power to 3 million British households by 2028 and incorporate a 600MW Tesla battery storage system at Swardeston. Next there is Hornsea 4 'in the pipeline' to provide another 2.6GW although there must now be some doubt over this. Trying to turn things round is the Orsted Group President and CEO with the brilliant name of MADS NIPPER.

Apparently RWE AG, a German multinational energy company, are lining up to buy into Hornsea 3 after agreeing in 2023 to invest in a £11 billion investment in the UK's Dogger Bank wind farm project and this year acquiring the Norfolk Offshore Wind portfolio from Vattenfall. They are big players have previously owned Thames Water and done big deals with E.On to extend their empire which they continue to expand by planning the UK's biggest solar farm in the British countryside on the 4,000 acre High Grove Solar Farm around Dereham. This is part of the new Labour government's GB Energy project after removing the bar on onshore turbines. There has been a lot in the press of late about the implications for food security, food production and tourism which is not surprising with largescale tree planting for carbon offset also adding to demand - sometimes for good arable land new government guidance on forestry on farms may be worth checking out. On top of this central government has decreed that North Norfolk 's new Local Plan, which we have already been waiting 8 years for, is still not fit for purpose. A shortfall in housing provision has again been highlighted along with inadequate provision for gypsies and travellers. It is proposed that the current Selected Villages like Blakeney and Briston will be expected to take a larger population growth than in the current draft for Small Growth Villages. If you have views on this you only have until 17th December to comment at Cromer.

*Mads Nipper
President and
CEO Orsted*



*Sir James Goldsmith
Asset Stripper aka
'Mad Snipper?'
Born 1933
Died 1997*



Dr Antony Caston from Syngenta is our speaker at **7.30 on Tuesday, 10th December**. He is from a Loddon farming family and, after studying pharmaceuticals at Nottingham University, he has had a bright career in plant breeding extending into patent law and licensing intellectual property. He has worked in Switzerland for a long time and this could be interesting for us in respect of GM foods and the like now that we are also out of the EU - especially with Donald Trump putting the cat amongst the pigeons with tariffs etc. Many thanks to **John Sizeland** for arranging The Doctor for us. We are hoping that **Ben Turner** from Ben Burgess will return to be our speaker on **14th January** but we have Orsted lined up to address us if he and/or his son, also Ben, are not available. There is an existential theme running through this season's speakers with **Larking Gowen**, co-hosted by **Laurie Hill**, giving us their take **on the IHT** issue that has made the headlines over recent weeks as well as on other relevant matters on 11th February. Finally on 11th March we have Peter Craven, a Nuffield scholar from Bawdeswell who has had an interesting career starting on a south Lincolnshire farm, going to Gresham's and working for NIAB outside Cambridge. He visited New Zealand in compiling his 2023 report and he has now joined Natural England in Norwich. He will answer his own questions 'How do you take a Family Business from Good to Great?' and 'What is the Formula for Family Success?' I've had one or two early bookings for **Leics. and Lincs. from 4th to 6th June** while William Youngs is firming up on details for both this and the **Soiree at Bayfield on Tuesday, 1st July**.

Tim



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