

# R·A·B·I news



SPRING 2020

**THE MAGAZINE OF THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION**

Supporting farming families Freephone Helpline 0808 281 9490



Simon's story  
Page 5





## Our 160th anniversary: a flick through the archives

Pages 10-11

### The Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution (R.A.B.I.)

We are a welfare charity that provides financial, practical and emotional support to farming people of all ages. We always work in confidence, with compassion and discretion.

**Registered office:** Shaw House, 27 West Way, Oxford OX2 0QH

**Freephone Helpline:** 0808 281 9490

**General enquiries:** 01865 724931

**Email:** [info@rabi.org.uk](mailto:info@rabi.org.uk) (general queries) or [help@rabi.org.uk](mailto:help@rabi.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.rabi.org.uk](http://www.rabi.org.uk)

**COVER IMAGE:** Simon Preece, a former farmer from Shropshire. See page 5.



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## From the Chair

These are difficult and uncertain times for everyone. We are all having to change the way we go about our daily business and no one is sure what things will be like next week, let alone in six months' time. Forward planning is impossible at the moment as none of us knows what tomorrow will bring. The Coronavirus has forced people in every walk of life to make adjustments, some of them major, to their lifestyles and daily practices. All of us must act and think differently, being more considerate to others at all times. We cannot just do things as we always have. For example, we are used to bringing people together for fundraising events 52 weeks per year. However, we have taken the decision to cancel all fundraising activities until further notice. People's wellbeing must come first. Our core work, supporting farming people in need, will continue. We are adapting our practices so staff can work remotely where necessary and, as an organisation, we remain well placed to be there for the individuals and families who rely on our assistance. Our Helpline is open and anyone who is struggling and does not know where to turn, should call it.

My first 100 days as Chair have been extremely busy but it's a great honour to be helping to lead R.A.B.I. forward in the charity's 160th anniversary year. It's a remarkable story but I genuinely feel that R.A.B.I. has as great a role to play now than at any point in its long and varied history. Today, the way farmers are perceived by the wider public has changed, and is changing still. Farming's place in society is no longer quite as clear as it once was, which means those now working in the sector face stresses and strains that previous generations did not have to contend with. The Agricultural Bill highlighted much more than food production; it put an onus on farmers to play their part in improving the quality of air and soil, as well as access to the countryside and protecting wildlife. Farmers have always played a pivotal role in looking after these things and, in my experience, take such responsibilities very seriously. British farmers lead the way in animal husbandry, for example, but don't always get the credit they deserve for this.

In recent months, I've also witnessed first hand the devastation that flooding has caused to many in our rural communities and I am delighted that R.A.B.I. has been able to provide fast-tracked emergency grants to lots of families. The importance of immediacy cannot be underestimated. When your home or business is flooded it creates a level of chaos where it's hard to think straight, plan ahead or even see light at the end of the tunnel. Short-term help is vital. However, putting things right takes time and patience, which is why we are prepared to support people for as long as it takes.

Life may seem bleak for many right now but it's important we stand together during the tough times. It might not be business as usual but our message to the farming community is we, at R.A.B.I., are still here for you.

**See back page for key message on R.A.B.I.'s work in light of the Coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic. Also see page 3.**



Jeanette  
Dawson  
OBE

# Farming Help

## 03000 111999

Confidential help for all in the farming community

## Teaming-up to listen and connect

**F**arming's leading charities are teaming up to ensure people get the support they need over the coming weeks and months.

Coronavirus is already presenting major challenges, forcing everyone to change the ways they live, work and think.

R.A.B.I., The Farming Community Network (FCN), The Addington Fund, Forage Aid and Scottish charity RSAB are joining forces under the Farming Help umbrella, which is also supported by The Prince's Countryside Fund. By calling one number, 03000 111 999 (a Helpline



operated by FCN), farmers in need can access free, impartial and confidential support and be connected to the relevant organisations. The Helpline is open daily from

7am-11pm. The aim is to ensure help and support remains accessible despite restrictions on meetings and movements. The key message the charities want to send out

to farmers and their loved ones is: 'We are here for you – to listen, support and connect'.

Anyone who feels isolated and needs someone to talk to can pick up the phone and ring the Farming Help Helpline in complete confidence.

It's essential that everyone has someone to talk to, be that us, or family and friends. Having someone to confide in, or consider a problem from a different perspective, can make all the difference. The farming community is well known for pulling together during difficult times which is why we must all support each other now.

## Fab party for Grace, 100

Beaufort House resident Grace Parish celebrated her 100th birthday on December 6, 2019. Grace was born at Gaunt's Farm in Pawlett, Somerset and spent most of her life on Somerset farms. She worked hard on the land, driving tractors and lifting hay bales, and wasn't shy about doing manual work. When she was young, a family with three children moved down from Accrington, Lancashire and bought Grace's

house. At the time the mother of the family was ill in hospital and the father was struggling to work and look after the young children. Grace offered to look after the youngest daughter, to take the strain off the family – even though she didn't really know them that well. Grace had a fantastic party with members of her family, including the lady who she cared for as a baby.



Call the Freephone Helpline in confidence: 0808 281 9490



# Your donations enable us to help people like Doreen

The importance of emergency help for farmers is evident at present, but support is also vital for those who no longer work. At 89, and with reduced mobility, life can be lonely for Doreen.

A former land girl, she said: "I loved every minute of it. You had companionship from the other girls, it felt like a family.

"Even after leaving the Land Army, I still worked on the farm.

"I remember visiting family one time and the neighbour's farm was a man down. I made the mistake of wearing my dungarees so they roped me into helping.

