

R·A·B·I news



SPRING 2016

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION

Supporting farming families www.rabi.org.uk



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Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution

We are a welfare charity that helps farming people in financial difficulty. Every year we support approximately 2,000 individuals and families and give out around £2 million in grants. We also offer practical help and always work in confidence, with compassion and discretion.

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Cover image: Ladies in Beef, left to right, Suzy Deeley, Sophie Cumber, Laura Harding and Jilly Greed. See page 5.

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From the chairman

It's been a turbulent year so far for farmers across the board and the floods that struck northern England in December and January stretched many to breaking point. However, a crisis can often bring out the best in people and the way small communities in counties such as Cumbria and Lancashire came together for the common good was heartening. R.A.B.I. played its part too, with regional manager Georgina Lamb and Jackie Clegg and the welfare team going the extra mile to engage with those in the farming world who needed help fast. Applications for emergency grants were dealt with speedily and since December 7, R.A.B.I. has paid out around £82,000 to flood victims.

Looking forward, we are honoured to have HM The Queen as our patron and we will be joining in the celebrations to mark Her Majesty's 90th birthday on April 21, when beacons will be lit throughout the country. On June 12 a Patron's Lunch will take place in London. The latter celebrates HM's patronage of more than 600 organisations in the UK and Commonwealth – including ours – since 1952.

It's appropriate to say a big thank you to all of our fundraisers and supporters for what they do. Charity fundraising has had a bit of a bad press of late, but I think R.A.B.I. can be extremely proud of its practices and methods. In 2015, our voluntary income was around £1.26m and we are indebted to our loyal supporters' goodwill because it allows us to pay out close to £2m in grants every year. An example of this generosity came at the recent NFU conference dinner where the NFU organised a fundraising prize draw on our behalf that raised more than £8,000. The prize was tickets to the Patron's Lunch and I would like to personally thank delegates for their support.

This will be my last column for R.A.B.I. news as I shall be stepping down as chairman after the AGM in May after eight years as trustee and three years as chairman. Being so heavily involved with this wonderful charity has been a real privilege. I've travelled the length and breadth of the country (everywhere is a long way when you live in Cornwall!) and met some fantastic, selfless people. I've also been humbled by the stories of people R.A.B.I. has helped; often ordinary folk with extraordinary tales. I have also visited some wonderful places and attended some very memorable events; thank you to all those who have shown such amazing hospitality and dedication to the cause. R.A.B.I. may give financial help but it's so much more than a 'money fund' – it's a complex network of people who genuinely care about farmers and British farming. Last year, R.A.B.I. helped farming people claim more than £390k in state benefits. It's an amazing statistic in itself but what it does not fully illustrate is the countless hours spent listening to people talk about their problems, the long journeys to and from meetings, the painstaking task of collecting information, filling-in forms, submitting applications, making telephone calls, then doing it all over again in many instances, for appeals and new assessments. Indeed, so much good work goes on behind the scenes at our head office, Shaw House in Oxford and our excellent care homes, Beaufort House in Somerset and Manson House in Suffolk. Ultimately, it's people who make organisations successful.

R.A.B.I. changes lives every day and it's certainly changed mine. To everyone connected with the charity I would

like to say a very big 'thank you'. It's been an honour to serve as your chairman. Keep up the good work and keep making a difference.



Chris Riddle,
Chairman R.A.B.I.

More people urged to seek help from County Durham & Northumberland

R.A.B.I wants more people who are suffering financial hardship in Northumberland and County Durham to come forward and seek help.

Typically, R.A.B.I gives grants to more than 1,300 individuals / families per year but Tom Armstrong, R.A.B.I's welfare officer for Northumberland and

County Durham, says that in his region farmers are extremely reluctant to step forward and claim available funding. In 2014, R.A.B.I gave out grants of more than £200k across Yorkshire, but in Durham the sum paid out was less than £15,500 for the same period. Tom said: "Only one new person from

County Durham has come forward to ask for my help in the past two years, even though R.A.B.I is a well-established charity and this is a very strong farming area."

R.A.B.I does not cover Scotland, but Tom helps more people north of the border than he does in County Durham. These are

usually people who initially sought R.A.B.I's help when they lived in England and have continued to receive ongoing support.

Tom added: "In small communities I understand that people can be reluctant to seek help and there's a determination to struggle on and manage on your own.

"However, R.A.B.I exists to help farming people through tough times when they've nothing to fall back on, so they can carry on doing what they love. We also help retired and disabled farmers and farmworkers too.

"We work in complete confidence and all enquiries are treated with compassion and discretion.

"It's important that we keep trying to raise awareness of what we do. "In Northumberland and County Durham there are a lot of small farms and tenant farmers so we want to catch people who need assistance and let them know that it's OK to ask for help."

To find out more about what R.A.B.I can do for you call the Freephone helpline 0808 281 9490 or email the welfare team at grants@rabi.org.uk



SPREADING THE WORD: Welfare officer Tom Armstrong wants to hear from more farming people in hardship from the north east of England.

Left without feed and bedding at start of the year

Brett Forrest, who farms in Spennymore, County Durham, sought R.A.B.I's help after being affected by **flooding in December / January**. He received an emergency grant for domestic costs. Brett owns 149 acres and rents a further 125. He needed feed and bedding for cattle after losing some 130 bales of haylage

and 500 bales of straw. He had to temporarily bed cattle in wet straw. **His land flooded three times in a month** and around 25 acres was left **under five feet water when the River Wear broke its banks**.

Pedigree Saler suckler cows knocked down part of a brick wall after the animals panicked when water started

pouring into shed. Brett explained:

"**The flooding affected us in several ways**, it had a dramatic impact on our business and we are still getting over the psychological and emotional effects.

"My wife and I carry out all of the work on the farm ourselves and we were both exhausted and drained."

Supporting flood victims in the north of England, see pages 12 and 13

A big thank you to our business supporters

Candidates shortlisted for Ceva's annual Animal Welfare awards

Ceva Animal Health has revealed the shortlist for its fifth annual Animal Welfare awards.

These awards serve to raise the profile of animal welfare around the world and within the veterinary industry. Nominations were submitted by friends, family, clients and colleagues from all backgrounds, but all with the common theme of acknowledging those who have gone beyond the call of duty to help better the lives of animals.

R.A.B.I is pleased to be joint

sponsor of the Farm Animal Welfare Award for the second year running. The award goes to someone from the farming industry who 'strives to provide or encourage high standards of ethical and compassionate farm animal welfare'. The shortlisted candidates for this category are Jon Huxley and Martin Green (joint entry), from the University of Nottingham Dairy Herd Health Group and Ruth Clements of FAI Farms. The awards ceremony is on April 6.



LAST YEAR'S WINNER: Rebecca Whay, pictured receiving the Animal Welfare award in 2015. R.A.B.I corporate development manager Suzy Deeley is right of photograph.

Glamping pioneers

Feather Down Farms, the award-winning pioneers of 'glamping' and farm-stays, have chosen R.A.B.I as their charity partner from January 2016. Benefits will include providing an option to donate during and after the booking process, promotion of the charity and support at fundraising events. Stefan Thurau, CEO of Feather Down, said: "Feather Down is happy and excited to complement the invaluable work in the farming community of R.A.B.I."

Cereals 2016

R.A.B.I has been chosen by Haymarket to be their charity partner for Cereals 2016 and Fruit Focus 2016. Cereals is the arable industry's leading technical event. It will be held in Cambridgeshire on June 15 and 16. Fruit Focus is the industry's leading fruit event, in Kent on July 20. "We feel enormously privileged to be able to showcase the great impact that R.A.B.I has on the agricultural community", said Jon Day, Cereals Event Director. "R.A.B.I offers a vital lifeline to those facing hardship."

Partnership with Meadow Quality

R.A.B.I is the chosen charity of the year of Meadow Quality, a livestock marketing firm formed in 2002 from the merger of Meadow Valley Livestock and Quality Calves. Meadow Quality is the largest livestock marketing company in England and Wales and began life in 1975 as a co-operative of Worcestershire farmers, intent on working together to add value to their livestock.

The firm now works closely with farmers and food producers to maximise the value of livestock - be it pigs, cattle or sheep - by finding suitable buyers. Being a farmer-controlled business, they work for the benefit of their producers and aim to deliver the maximum return on every animal. Judy Underwood from Meadow Quality said: "The

Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution was an obvious choice to be our chosen charity for 2016.

"We see first-hand how this charity provides a hugely positive impact on the lives of many farmers.

"During times of struggle, our agricultural community needs to unite and it's our responsibility to help those who may be suffering hardship."

Polythene backing

Thanks to British Polythene Industries (BPI) for their generous support. They donated £2,437.47 in 2014 and £2,904.47 in 2015. British Polythene Industries has developed over the last decade to become one of the largest producers of polythene film products in the world.

Charity of choice for 2016

The Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers has named R.A.B.I as their charity of choice for 2016. RABDF is the only independent, specialist body dedicated to representing the interests of British dairy farmers.

Alongside lobbying activities, RABDF runs an annual programme of events, including Livestock, each July. RABDF was founded in 1876 as an independent organisation dedicated to the interests of dairy farmers. Initially, membership was concentrated in the south of England. Throughout the years, RABDF has acted in the best interests of dairy farmers in responding to government consultations and enquiries.

Kramp give wellies and farm toys

Kramp UK has named R.A.B.I as its charity of the year for 2016. In response to the flooding in the north, they recently donated a number of pairs of wellies and a large selection of children's farm toys. These will be auctioned and raffled off to raise funds. Richard Kendrick, marketing manager at Kramp, said:

"These donations were suggested by employees who wanted to show their support to the farming community. "We are now working on a number of further ideas from employees on fundraising and events aimed at raising awareness about the fundamental work that R.A.B.I carries out across the UK."

