

HOLT & DISTRICT FARMERS' CLUB

FOUNDED 1948

President: Peter Perry-Warnes

Chairman: Martin Jensen

Vice-Chairman: Andrew Ross

www.holtfarmers.club

POLLITT's PIECE on IMPERISHABLE PAPWORTH

Spreading positive messages about farming and food A third-generation farmer Tim Papworth highlighted the opportunity to promote home-grown food production to young people. His 45-minute presentation to Holt & District Farmers' Club clearly fascinated his audience as he explained his latest challenge. He was one of a handful in the county currently supporting the Farmers for Schools initiative, working mainly with secondary schools. As he told fellow farmers, he has now spoken to 19 schools, including primary and sixth form colleges. He had just visited Hobart High School, Loddon, and briefed students about the exciting range of career opportunities in food and farming. The industry needs a range of technical skills from handling and processing data to mechanical and electrical engineering and in the whole field of livestock production. "Whenever there's a mention of AI (artificial intelligence) I always think of AI applications in farming. For example, artificial insemination in animal production (incidentally pioneered by north Norfolk farmer's son Sir John Hammond) and avian flu. Mr Papworth said that his grand-father, Leonard had moved lock and barrel in 1927 from Cambridgeshire, where he had sold a milling business at Elsworth, near Papworth Everard. "When he moved to Felmingham to take on the farm from Michaelmas, he was not allowed to enter the farm until mid-day. "So the stock and equipment had to stay on the railway wagons at Felmingham until noon when they were allowed to enter the farm!" After Town Close, Tim went as a boarder to Norwich School. In an early demonstration of his business acumen, he ran would be today described as a "side hustle" taking fellow students up the cathedral spire for 50p - and at night! Then, he trained at City College, Norwich, to become a butcher. Ironically, as he added, he became a farmer while his brother, Sam, who had read agriculture, became a butcher in the family's successful business! He did a degree in farm management at Seale Hayne, Devon, in 1991/2. A keen rugby player, he played for teams in Devon, Aberdeen, in North at North Walsham and also for the county as an openside wing forward. However, his other keen interest has always been horses - and he won two point-to-points at Fakenham. His "epiphany" came during a visit to the United States in 1997 while taking part in a potato industry leadership course. "I was there lobbying political leaders on Capitol Hill including the Secretary for Agriculture for a better deal for USA's farmers." On his return, he decided to become more involved in supporting the industry. He was a member of the AHDB (Agricultural Horticultural Development Board) for seven years, which included serving on the (British) Potato Council and then holding increasing senior positions with the Norfolk National Farmers' Union. In 2010, he almost lost his life when he fell onto a concrete floor in a potato store. He owed his life, firstly to the prompt action of farm staff, then the speedy arrival of the East Anglian Air Ambulance, and finally the medical team at Addenbrooke's Hospital. He spent seven weeks in an induced coma with his wife, Emma, at his bedside. Later, he was fitted with a titanium plate protecting his head and brain, which always makes for an interesting time passing through airport security. Now, Tim has been embracing his latest challenge - helping young people learn more about food, farming and the countryside. The Farmers for Schools initiative needs further support and he urged like-minded farmers and growers to help to spread a positive message about the industry to young people. He was thanked by the president, Peter Perry-Warnes.



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