Look out for the Red Tractor logo

During Great British Beef Week we're teaming up with Ladies in Beef – an organisation of more than 150 female beef farmers – to promote the quality and versatility of assured British beef. We want you to get involved in the campaign by eating beef while helping to raise money for R.A.B.I. Why not invite friends for a beef meal and encourage them to donate to us? There will be a host of events across the UK during Great British Beef Week, organised by colleges, farmers, individuals, retailers and caterers. In the UK, we've lost more than 140,000 beef-breeding cows over the last four years, yet beef remains one of the nation's most popular meats. During Great British Beef Week, which starts on St George's Day, April 23, we want to celebrate an industry that is still an integral part of British agriculture. Look for the Red



LADIES IN BEEF: Left to right, Laura Harding, Sophie Cumber, Suzy Deeley (R.A.B.I. corporate development manager) and Jilly Greed.

Tractor logo when buying beef, an independent mark of quality that guarantees your beef comes from farms and food companies that meet

high standards of food safety. This is the fourth consecutive year that R.A.B.I. has worked with Ladies on Beef on Great British Beef Week.

Sophie is the face of the 2016 campaign



Growing up on a beef farm in Oxfordshire, Sophie Cumber (pictured) didn't envisage a future in the meat industry for herself. However, she always loved cooking and – after taking a catering course at Leith's in London – she realised she wanted to go down a road seldom travelled by women

and become a butcher. Today, she is a fully **qualified butcher in London**, with close to four years' experience under her belt, working for a highly **reputable firm called Turner & George**. She is also the face of the 2016 Great British Beef Week. Sophie, the daughter of

R.A.B.I. trustee William Cumber, said: "As a child I tended to do my own thing and probably didn't take as much interest in the farm as I now wish I had. I always knew the importance of good quality meat though. I saw mum and dad constantly striving for quality and the processes they went through and when I went to university I was always telling my friends off for buying Danish bacon."

Being a butcher can be tough, physical work and in her first job Sophie found herself the only female alongside nine guys. She is passionate about what she does, however, and wants consumers to take a much more active interest in what they are eating.

She said: "Because I liked cooking, I was drawn to butchery as it's an important first step. I absolutely believe British beef is the best."

"I spent four months in Argentina, a country with a reputation for producing top quality beef, but I never saw or ate anything better than what I could get in Britain. What Argentina does have is more quality beef,

because there is so much grassland."

Sophie's understanding of the meat trade has turned full circle and she now appreciates the important role many small farms play in maintaining a high quality industry.

"At work, we liaise with a lot of small farms and we focus on rare British breeds," she explained.

"How an animal is reared really matters."

Being the 'face of Great British Beef Week' has also given Sophie another window of opportunity to share her own belief in 'treating meat with respect'.

She said: "I was always aware of Great British Beef Week, because of dad's involvement with R.A.B.I., but being more closely involved this year has been very interesting and I've met some fantastic people. "Beef is still popular, rib-eye steaks are one of our best sellers and we also sell a lot of brisket and cuts for barbecues."

"My advice to people is 'talk to your butcher and learn to trust them'. Don't worry about saying the wrong thing either, just tell us exactly what you want."

Message is simple: back the breakfast!

R.A.B.I.'s Farmhouse Breakfast campaign supports AHDB's annual Breakfast Week – promoting the wealth of wonderful breakfast ingredients produced in the UK – in late January. However, our related fundraising events run throughout the winter. The overall message is simple: host a delicious breakfast to help farming families in need. Once again, our regional managers and county committees did just that, organising around 30 brilliant breakfasts, with the majority between mid-January and mid-February. At the time of going to press, breakfast events from Cornwall to County Durham and from Kent to Cumbria, had raised more than £15,000 and served around 1,200 delicious, hearty meals to our very happy supporters – with several more still to take place. And this year has

seen new breakfast events running alongside various firmly-established dates in the calendar. A couple of the new events were held at key auction marts, with whom we hope to

collaborate even more in future. Thank you to everyone who got involved to 'back the breakfast'!

Stephen Noble, head of fundraising & development



LEFT: Tony Turnbull and granddaughter Stella at a breakfast event in Piercebridge, County Durham, hosted by Sam Turner and Sons. Tony's wife Jo is a R.A.B.I. trustee. H&H Land and Property supported the event and surveyor, Tim Sedgewick, said: "There is a natural synergy between H&H Land and Property, our clients and R.A.B.I."

Get braced for a pheasant surprise

- More than £500 was raised at a breakfast at Weald of Kent Golf Club in Headcorn. Kent committee member Sheila Adams arranged the morning, which was attended by 60 guests, including Mel Ellis, agricultural manager for Barclays. One of the raffle prizes was a brace of pheasants.

- Around 100 people supported the breakfast at Bartholomew's barn in Kirdford, West Sussex, by kind permission of Francis Attwell and family. This is the sixth year the breakfast has been held at this venue and it's always a sell-out. The event raised more than £1,100 and great camaraderie, with lots of laughter and an amazing team spirit, ensured many hands made light work.

- A Kent breakfast at Greenfields Shooting School in Canterbury raised £311.50 and around 35 people attended. A raffle was also held.

Hungry market-goers fork out

Thanks to Nicola Clayton-Bailey and her team at Bletsoes for supporting Breakfast Week at the Thrapston livestock market. A locally sourced breakfast was served for hungry market-goers and £550

was raised. A market staff team has also entered a wolf run (a combination of three kinds of off-road running across trails, through mud and over obstacles) in April to raise funds for R.A.B.I.



Village hall plates up for 216



With match funding from Barclays, a breakfast event at Hellingly Village Hall in East Sussex raised more than £2,600. A total of 216 cooked breakfasts were served, with Gill and Brian Hesselgrave arranging the

day and friends and family helping to clear and lay tables, cook and wash up. Along with a traditional fry-up, there was homemade muesli, stewed plums and yoghurts, fresh apple juice and homemade marmalade and jams.

Repaying the favour from the pub

The Barrington Boar pub near Ilminster – on the edge of the Somerset Levels – laid on a Farmhouse breakfast event to raise £467 for R.A.B.I. The Barrington Boar breakfast event was organised by staunch R.A.B.I supporter **Sir John Lushington**. Many local villagers attended and pub staff cooked and served all of the meals. Pam Wills, R.A.B.I regional manager for the South West, said: "Many people here in Somerset

empathise with the plight of flood victims in the north. A breakfast event like this is a small but important gesture, to show victims of the recent storms that they have not been forgotten and are not alone." Pictured left to right are

landlord Stephen Carr, Somerset committee chairman Robert Mann and Sir John Lushington.



Sociable event at Spring Barn farm

● Thirty-two people from farming and business sectors attended a breakfast at Spring Barn Farm, Kingston, near Lewes in East Sussex. The morning raised £541. Thanks to Andrew Samuel, Kevin Powell, Nick Rawson and Suzanne Craig from Knill James Accountants and Steve Turner and Alan Chilvers from the Lloyds Bank Agricultural team.

● Karen Smeed, NFU group secretary for Meopham, arranged a breakfast at Manor Farm Barn, Southfleet, Kent for around 30 guests. The morning raised £325.

● A breakfast at York Mart raised more than £500.

● A breakfast at Plucks Gutter in Kent raised £681, thanks to 45 paying guests and a successful raffle. There was also a breakfast event in the Kent village of Elham, which raised a further £354. A farmhouse breakfast in Ashford generated a further £300 for R.A.B.I., with an event at The Alma in Faversham raising £345.

● A farmhouse breakfast was held at the Westlands Farm Shop in Shedfield, Southampton, by kind permission of the Collett family. Around 40 guests tucked into a delicious breakfast provided by the farm shop and £200 was raised.

● Around 200 breakfasts were served at a function at Rowberry's Nursery, Chaddersley Corbett, Worcestershire.

● Staff at Hatton Country World in Warwickshire cooked more than 100 breakfasts to raise £2701.26, to be split equally between R.A.B.I and the Addington Fund.



Cumbrian kindness

Cumbria committee chair Pat Turnbull and vice-chair Laura Wilson are pictured at the breakfast event at the offices of law firm Cartmell Shepherd in Carlisle. Forty

breakfasts were served to business people linked to the farming industry and a sum of £720 was raised. Thanks to Clydesdale Bank for their £200 donation.

Sizzling in the car park

R.A.B.I.'s Oxford office had a welcome visit from Jane Drewe and Judy Mallett of Ladies in Pigs, who sold more than 130 bacon and sausage baps to staff and surrounding businesses as part of the Farmhouse Breakfast campaign. Corporate development manager Suzy Deeley and regional manager Jenni Thompson were also busy frying bacon and sausages in the Shaw House office car park, along with Jill Dean from the Oxfordshire committee. A sum of £428.02 was raised – enough to pay for more than 1,000 litres of heating oil or cover the cost of 83 weeks' worth of line rentals for an emergency alarm. Pictured are happy customers from Oxford firm Savills with their orders.



Anthony's story: Living with muscular dystrophy

Growing up in Cornwall, Anthony Hawke always wanted to be a farmer. When he left school he got a job as a herdsman, but within a year his life was turned upside down by muscular dystrophy. Anthony spoke to Rob Harris about living with the condition.

Farming was all Anthony Hawke (pictured) ever knew as a child. His grandfather farmed 50 acres, his dad was a farmworker and his mother used to milk 250 cows every day. By the age of 16, Anthony was a strapping 17 stone herdsman himself, studying for dairying qualifications and planning his future.

A year later, however, life was very different. Struck down by muscular dystrophy, a serious muscle-wasting disease, Anthony found himself in a wheelchair with all of his plans on hold for good.

Today, at 44, Anthony lives in a specially adapted bungalow in Truro and is unable to use his arms or legs. He said: "As a kid I was always riding around on tractors. I still dream about the farming life and wish I could go back to it, just to have a couple of acres and a few chickens would be great."

"I was as strong as an ox when I got my first job but within nine months I had to quit because it got to the point where I couldn't do anything. It took a while for the doctors to diagnose me because there are only 1,000 -1,400 people in the world who have got the form of muscular dystrophy that I have."

Anthony accepts he can do nothing to change his condition, but that doesn't mean he's prepared to give up on life. He says coping with his situation mentally has always been, and remains, the toughest challenge. "I've had a lot of good times and I tell myself there are a lot of people worse off than me," he said.

"I've ridden through the New Forest and Scotland in wheelchairs, even chasing wild boar! I've got through a lot of wheelchairs because I've been

so hard on them, but that's the whole point isn't it?

"I used to drive 30,000 miles per year, go abroad and even sleep rough in the car. I slept on the side of a mountain in Germany once. I used to like waking up somewhere different everyday but now I need the comforts of home. My ambition is to get a greenhouse and a shed and make cider. I've got to keep busy. I can't sit here staring at that wall."

"My friends have been good to me. I well up just thinking about it. They've pushed me, carried me, dressed me, undressed me, put me on the toilet and put me to bed. I've been lucky to have them."

Often unable to take full breaths, Anthony pushes himself to the max because once he stops doing something it's lost, and he can't get it back.

He added: "Because I can't move my arms or legs, one of the most important pieces of equipment to me is this table, it helps keeps me up."

"I used to be able to pick up a bullock on my own and now I can't even brush my hair. But you've got to keep going, haven't you? The doctors said I wouldn't see 20,

but here I am today."

Anthony's condition means he often wakes in the night choking because of a build-up of phlegm. R.A.B.I helped buy him a special bed, so he could turn himself rather than rely on his live-in carer.

R.A.B.I also helped Anthony by purchasing him a special seat and hoist for his van and an all-terrain 'Boma' wheelchair, which has a strong but flexible steel chassis, advanced adjustable suspension and off road tyres, giving him the freedom to go out into the countryside on his own.

Anthony said: "I really can't thank R.A.B.I enough for what they've done for me over the years, they've been brilliant."



Find out exactly what we can do for you...

R.A.B.I supports working farmers, farmworkers and their families - on low incomes and with limited savings - who rely on farming for their main source of income.

Help can also be given to retired farmers, farmworkers and their dependants. R.A.B.I cannot help with business payments but we can support households with domestic payments. Call our Freephone Helpline 0808 281 9490 in complete confidence to find out what R.A.B.I can do for you, or someone you know who needs help. For more information about us go to www.rabi.org.uk or twitter.com/rabicharity. Also find us at Facebook.com/rabicharity1.

'I'll always be proud to call myself a land girl'



Mary Gamble escaped the bombing of Liverpool in the Second World War by signing up to be a land girl. Her experiences shaped the rest of her life, as she explained to Rob Harris.

Memories of being a land girl during the Second World War are something that Mary Gamble will always treasure.

Now 94, R.A.B.I beneficiary Mary lives in a housing association flat in Penzance, where she is called upon by carers four times per day.

When she was first 'sent to Penzance' as a naïve 18-year-old, Mary's step-father warned her she was going to the 'other ends of the earth'. However, it is the place where she has been at her happiest.

Born in Cheshire in 1922, Mary's father died of pneumonia when she was just one. A pier master and secretary of a lifeboat crew, he fell ill following a daring sea rescue. Mary's mother subsequently moved the family to Liverpool, where she remarried. Aged 14, Mary began work in a fruit shop, but she always longed to do something else – and to be somewhere else.

She said: "I hated the city, the rush

and the crowds, I always preferred the countryside. My grandparents on my father's side were big chicken farmers. When war broke out and they started bombing Liverpool I couldn't stand it any longer so one day, in my lunch break, I decided to join the Land Army without even telling my mother. She was quite cross when she eventually found out and said 'How can you do such a thing?'

"I was the only one left at home as my two brothers were both in the Merchant Navy. One of them had been torpedoed, but was saved." It wasn't long before Mary got a letter informing her of a farming vacancy in Penzance, a place she hadn't even heard of. She caught a train to Cornwall and was met at midnight by the person she would be working for, Mrs Charles Williams, a notable property owner in the county. The Women's Land Army was a civilian organisation that called upon women to work in agriculture and fill

the void left by the thousands of men who had signed up for the military. More than a third of all land girls came from London and the industrial cities in the north of England, but they had important jobs to do as the war effort desperately needed more food. "There were two of us from Liverpool making that trip to Penzance but the other girl couldn't stick it and went back home inside a week," said Mary.

"I loved it though. It was hard, physical work but I was a bit of a tomboy so it suited me down to the ground."

The learning curve was steep for a girl from the city who had never even seen a pig before, let alone mucked one out. She explained: "I loved pigs – people would call them stinky but I actually liked their smell. I still do. "I would ride into town on a pony and trap and also milk cows by hand. We picked potatoes and sugar beet. I would be up at six most mornings and sometimes still working at nine or 10 at night but we always had a lot of fun. We ate well too, because the boss would always give us a leg of pork or some cream. If we ran short of milk we would just take our flasks into work and fill them up ourselves, straight from the cow."

When the war ended, Mary briefly returned to Liverpool to work in a cotton factory before going back to Penzance to marry and set up home with her sweetheart Francis – who in 1940 had taken her to the pictures for the very first time in her life to see Clark Gable in 'Gone with the Wind'. In the years that followed, Francis worked as a head gardener for a local hospital. Mary never returned to the land but she revisits those Cornish fields – which she worked in for more than five years – every day in her mind. And they keep getting greener.

She said: "All those people and farms have gone now but I've got so many happy memories, I absolutely loved the life. My mother came down once to visit and she could see what it all meant to me. She sat in a deckchair for several hours and watched me at work, chopping row upon row of sugar beet for hours on end.

"She looked up at me and said 'I never thought you'd have the patience for this' but I simply loved it. And I have always been proud to call myself a land girl."

Working as a welfare officer has been 'most rewarding'

Meriel Edwards, welfare officer for South West Wales (Carmarthenshire, Cardiganshire and Pembrokeshire) is retiring.

Meriel was one of R.A.B.I.'s original eight welfare officers, recruited in 1999. She is leaving after close to 17 years with the charity. Previously, Meriel worked for the local authority, helping people to buy council houses. She said: "Working for R.A.B.I. has been the most rewarding job I've ever had.

"Things have evolved

a lot since I first started, particularly in terms of information and technology. "However, what matters most is helping people to give them a better quality of life. That is something that has not changed.

"One of the first people I ever helped was a farmer's wife living in council accommodation on £50 per week following a stroke. She didn't know what help was available to her and had a coal burner, even though she couldn't get the coal in. "It was lovely to be able to get central heating

for her, install a shower and things like that."

Meriel says she regards most of the people she visits in her working life as friends and accepts that she will 'miss them greatly'.

"Although you might not visit someone for several months, you build bonds over time," she said.

"In this job you see some terrible sights – things you never wish to see again – but you also get to do some lovely things. It's the right time for me to go, but it will leave a huge gap in my life."



RETIRING: Meriel Edwards, who has worked for R.A.B.I since 1999.

New manager for West Midlands



Becky Davies (pictured) is R.A.B.I.'s regional manager for the West Midlands for the next 12 months. Becky will be covering the counties of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Worcestershire

and Warwickshire. She is covering for **Kate Jones**, who is on maternity leave having recently given birth to her second son, Otis. "I'm hugely excited by the challenge and keen to throw myself into the work," said

farmer's daughter Becky, who grew up on a mixed dairy / sheep / arable farm. Becky also worked for Shropshire Council for eight years and for a local agricultural machinery firm.

She added: "I started work on February 1 and I will be attending shows and conferences, giving talks and developing relationships with local companies and organisations, as well as working with our wonderful volunteers and county committees who do so much to raise money for R.A.B.I."

To contact Becky, call 07876 492839 or email RM.West-Midlands@rabi.org.uk

Milly's off to pastures new



Milly Fyfe, regional manager for the East Midlands (pictured), is leaving R.A.B.I in May. Milly has been offered the prestigious role of chief executive at the Beef and Dairy Shorthorn Cattle Society, based at Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire.

Milly, who has been a regional manager for eight years, will be a hard act to follow and Stephen Noble, head of fundraising

& development, said: "It is the ideal role for Milly: combining her passions for livestock farming and premium food marketing with a significant leadership challenge that is nothing if not a substantial career development. "I want to thank Milly for such a strong and consistent contribution to R.A.B.I in the East Midlands and beyond. "I admire Milly's drive, energy and creativity."

What R.A.B.I means to me

Peter Hickling, Essex R.A.B.I committee secretary



Working as NFU group secretary in North Essex in 1995, one part of the job that was not mentioned to me at interview was that I would act as the R.A.B.I secretary in Essex. It was definitely not suggested that I might still be in that role in 2016! I've no complaints, however, as I thoroughly enjoy my involvement with what is a great and successful charity serving the farming community. We have a small but enthusiastic and efficient committee, responsible for arranging a programme of fundraising events in the county. We always aim to put on events with a social side, maybe a traditional black tie dinner, a Sunday lunch, a harvest festival in Chelmsford Cathedral, a sponsored horse ride or an annual golf day. Whilst we have a nucleus of great, regular farming supporters we also try and spread the word about the work of R.A.B.I amongst the general public, especially if that means we can encourage their financial support. The kindness of people never ceases to amaze me - whether it is by way of a generous donation, finding a table of friends to join us for lunch, buying a handful of raffle tickets or an offer of help when organising an event. We noticed this particularly in Essex when celebrating the charity's 150th anniversary in 2010. It has continued in the following years. Another really pleasant surprise comes when we hear from Shaw House that a legacy has been received in memory of someone who we all knew well. We would have loved to have thanked them personally. We have a close affinity with our regional managers and welfare officers and this gives us an insight into their work and how the funds that we have raised are used locally. One of the jewels in the R.A.B.I crown is just up the road... Manson House in Suffolk. I hope they are taking bookings!

Chief executive honoured at the House of Lords

R.A.B.I CEO Paul Burrows has been advanced to the Fellowship of the Royal Agricultural Societies for his outstanding contribution to UK agriculture. Paul attended an official reception in the Cholmondeley Room of the House of Lords on February 10, receiving his certificate from HRH Countess of Wessex. The reception was hosted by Baroness Byford. The Fellowship of Royal Agricultural Societies is coordinated by CARAS (the Council for Awards of Royal Agricultural Societies). There are two



categories of awards, initially Associateship (ARAGS) and then the senior award of Fellowship (FRAGS). Paul said: "It was a great honour to accept

this award on behalf of R.A.B.I as a whole, in recognition of the work that we do." Paul is pictured with HRH Countess of Wessex.

Beth departs for post at illustrious museum

R.A.B.I said a fond farewell in February to fundraising and development co-ordinator Beth Steiner (below). 'Doctor' Beth, who has two Masters Degrees (in mythology and theology) as well as a PhD in Old Testament theology, took up a post with

the Russell-Cotes Museum in Bournemouth as a fundraising officer. Beth has relocated to Bournemouth for her new job after seven years in Oxford. She will be much missed by her friends at Shaw House, and we wish her every success for the future.



Louise joins Shaw House team in digital media role



January saw a new member of staff join the communications team in Oxford. Communications officer Louise Courtney (pictured) will focus on digital media, with key responsibilities including maintaining and developing the R.A.B.I website and social media channels. Prior to joining R.A.B.I, Louise worked as website manager for the Saïd Business School, Oxford University, where she supported a large team of content contributors and led the team to deliver a new website for the school. Louise says she is very happy to be using her experience to help a charity. Louise is based at Shaw House and works closely with communications manager Rob Harris and operations manager Kris Band.

Applications fast-tracked in the wake of Desmond

Series of storms cause mayhem and misery in the north

First there was Storm Desmond. Then Storm Evie was quickly followed by Storm Frank.

For many in northern England it's been a miserable winter of wringing out both the old and new, with flooding and storm damage repeatedly wreaking havoc across towns and communities.

R.A.B.I has been fast-tracking claims for help from those in the farming world affected by the storms and unprecedented levels of rainfall. From December 7- March 7 R.A.B.I paid out £82,000 to flood victims in Cumbria, Lancashire, Durham and Wales. Paul Burrows, chief executive of R.A.B.I, said: "The scenes witnessed

in Cumbria and other parts of northern England will have terrible consequences for months and years to come. Getting people back on their feet will be a long and difficult process. Farmers are resilient people but events such as this can quickly push someone to their limit. In the north of England flooding has exacerbated other problems such as falling commodity prices or people not receiving Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) money from the Rural Payments Agency (RPA).

"These are certainly very challenging times for the farming industry, but we will continue to do what we have always done, which is support those in the farming world on low incomes with limited means."

R.A.B.I's regional managers and welfare officers have been extremely busy, liaising with other agencies including The Prince's Countryside Fund, Farming Community Network, NFU, The Cumbria Farmers' Network, YFC, Forage Aid and the Churches Rural Commission.

North West regional welfare officer Jackie Clegg and North West regional manager Georgina Lamb, in conjunction with the Farming Community Network, held surgeries for people affected by flooding in Cumbria and Lancashire before Christmas.

This was a deliberate tactic to engage face-to-face with those needing assistance, highlighting the fact that emergency help is available. Paul Burrows also met with HRH The Prince of Wales and other representatives of the Prince's Countryside Fund to discuss what further help can be given to those affected in the coming months. R.A.B.I is part of a new collaborative initiative – the Cumbria Farm Flood Action Group – formed to provide ongoing support to those farmers reeling from the after-effects of Storm Desmond.

The Cumbria Farm Flood Action Group also comprises the Farming Community Network, The Farmer Network, Cumbria Commoners, NFU, Foundation for Common Land, Forage Aid, Cumbria Agricultural Chaplaincy, Addington Fund, Westmorland Agricultural Society and Mitchells Auction.

Georgina Lamb believes there is still much to do to get flood-affected farmers back on their feet and the plight of many remains 'desperate' – especially those who have suffered from repeated flooding.

She said: "When we held the four surgeries at auction marts in Cumbria we were approached by more than 60 people."

To enquire about financial help from R.A.B.I please call the Freephone confidential helpline 0808 281 9490 or email grants@rabi.org.uk

For information on how to make a donation to R.A.B.I go to www.rabi.org.uk



**ABOVE: BBC Radio 4 Farming Today presenter Caz Graham and welfare officer Jackie Clegg at an auction mart surgery in Carlisle.
BELOW: A flooded scene in York.**



Generous donation of £25,000 from The Daily Mail fund

R.A.B.I received a generous donation of £25,000 from The Daily Mail to help victims of flooding in the aftermath of the December / January storms. The Daily Mail's Christmas Flood Appeal broke the £1 million barrier inside 17 days. The money was

distributed to various charities helping those affected by the storms. The Mail's appeal was welcomed by Environment Secretary Elizabeth Truss, who said: "The great British public is world renowned for its resilience and generosity of spirit."

"It's truly humbling to see so many people reaching out to the families affected, and this is another fantastic initiative."

Most of the Mail's appeal fund money went to community foundations set up in Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cumbria.

'I never thought this would happen'



LEFT: Allan Butler (right of picture) surveys the damage with NFU adviser Adam Briggs. ABOVE: A field of potatoes is destroyed.

Grower Allan Butler says he feels like he has 'worked all of his life for nothing' after losing around 55 acres of crops, worth an estimated £230k, because of flooding. Part of a river embankment which protects the land at Causeway Farm in Rufford, Lancashire, gave way on Boxing Day allowing floodwater to submerge land that housed his potatoes, cabbages and spring cabbages. The floodwater was more than 10ft deep in some fields. "I'd usually harvest my potatoes in mid-December but struggled as my son had to have a hernia operation," said Allan, whose farm is close to the River Douglas.

"Basically all of my cash crop was under water." The water came through a two-metre gap in the embankment. Mr Butler says he previously asked the Environment Agency to make sure the embankment was plugged with sandbags and other materials. In terms of turnover, he says he lost an estimated £48,000 of potatoes, £20,000 of cabbage and £160,000 of spring cabbage. "What really worries me is the threat of the bank bursting again," added Mr Butler, who was uninsured. "For me personally how can I recover and begin to grow high value crops again without any protection and the very

real threat of the bank bursting again within my lifetime?" "I told the Environment Agency there was a problem with the embankment. It's also breaking in other places. As a grower, I can't move crops. If it were cows or sheep you might lose a few, but you wouldn't lose everything." NFU Lancashire County Adviser, Adam Briggs, said: "A great deal of the focus has been on the impact of the flooding on urban businesses. However we have seen a great deal of damage to farmland and the cost to agriculture will run into millions. "In West Lancashire horticulture is a major sector and employs

thousands of people generating millions for the local and national economy. Just because the area flooded is not on hard standing ground does not mean that the economic impact of flooding is less devastating. "We need to find solutions which recognise the importance of farmland and protect it where necessary." Allan Butler says he does not know what the future holds. He said: "I'm 56, I work stupid hours and I'll end probably end up with a mortgage bigger than when I started out. I never thought this would happen. There's nothing I can do and everyone thinks I'm going bust."

Unprecedented rainfall? It's becoming a regular thing

Bryan Fell says he was luckier than most during the floods, despite losing six sheep, having floodwater in all of his sheds and being forced to make a 30-40 mile detour just to get to the other side of his farm. Bryan, a beef and sheep farmer from Bassenthwaite, just outside Keswick in Cumbria, was forced to make a much longer journey to check stock on outlying fields because a bridge was subsequently closed for safety reasons. A stream running through his land effectively split the farm two and left gravel and debris everywhere.

The clear-up bill was estimated at £20k. One two-hectare field was particularly hard hit with a third of it covered in slate and rubble, which washed down from the foothills of Skiddaw. His sheep were trapped and the water was more than two feet deep in some of the sheds, but he managed to keep it out of the family home. He says the damage will have a massive impact on his business with next summer's grazing land sure to be affected. "I was luckier than most and didn't lose too much," he added.

"The stream that runs through our farm has flooded three times in the past 10 years, but never to this extent. My father farmed the land before me and he says it never flooded in 70 years." "They tell us it was unprecedented rainfall and it probably was, but we're seeing it every couple of years now. "Every farmer in Cumbria has been affected. If they don't look to get the debris out of the bottom of the riverbed onto the riverbank we're going to see floods, lose farmland and lose stock."

Light a beacon for HM The Queen

To mark HM The Queen's 90th Birthday on April 21, beacons will be lit throughout the country. There is a long and unbroken tradition of celebrating royal jubilees, weddings, coronations and special birthdays with the lighting of beacons, on top of mountains, churches and castle battlements, on town and village greens, farms, country parks and estates and along the beaches surrounding our shores. The last major beacon celebration was on Her Majesty The Queen's Diamond Jubilee on June 4 2012. R.A.B.I CEO Paul Burrows said:

"R.A.B.I is proud to be part of this special occasion and I would like to encourage you to join us by getting involved in this unique and historic tribute to our monarch. Your Beacon event can be as large or small as you wish and if you like, you can use it to fundraise for R.A.B.I." If you plan to hold an event in aid of R.A.B.I please let us know by emailing details (including location, likely number of attendees and which type of beacon you will be using) to info@rabi.org.uk using the subject 'Beacon event in aid of R.A.B.I'. For more information go to www.rabi.org.uk

£1.9m given out in 2015

In 2015, R.A.B.I gave out £1,873,122.62 in grants, assisting 1,340 individuals and families. This second figure reflects a small decrease of 54 on 2014. Ninety per cent of people helped in 2015 were no longer working due to illness, old age or disability, while 10 per cent of those helped were working farmers. This ratio was identical to 2014. In total, 11,089 grants were given out. Trish Pickford, R.A.B.I's head of welfare, said: "What really matters is the difference we can make to the lives of people who are suffering financial hardship, especially where they are

unable to improve their circumstances themselves. "Inevitably and sadly, a large number of beneficiaries die each year and R.A.B.I also suspends regular grants if the beneficiary's financial situation improves considerably. "If we know that someone is lonely, isolated or vulnerable, a regional welfare officer will continue to visit, even if we are no longer sending grants." Many people visited by welfare officers received other forms of support apart from grants, such as help obtaining state benefits. A number of working

farmers received business appraisals through our links with Promar, to assist them with future planning and decision-making. Many people also received advice and information direct from head office. Trish added: "Although it does not necessarily show on the figures for grant-giving, we have helped many more people than it appears and changed their lives for the better. "We obtained £390,590 in state benefits, tax credits and other grants for beneficiaries and have been kept busy helping people make claims and challenge decisions."



PEOPLE MATTER: R.A.B.I's trustees, pictured at the last AGM.

Regional Welfare Officers

For welfare enquiries please contact our Helpline number 0808 281 9490 (Oxford)

TOM ARMSTRONG
NORTH

Northumberland, County Durham, Scotland



SUZIE PATON
SOUTH CENTRAL ENGLAND
Oxfordshire, Wiltshire, Somerset (north), Gloucestershire (south), Avon



TO BE ANNOUNCED
SOUTH WEST WALES
Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire



JOHN BASNETT
NE ENGLAND
Yorkshire, Derbyshire



CATHY DENSLOW
SOUTH ENGLAND
Somerset (south), Dorset, Hampshire, Isle of Wight



CLAIRE CRICHARD
SOUTH EAST WALES & BORDERS
Brecon & Radnor, Glamorgan, Monmouthshire, Worcestershire, Gloucestershire (north), Herefordshire



JILL LINE
NE ENGLAND
Lincolnshire, Riding of East Yorkshire



SALLY HUBBARD
EAST ENGLAND
Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Norfolk



LIZ HOARE
SOUTH WEST ENGLAND
Cornwall, Devon



JACKIE CLEGG
NORTH WEST ENGLAND
Cheshire, Lancashire, Cumbria, Staffordshire, Merseyside



PAT DOBSON
SE ENGLAND
Berkshire, Surrey, Sussex (east & west), Kent, Middlesex, Essex, London



All enquiries to our welfare department will be dealt with in the strictest confidence

SARA GARNER
MIDLANDS
Warwickshire, Northants, Nottinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Leicestershire, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, West Midlands



MEL JONES
NORTH WALES & SHROPSHIRE
Anglesey, Conwy, Caernarfon, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Wrexham, Merionethshire, Shropshire, Montgomeryshire,



R.A.B.I.
Supporting Farming Families

Supporting farmers for 156 years

The reality of farming life is often very different from what people imagine. Many in the industry are so close to the brink that when something out of the ordinary happens, it tips them over the edge. If that happens to you, or someone you know, give R.A.B.I a call.

Our work in 2015



£1.9m

How much we gave out in grants



79,000

Home-cooked meals prepared at our two residential care homes

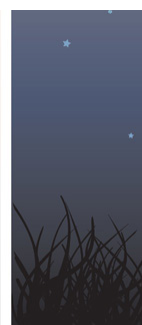


£390,590

The total we helped people to claim in state benefits

A shoulder to lean on through every season

Last year, we paid out more than £156k to working farmers to help them cope with such things as illness, flooding and animal disease. In 2015 we also gave:



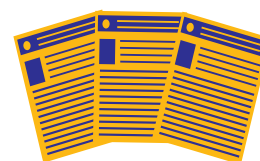
£122,039

For disability equipment & adaptations



£48,366

For housing repairs and home improvements



£221,885

Towards clearing domestic bills

Call R.A.B.I today... we do more than you think

If you or someone you know works in farming and is in need of help, telephone 0808 2819490 – Just Ask!

The Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution, Shaw House, 27 West Way, Oxford OX2 0QH
Reg. charity number 208858



Website www.rabi.org.uk Helpline 0808 2819490 General enquiries 01865 724931 Email grants@rabi.org.uk

Regional News

R.A.B.I has county committees across England and Wales, who work at a local level to raise awareness of the charity as well as funds. Committees are the lifeblood of R.A.B.I and we very much value the time and effort that people put into supporting us, out in the farming community and beyond.

Singing Farmers going out on high note

It really is the end for The Singing Farmers, who have raised more than £100,000 for R.A.B.I since their formation in 2004. The group's farewell tour takes place in May.

"We know the demand is still there, but the time has come for us to go out on a high," said singer/guitarist Chris Berry.

"The farewell tour will feature five dates across Yorkshire and Durham and this will hopefully give everyone the opportunity to see us for the last time."

The Singing Farmers concerts first took place in 2004 when Chris pulled together the line-up that has remained the same ever since. Chris added: "It turned out far bigger than any of us ever envisaged. When I first came up with the idea and mentioned it to the then regional organiser of R.A.B.I, Christine Andrews, it was only meant to be for four concerts.

"With five dates this year we will have played 52 concerts in total and raised well in excess of £100,000. It has been a very real pleasure to perform alongside the others and I think in our own small way we have brought something special to our

BELOW: The Singing Farmers, who play a mix of country, folk, songs from the shows and pop music.



audiences." The Singing Farmers are: Tony Richards, Ken Jackson, Charles Marwood, Phillip Holden and Chris Berry.

Sally Conner, R.A.B.I regional manager for the North East, said: "They are all such wonderful people and their enthusiasm and dedication has enabled us to raise the profile of the charity.

"Their concerts are a real joy and everyone should make

that extra special effort to come along and see them for the very last time."

The farewell tour dates are as follows: Friday May 6, Teesdale School, Barnard Castle (7.30pm); Sunday May 8, The Mart Theatre, Skipton (2.30pm); Sunday May 15, The Milton Rooms, Malton (2.30pm); Friday May 20, The Forum, Northallerton (7.30pm); Sunday May 22, Riley Smith Hall, Tadcaster (2.30pm).

Wizard fundraiser

● A fundraising dinner will be held at Oxford University's Great Hall at Christ Church College – which provided the backdrop for scenes in the Harry Potter films. The Oxfordshire R.A.B.I committee raised more than £24,000 at the 2014 dinner for 300 people in the historic Christ Church hall. Supported by Henmans Freeth, the 2016 dinner takes place on April 12. Guest speaker this year is Chris Green, better known as 'The Cornish Countryman', a true 'hunter gatherer' who regularly demonstrates his skills at agricultural shows and on TV programmes such as 'A Cook on the Wild Side'.

● Rolla's Team won the annual Ulverston NFU quiz at The Old Mill at Bardsea on February 19. Sixty guests enjoyed an entertaining evening hosted by Ulverston group secretary Andrew Pye and his office staff. The event raised £650.

North Yorkshire committee honours Brian

Noreen Abell was presented with a president's badge on behalf of her husband Brian, who died last year. Brian, from Harrogate, was instrumental in setting up the North Yorkshire R.A.B.I committee and was its first chairman. He received the Dennis Brown Shield at the 2007 AGM awards in recognition of his charity work, particularly for creating and inspiring the 'Cooking Canons' with Rev Canon Leslie Morley in order to showcase local produce. Noreen agreed to take on

the role of North Yorkshire committee president herself. Pictured are the Reverend Canon Leslie Morley,

Noreen Abell, David Anderson (North Yorkshire committee chairman) and Chris Andrews (former R.A.B.I regional manager).



Peterborough Showground stages top festival

Berkshire Association's annual meeting

Outgoing chair of the Royal East Berkshire Agricultural Association, Russell Watts, presented a cheque for £1,000 to R.A.B.I. head of fundraising Stephen Noble at their AGM. R.A.B.I. was one of three charities supported by the association.

The AGM was held at Fernygrove Farm Shop near Warfield.

Pictured left to right are Stephen Noble, Bill Bird (2015 REBAA president) and Russell Watts. REBAA was formed 160 years ago so slightly predates R.A.B.I. The Queen is also their patron. REBAA runs a handful of events each

year including a plough match and a dog show in late September. One of their members, Rowena Westacott, also serves on the Berkshire R.A.B.I. committee.



Cheshire chairman collects cheque from NFU group

Cheshire county chairman Norman Lawson received a cheque from former Cheshire NFU group secretary Mike Case for £4,500 on behalf of R.A.B.I. This money came from the social section account

of the Chester and Wirral Farmers Club, who wanted to support those in the farming sector needing financial help. Over the past 45 years, events held have included Mersey ferry trips and

medieval banquets. Also pictured, third from left, is Ray Brown, Cheshire NFU county chairman, who presented R.A.B.I. with a cheque for £340, raised at his annual county chairman's dinner.



Fierce bidding at Smithfield

The 2015 East of England Smithfield Festival, held at the Peterborough Showground, provided a forum where the best cattle and lambs in the country could compete. There were new elements to the 2015 festival, with 'no nonsense' seminars from industry experts. Every competitor in the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution Charity Sheep Class was given a R.A.B.I. gift bag and charity chairman Chris Riddle presented the trophies. Smithfield also provided a glass tumbler for every entrant. Trustee William Cumber and regional manager

Lucy Bellefontaine were on hand to give a talk on R.A.B.I.'s work and Christine Bish and Joy Martin from the Cambridgeshire committee handed out thank you gifts. Proceeds from the beef rib auction were split

between R.A.B.I. and the Addington Fund. R.A.B.I. will receive £580. Bidding at the sheep auction was fierce with a top price of £285 paid. In total, £1,310 was raised in the auction run by Melton Meats.



Otley show is set for May 21

● Organisers of the Otley Show donated £750 to R.A.B.I.

Otley Show and Wharfedale Agricultural Society president, Mark Loffhouse, said: "Farmers have been the backbone of Otley Show for more than 200 years. We are delighted we can help by way of this donation towards a very worthwhile cause which supports the farming community – particularly at this time following severe flooding in many rural areas."

The 2016 Otley Show will be held on May 21 and has lined up Bob Hogg and his Sheepdog and Duck display – together with his Lamb National – as the main arena attraction.

● R.A.B.I. was one of two chosen show charities at the Midlands Machinery Show in Newark, Nottinghamshire. Christmas cards were sold on the R.A.B.I. stand and competitions were held over both days of the show, with a bucket collection on day one. In total, £317.35 was raised.

● A cheese and wine evening at Cheerbrook Farmshop in Nantwich, Cheshire, was hosted by the Shufflebotham family. Eighty guests packed into the shop for a social evening with cheese donated by Joseph Heler. Panic struck when hostess Miranda Shufflebotham could not find the enormous bowl of chutney which she made especially for the event (it mysteriously turned up 24 hours later in the boot of her car). On sale were fashion jewellery from Classic Jewels of Ellesmere Port and clothing from Nantwich firm 'Style Has No Size'. The evening raised £850 for R.A.B.I.

Quizzers come up with all the correct answers

R.A.B.I held its first ever fundraising event in Monmouthshire and more than 200 people attended a quiz night to help raise £3,000.

R.A.B.I is currently looking to expand its work in Monmouthshire and the quiz night at Maria's award-winning mart café at Monmouthshire Livestock Centre on January 21 – in aid of struggling farmers – was a resounding success. The newly-formed Monmouthshire R.A.B.I committee organised the evening, with John

Briggs taking on the role of quizmaster. Gwilym Richards, who has been elected chairman of Monmouthshire's R.A.B.I committee, thanked people – including many from the local farming community – for attending. R.A.B.I regional manager for Wales, Linda Jones, said: "I am extremely impressed with the level of enthusiasm and motivation shown by our new Monmouthshire committee. They have worked together as a team and hosted an incredible event to raise much

needed funds to support farming families. We are keen to develop our links here and that means making sure that farming people who need our help do not slip through the net."

Monmouthshire's fundraising efforts were further boosted by donations of £1,500 from St John's Monmouthshire Freemasons Lodge, £300 from Coleg Gwent (raised at the Usk college students' Christmas Fayre) and £75 from Llanvetherine Carol Singers.

Quizzers enjoyed drinks and a fabulous buffet provided by Maria and her staff and R.A.B.I's deputy chairman and quiz scorer for the evening, Malcolm Thomas MBE, provided an insight to the charity's ongoing work, particularly in Wales. R.A.B.I county committee secretary Kate Beavan added: "It was a wonderful evening and to raise nearly £3,000 for the charity at our first event bodes well for the future."



MAJOR CONTRIBUTION: St John's Monmouthshire Freemasons Lodge donated £1,500.

40,000 visitors over two days in Peterborough

The Lamma Show, held at the Peterborough Showground over two days in January, is the UK's largest farm machinery,

equipment and agricultural services show. R.A.B.I had a stand at the show to promote the charity and the Cambridgeshire

committee kick-started their annual grand draw by selling £420 worth of raffle tickets. Lucy Bellefontaine, R.A.B.I regional manager for the east, was at the show and said: "Visitor numbers were close to 40,000 over the two days and people came from all over Europe. It was a great opportunity to catch up with businesses and supporters of R.A.B.I in the agricultural industry."

Lucy, second from right, is pictured receiving a cheque for £1676.75 from representatives of the East of England Agricultural Society.



£1,000 bid for shooting lot

● Northamptonshire R.A.B.I held an event at Flore Fields by kind permission of Catherine Morton. Thanks to Ellacotts for sponsoring the evening which raised £3,647 via an auction, ticket sales and a raffle. The top auction lot was a day's shooting for two guns which made an impressive £1,000. Also coming under the hammer was a glider flight across the Solent, a selection of wines (donated by Agrii) and a trip around New Holland's Basildon factory kindly donated by Turneys.

● Three new committee members came forward at Gloucestershire R.A.B.I's open February meeting. The aim was to encourage new people to get involved and develop ideas for 2016. Stephen Noble, R.A.B.I's head of fundraising and development attended the meeting.

● A Plough Sunday service at Ashburnham Chapel in East Sussex raised £330.80. Another service is already pencilled in for next year on January 8. Thanks to all involved in this year's event and many other Plough Sunday services around the country.

● The Kingham Plough in West Oxfordshire raised £121.38 at a charity quiz night at the start of 2016. R.A.B.I regional manager Jenni Thompson attended and helped pub owner Miles Lampson deliver some challenging and entertaining questions.

● More than £550 was raised at Holsworthy Market's annual poultry sale. James Morrish of Kivells auctioned some super John Deere toy tractors for R.A.B.I, with the toys being provided by Smallridge Bros.

Yorkshire farmer's generous £10k donation

Sister's chance encounter in wet show tent

A Yorkshire farmer, who would prefer to stay anonymous, has donated £10,000 to R.A.B.I to say thank you for the help he received 14 years ago when he was rushed into hospital with a ruptured bowel and septicaemia. His condition was so serious he was off work for two years. Here, he tells his story...

"I was a self-employed farmer, working alongside my father who was 75. I hadn't really been ill but through the weekend I didn't feel well and it got worse and worse. I had spraying to do and carried on, but eventually it ended with an ambulance coming and me waking up in hospital, having had a colostomy, wondering how we were ever

going to manage. "Coincidentally, my sister, who lives in Powys, went to the Royal Welsh Show and it was pelting down. She took shelter in the R.A.B.I tent and began talking about my situation. As a result, John Basnett (R.A.B.I welfare officer) came out to see me and I got a monthly allowance of £800 for 12 months – I can't tell you how important

that money was to us. "Now, I'm in a position to give something back to R.A.B.I. Being off work for so long forced us to make some radical changes and we sorted ourselves out. R.A.B.I gave us that chance. The help we received allowed me, my wife and mum and dad to make adjustments. "I'm in my 60s now

and although I've still got the farm I've effectively retired. My dad is 92 and in a nursing home – but whenever I go and see him I ask him what he wants to do and he says 'come home and go to work'. "If my sister hadn't gone to the Royal Welsh Show that day – and if it hadn't been raining – I'm not sure what we would have done."

Spring ball at Langstone Cliffs



Around 100 guests gathered for the Devon Spring Ball at the Langstone Cliffs Hotel, Dawlish Warren. More than £1,500 was raised for R.A.B.I and the Devon YFC building project. Pictured are some of the young farmers who attended.

Hampshire chair is elected again

● The Hampshire R.A.B.I committee AGM was held on Wednesday February 24 at the Church Rooms, Colden Common, Hampshire. More than 30 people attended the meeting. Last year, the Hampshire committee raised around £33,585.

● The Pymoor Agricultural Association held a Valentine's Ball for R.A.B.I and 120 guests attended the evening at Ely Football Club. Thanks to the association for thinking of R.A.B.I (we are still awaiting final figures of funds raised).

● Somerset R.A.B.I committee chairman Robert Mann's birthday party raised £535, thanks to generous donations in lieu of presents.

● Waitrose's Community Matters Scheme in Buckingham resulted in R.A.B.I receiving a cheque for £159.

Plough carried through cathedral

The Plough Sunday service at Chichester Cathedral on February 7 was in aid of R.A.B.I and the Farming Community Network (FCN). Around 150 guests attended, including the High Sheriff and Mayor of Chichester.

Traditionally, this service was held in January, on the first Sunday of Epiphany, to mark the beginning of the agricultural year. Before farmers had their own ploughs, the communal village plough would have been brought to the local church, decorated with ribbons and blessed for the work of ploughing and tilling the land. Winter sown cereals mean that few, if any, farmers now start ploughing in January, yet the purpose

of the service remains the same. Chichester Young Farmers carried the horse plough (kindly provided by Ivon Wadey) through the

cathedral and it was followed by the R.A.B.I standard. Charles Smith, FCN chief executive, gave an excellent address and Neve

Cordingly and Clive Brickell, senior lecturer at Plumpton Agricultural College, both gave readings. A collection raised £502.

BELOW: Chichester YFC.



Ivor's generous gesture marks his 80th birthday



Ivor Davies, a stalwart of the Carmarthenshire county committee, invited 120 guests to his 80th birthday party in November, but didn't receive any gifts. Instead, he asked friends and family to mark his special milestone with a donation to R.A.B.I., a generous and unselfish gesture that resulted in Linda Jones, regional manager for Wales, being presented with a cheque for £1,420. Ivor, a former dairy farmer, understands there are many people in the farming sector currently facing severe financial

pressures. "It's dreadful what's happening to a lot of farmers," he said. "I've a lot of sympathy for them." Ivor first got involved with R.A.B.I. more than 10 years ago through his friend John Howell, a former committee chairman. Linda Jones said: "Ivor is such a lovely man, he is usually first to arrive to set up an event and the last to leave after clearing up." "He also acts as an MC for whist drives all over Carmarthenshire for various charities. He's out nearly every night helping someone." As a younger man, Ivor was

a leading stock judge who represented Great Britain in a competition in Jamaica. He said: "I spent a month in Jamaica in 1956 and we sailed over on a banana boat – it was awful! When it came to returning we discovered there was a two-year waiting list, because so many Jamaicans were trying to come to England at the time. In the end they flew us to Florida and we sailed back on the Queen Mary from New York." Ivor is pictured third from left, with Linda, centre and other members of the Carmarthenshire committee.

Tedworth Hunt rallies to the call

- Supporters of the Tedworth Hunt have raised more than £4,000 for R.A.B.I. The Tedworth Hunt, based in Wiltshire, was started in 1826. They have been raising funds for R.A.B.I. for 17 years and their most recent meet on February 4 generated more than £500, with some 50-60 huntsmen and supporters turning out on a beautiful, calm morning. Jenni Thompson, R.A.B.I. regional manager for South Central, said: "Over the years, The Tedworth Hunt has raised more than £4,000 for R.A.B.I. – a fantastic sum of money which would have covered all of our home care grants in Wiltshire in 2014."

- Henlle Park, Oswestry, will once again host the Wales & Shropshire golf day on Friday June 3. Teams of four can register for £168, which includes a bacon roll and coffee, a barbecue after nine holes and a carvery two-course following 18 holes. This year's event will be supported by Agri Advisor Solicitors.

- Turnworth Church in Dorset donated £126.40 following their harvest festival.

Packed congregation celebrates farming year at Reaseheath College

Parishioners came together to celebrate the new farming year at a Plough Sunday service at Reaseheath College. A packed congregation gathered in Nantwich college's historic old hall to take part in the service, which raised £454 for R.A.B.I. Reaseheath College donated £210 from the sale of lunches. The service was conducted by Rev Anne Lawson, vicar of Acton, Church Minshull, Worleston and Wettenhall. She said: "The purpose of this service was to encourage communities to gather

together to celebrate the traditional start of the farming year and also to raise awareness of the work of R.A.B.I. "Plough Sunday hasn't been marked at Reaseheath College in recent times and I was delighted that the service was such a success." R.A.B.I. regional manager Georgina Lamb, who attended the service, said: "This was a great opportunity for us to give thanks for the contribution our farming communities make by providing food for our tables and by caring for



SUNDAY SERVICE: Reaseheath principal Meredydd David, Rev Anne Lawson and Georgina Lamb celebrate Plough Sunday.

the wider landscape. "It also allowed us to remember that farming families have been

particularly hard hit by bad weather and will continue to suffer financially for some time to come."

Artist gives work to the prize draw



SCENE OF SNOWDON: Brian Jones with Cerri Roberts and members of the West Bromwich Building Society in Newtown.

A painting of Snowdon by artist Brian Jones was presented to prize draw winner Cerri Roberts at the West Bromwich Building Society in Newtown.

Cerri selected the winning square at a Christmas carol concert at the Welsh Livestock Centre in December.

Tricia Jones, manager of the West Bromwich Building Society and a member of the Montgomeryshire R.A.B.I. county committee, helped sell the squares along with other members of staff and county committee colleagues.

A soup-selling day was also held at the building society branch when Wales Rally GB visited the town.

More than £600 was raised for R.A.B.I. from both initiatives. Thanks to Tricia and her team for their efforts and to Brian Jones for donating such a magnificent painting.

The Radnor Twurzels got the party started at the Welshpool Livestock Centre concert, which also raised £665.

The Radnor Twurzels, who hail from Rhayader, were supported by local YFC member Will Lister and the Welshpool High School Band – who accompanied the community singing and performed some instrumental numbers, including a rousing rendition of Bon Jovi's 'Living On a Prayer'.

Archbishop of York hears about farming challenges

Sally Conner, R.A.B.I.'s regional manager for the north east, spent some time with John Sentamu, Archbishop of York, when he passed through her region as part of his Diocesan Pilgrimage of Prayer, Witness and Blessing. Sally was invited to meet the Archbishop by her local vicar in order to discuss the work that R.A.B.I. does in supporting the farming community. After a discussion over lunch and a visit to the church, school and various stops

around the village, Sally accompanied the Archbishop to the next village to 'hand over' to his next host on the next stage of his journey.

Sally said: "The Archbishop is a determined man and was genuinely interested to hear about R.A.B.I., farming and the challenges facing rural communities." The Archbishop's began his pilgrimage in November 2015 and will complete his journey in May 2016.



PILGRIMAGE: Archbishop of York, John Sentamu, with R.A.B.I. regional manager Sally Conner.

Plough blessed after being pulled to nave by Thaxted Morris Men



More than 200 people gathered at Thaxted Church to celebrate Plough Sunday, with the service led by the Bishop of Colchester, the Right Revd Roger Morris and the Rural Chaplain for the Chelmsford Diocese, Revd Janet Nicholls. During the service a horse plough was drawn the length of the nave by the Thaxted Morris Men, who then danced under the

crossing of the church. At the end of the service, Bishop Roger led the congregation through the west door out of the church, where he climbed upon a tractor to bless its mounted plough (pictured). There were displays from FCN, R.A.B.I. and Essex YFC in the church.

A collection taken during the service raised more than £570 for R.A.B.I. and FCN.

Another big push from the Young Farmers

Federation hits target of £20k

- The Northumberland Federation of Young Farmers raised £20k for charities in 2015 with R.A.B.I. one of the organisations to benefit. At their AGM, Will Howie (Tritlington YFC member) was appointed county chairman and Amanda Pigg (ex Stamfordham YFC) was elected county president.

- South Central regional manager **Jenni Thompson** gave talks to YFC members in her region. Jenni visited Salisbury YFC and Edgcott and Winslow YFC in Buckinghamshire – who in 2014 raised more than £4,000 for R.A.B.I. by riding their bikes to the annual convention in Blackpool in less than 24 hours. There are 630 Young Farmers' Clubs in England and Wales dedicated to supporting young people in agriculture and the countryside. And you don't need to be involved in farming to be a 'Young Farmer', just someone who appreciates rural life.

It's domino drives and vintage tractor runs!

Catterick Young Farmers Club presented R.A.B.I. with a cheque for £1,500. The club raised the money through a string of fundraising events, including a vintage tractor run, a dinner & dance, supermarket bag filling and a domino drive.

David Anderson is pictured accepting the cheque on behalf of R.A.B.I. from Alex Chapman, chairman of Catterick YFC.



Cheque for £800 from Newton St Cyres



Pam Wills, R.A.B.I. regional manager for the South West, was presented with a cheque for £800 by the members of Newton St Cyres Young Farmers Club. They raised the money through various fundraising events in 2015.



Lambing weekend

Stockbridge YFC members (pictured) are great supporters of R.A.B.I. events in Hampshire and they attended the lambing weekend at Sparsholt College. R.A.B.I. representatives sold cards and took donations totalling around £100.

Staindrop Club is active in County Durham

Staindrop YFC raised £850 for R.A.B.I. through various events including a ball, a muck chuck, carol singing and a tractor run. The active club, based in the south west corner of County Durham, has around 40 members. Pictured presenting a cheque to regional manager Sally Conner are current chairman Mark Harding (left) and previous chairman Chris Dobinson.



A short look back to festive fundraising

Vet firm marks 10th birthday

● In December, Worcestershire NFU members presented an impressive £8,500 to R.A.B.I. Funds were raised through various events including Steve Morris's 10th Great North Run and an annual dinner at Spring Grove House, Bewdley.

● **Shropshire firm Stapeley Veterinary Practice** celebrated 10 years of trading by holding a party for friends and customers. Guests were invited to make a donation to R.A.B.I. and regional manager Becky Davies was presented with a

cheque for £373.75 by Jess Banks.

● Mervin Mullard returned as quiz master at the annual quiz at Hadnall Village Hall in Shropshire. The village hall was packed out and quiz teams enjoyed a delicious meal cooked by Mervyn's wife Trish.

● Donations of £650 were received as Shropshire committee members gathered to offer guests homemade soup, cakes and Appleby's cheese at an event hosted by John and Christine Downes.

Gift of £1,050 from Chamber



Shropshire Chamber of Agriculture recently celebrated its 150th anniversary and presented a cheque for £1,050 to regional manager Becky Davies at their AGM. Pictured left to right are John Sumner, secretary of Shropshire Chamber of Agriculture, Maria Jones from Midlands Air Ambulance, Neil Vance, retiring president of the chamber, Becky Davies and Mike Perry from the Severn Hospice.

Nativity plays, concerts and carol nights

● A farmers' nativity play – held at Thame Farmers' Market – helped raise more than £700 for R.A.B.I. The Buckinghamshire committee organised a Christmas carol evening with the support of hosts Thame Farmers Auction Mart Ltd. An oak framed print of Cotswold Farm Park's Highland cow, Imogen, raised £190, with Simon Draper leading the auction.

● A hamper raffle – arranged by the Carmarthenshire committee, raised £1,100. With the support of Bob Jones Prytherch & Co Marts Limited (BJP) at Carmarthen, members from the R.A.B.I. committee attended three marts to sell raffle tickets for hamper prizes.

● The Williams Wonders won a Christmas pub quiz at the Royal Oak Pub in Worleston, Nantwich. The event was match funded by Steve Lowery of Barclays and raised over £1,500. Thanks to landlord Phil Smallwood and wife Dorothy.

● A concert at Ruthin Mart, organised by the Clwyd committee, raised £927. Sian Edwards expertly compered the evening, which included performances from Welsh bass-baritone Meirion Jones and local YFC members Elis Jones and Dafydd Jones.

● Led by Robert Bower, chairman of the Nottinghamshire committee, guests were invited to a concert on the Welbeck Estate in Nottinghamshire which raised £2,335 for R.A.B.I. The concert included

readings as well as carols and there was a solo performance by R.A.B.I. supporter Joanna Hudson. After the concert, guests enjoyed mulled wine and mince pies and had the chance to buy gifts from stallholders.

● More than 60 people attended a carol evening at Salisbury Livestock Market. Robert Medway from Godshill Cherries led proceedings from the rostrum as Stockbridge YFC put on 'The Story of Christmas'. The evening raised £300.

● A R.A.B.I. hamper was raffled off at a Wassail evening in Suffolk and raised £70. A successful evening of readings and poems brought in close to £2,500, thanks to match funding from Barclays.

● Fifty guests enjoyed a carol evening at the Petworth United Reformed Church in West Sussex. The Reverend Mark Betson led proceedings and mulled wine, homemade sausage rolls and mince pies were served in the church hall.

The evening raised around £200.

● More than 250 people attended a Christmas craft fair at Doxford Barns in Alnwick, organised by the Northumberland committee.

● A sum of £342 was raised at a service at York Auction Mart.

● Belles Cantos sang at the annual Christmas Concert at Swinton Park, Masham, which took place by kind permission of Mark and Felicity Cunliffe Lister.

● A Cumbrian carol service at Hopes Auction Mart raised more than £3,000, thanks to match funding from Barclays. Despite the floods, there was standing room only as the community came together. A supper and raffle was also held.

● A carol service was organised by the Merionethshire committee at Parc Chapel, Bala and a collection raised £227.



Pictured left are members of the Hodnet School Choir at a carol service in Shrewsbury which raised around £500. A subsequent Christmas draw raised an additional £1,500.

Diary Dates

March

- 17 Barclays Quiz, Corn Exchange, Bourne
- 18 Rural stakeholder event, Thame
- 19 Staffordshire dinner
- 19 Rossendale Scout Band night, Lancashire
- 20 Leicestershire ploughing match, Nailstone
- 20 Flower Power event, Wirral, Merseyside
- 23 Coffee morning, Manson House, Suffolk
- 23 Coffee morning, Beaufort House, Somerset
- 26 Easter Sunday tractor run, Maidstone
- 26 Easter Sunday tea & cakes, Wroxall
- 27 Warwickshire tea and cake afternoon
- 28 Car boot sale, Cheerbrook Farm, Cheshire
- 29 Evening at Wool Room, Rowsley
- 30 Joules clothing sale, Towcester RFC

April

- 1 'Spring into spring' evening, County Durham
- 1 Wurzels concert, Bath & West Showground
- 4 Farming film night, Cawthorne, South Yorks
- 7 Fashion show, Golden Fleece, Thirsk
- 7 Comedy night, Waie Inn, Crediton
- 8 Joules clothing sale, Holbeach
- 8 Highwayman Gallery preview, Suffolk
- 9 Lancashire treasure hunt
- 10 Notts agricultural charities lunch
- 12 Auction preview, Duke of Dorchester
- 12 Oxfordshire dinner, Christ Church College
- 15 Leicestershire quiz night, Barkby Thorpe
- 15 FCN farming debate, Stowmarket
- 16 Farmyard sale, Buckfastleigh
- 16 Selby NFU dinner and dance
- 17 Clwyd hog roast
- 17 Suffolk YFC Country Fair, Easton
- 20 Flower power evening, Thornton Hough
- 20 Carmarthenshire bingo night
- 20 Norfolk committee quiz, East Tuddenham
- 21 Pub quiz night, Whitley, Yorks
- 21 Roast beef dinner, New Ellerby, Yorks
- 21 Tour of Kramp, Bedfordshire
- 21-23 Derbyshire auction ring ride
- 22 Clay pigeon shoot, Paddock Wood, Kent
- 24 Suffolk spring lunch, Stradbroke
- 28 Somerset beef supper, Frogmary Green

May

- 6 Singing Farmers concert, Barnard Castle
- 6 Ceredigion concert, Tregaron Hall
- 6 Farming film night, Cawthorne, South Yorks
- 7 Market day in the square, Shrewsbury
- 8 Cross country ride, Shipston-on-Strour
- 8 Singing Farmers concert, Skipton
- 9 Suffolk tennis day, Woodbridge
- 9 Lancashire treasure hunt
- 11 R.A.B.I AGM, Oxford
- 14-15 Newark & Nottinghamshire Show
- 15 Singing Farmers concert, Malton
- 15 Essex antiques and afternoon tea
- 19-21 Devon County Show, Exeter
- 20 Beef expo, Bakewell Livestock Market
- 20 Singing Farmers concert, Northallerton
- 21 Wurzels, Brickfields, Isle of Wight
- 21 Nottinghamshire clay shoot, Whalley
- 21 Bedfordshire YFC Show
- 21 Hadleigh Show, Suffolk
- 22 Singing Farmers concert, Tadcaster
- 22 Essex YFC Show
- 23 Norfolk golf day
- 25 Golf day, Headlam Hall, Durham

- 28 Heathfield Show, East Sussex
- 28 Northants YFC Rally, Kelmars
- 28-29 Hertfordshire Show
- 29 Berkshire event, Englefield Park

June

- 1-2 Suffolk Show
- 1-4 Royal Bath & West Show
- 3 Golf day, Henlle Golf Club, Oswestry
- 5 Rutland Show
- 5 Tractor run, Etton, East Yorkshire
- 5 Open farm Sunday, Thorny, Peterborough
- 5 Cambridgeshire YFC Show
- 9-11 South of England Show, Ardingly
- 9-11 Royal Cornwall Show, Wadebridge
- 10 Ceredigion quiz night, Aberaeron RFC
- 11 Open garden day, Ashford, Kent
- 11 Barn dance, Worcestershire
- 12 Myerscough College open day
- 12 Afternoon tea, Cheshire
- 12 Essex clay shoot
- 17 Carmarthenshire concert, Cothi Bridge Hall
- 17-19 Royal Three Counties Show
- 18 Carmarthenshire whist drive, Cothi Bridge
- 18 Africa Beer Festival, Shropshire
- 18 Brecon & Radnor clay shoot
- 19 Farm visit & barbecue, Wadebridge
- 20 Golf day, Driffield
- 20 Norfolk cocktail party, Norfolk Showground
- 21 Tour of Biddenden Vineyard
- 21-22 Royal Cheshire Show
- 22-23 Lincolnshire Show
- 24 Cumbria dinner dance
- 24 Suffolk committee hog roast
- 25 Brymore open day
- 26 Midsummer lunch, Ebernoe, West Sussex
- 26 Shropshire NFU lunch, Ludlow Racecourse
- 26 Blastow Show
- 26 Pandy Show
- 26 Orwell 25 charity walk, Suffolk
- 27 Nantwich Show
- 28 Hansons auction evening, Etwell, Derbyshire
- 29 Manson House summer fayre, Suffolk
- 29-30 Norfolk Show

July

- 2 Summer barbecue, Northwich, Cheshire
- 5 Sealwood vineyard tour, Linton
- 7-9 Kent Show, Detling
- 9 Live band in barn, Meonstoke, Hampshire
- 9 Tending Show, Essex
- 10 SFYCC president's lunch, Shrewsbury
- 10 Essex horse ride, Galleywood
- 11 Hampshire cream tea, Selbourne
- 12-14 Great Yorkshire Show
- 14 Gin tasting, Warner Edwards, Harrington
- 18-21 Royal Welsh Show
- 20 Driffield Show
- 23 Mid Devon Show, Tiverton
- 27 Yealmpton Show
- 26-28 New Forest Show, Brockenhurst, Hants
- 28 Forde Abbey Summer Fair, Chard
- 31 Totnes Show

August

- 2 Derbyshire Joules clothing sale
- 3 North Devon Show, Umberleigh
- 4-5 Thame Sheep Fair
- 11 Okehampton Show

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Notice of 156th Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the 156th Annual General Meeting of the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution will be held at The Manor, Weston-on-the-Green, Oxfordshire OX25 3QL on Wednesday May 11 2016 at 2.15pm by order of the Council of Trustees. The afternoon's formal AGM will be preceded as usual in the morning by

the 2016 R.A.B.I Conference (including the presentation of the annual awards for 2015).
Invitations will be sent to all official members of R.A.B.I., as well as the charity's guests.
A maximum of three people from each county, who are the official members, are entitled to vote.