"At the end of the day the farmer was going to pay me a woman's wage, but the other workers demanded I got full pay because I'd worked so hard."



## Partnership appreciated

R.A.B.I was again named as show charity for Cereals 2020.

Cereals, which at the time of writing is due to take place at Duxford in Cambridgeshire on June 10 and 11, is Europe's biggest technical event for the arable industry.

Organisers Comexposium kindly announced that R.A.B.I could benefit from the exit collections at the show on both days.

Please check the website [www.cerealsevent.co.uk](http://www.cerealsevent.co.uk) for the latest updates relating to this year's show arrangements.

# Settling into a life beyond farming

Graham and Carol Meaden (pictured) moved into an independent flat at Manson House in Bury St Edmunds in 2019, after a lifetime in farming.

"We love it here," said Graham.

"The staff are great. You can tell how good a place it is because the staff have been here for years!"

The couple first heard of R.A.B.I around 10 years ago when Carol was having problems with her pension. Welfare officer Mel Jones helped her to resolve the issues and kept in touch with the couple over the ensuing years as they continued to work their smallholding near Welshpool.

The move to Manson

House came about when Carol needed a shoulder replacement operation, leaving Graham to care for his wife, run the holding solo and take charge of lambing.

Graham said: "I lost more lambs last year because I needed to care for Carol. I realised we couldn't look after the livestock anymore."

Graham and Carol searched for a dog-friendly home because they did not want to part with their springer spaniel Bailey. They moved into one of Manson House's flats – with Bailey – last September. They've settled in well and get involved in lots of activities, whilst Bailey is a firm hit with the other residents.



R.A.B.I  
Supporting Farming Families

**FREEPHONE  
HELPLINE  
0808 281 9490**

# 'I wouldn't be here without you'



**I**'ve been through the mill. Everything's been taken from me.

As long as I've not got the pain, I can cope but I go to bed and I think 'what's the point?' Living this life on my own.

Sometimes I burst into tears.

Simon Preece (pictured) grew up on the Shropshire farm that has been in his family for 900 years. One of four boys, he watched his Dad run the farm which became his playground. As he got older, he started to become more involved in everyday work and it soon became his job. He loved it too, being part of a 10th generation looking after the 500-acre arable operation that was rooted into the local community and its history.

When he was 29, Simon was feeding the sheep on a day much like any other when he collapsed. He hadn't been feeling well and had seen a doctor, who told him it was 'probably stress'.

The doctors subsequently discovered he had 'stomach problems' and he found himself in and out of hospital. From that moment, Simon's health took a downward spiral and life has never been the same since. Now 56, he hasn't worked since the day he first collapsed.

In 2012, Simon had part of his bowel removed at Birmingham Hospital after a tumour was discovered. The operation caused more problems than it solved and left him struggling to walk. Today, he has a colostomy bag and 17 hernias that cannot be treated. He has undergone five operations – four on his stomach and one to remove his prostate. He has bladder problems, diverticulitis, diabetes and his immune system is weak. Simon said: "I live in chronic pain, 24/7 and I've not had a decent night's sleep since the op in 2012. The pain is unbelievable. "When I get off the phone from talking to you the first thing I'm going to do is take some morphine.

"I ask myself 'why me?' I'll help anybody."

Simon has lots of friends who visit him but admits he gets lonely. He enjoys watching old black and white movies, featuring the likes of James Stewart and Jack Hawkins, and he likes to draw, usually old cars, tractors and farm machinery. He's close to his brother Andrew who now runs the family farm. One of his brothers died and the other lives in Spain.

Simon said: "I like to go to the farm but that can be upsetting when I see Andrew working flat out and I can't help him. I'd love to be doing what he's doing, what I used to do. I miss the farm.

"I was only a farmworker but stick me on a tractor in the fresh air, with the wildlife, I'd be as happy as anything. Now, all I see are four walls and a ceiling. "I get angry that I can't do what I used to do and it's getting worse.

"The scar tissue on my lungs is affecting my breathing

and I can hardly walk up hills. I'm full of scar tissue from the ops.

"I try and tell myself there's someone worse off than me. Mind you, some days, it's hard to think about anyone else."

Simon first contacted R.A.B.I in 2007 after being given the charity's phone number by a friend. He was on benefits and struggling to manage, relying on handouts from family and friends.

He was visited by welfare officer Mel Jones. Simon explained: "I was skint, I didn't have a penny. And I was freezing. Mel got me 20 bags of coal. I didn't have enough money to buy a box of matches." R.A.B.I has continued to support Simon since then. "Without R.A.B.I I wouldn't be able to do anything," he said.

"What you've done for me is out of this world. I know you're always there for me. I've just got to pick up the phone.

"I wouldn't be here without you, I promise you."

Every donation, large or small, is appreciated. You can give via [www.justgiving.com/rabi](http://www.justgiving.com/rabi)



# Working together, we can help tackle mental health issues



R.A.B.I does not provide counselling services, but we can offer other support for farming people to ease stress or anxiety. Take a look below to find out more.

## **Don't mental health issues affect everyone? Why are farmers so different?**

The short answer is yes, and they're not!

Anyone, from any walk of life, can experience mental health problems at any time, through no fault of their own.

However, people working in agriculture do face some unique and complex emotional and practical challenges. For a start, farming is often a 24/7 business where it's hard to switch off and impossible to get away from the workplace. Many in farming work long hours in isolation in remote, rural areas. Strong support networks are therefore important and R.A.B.I can play a vital part in helping people put them in place.

## **In what ways can R.A.B.I help?**

One of the key things we can do is

provide financial assistance. Money problems and worrying about debts can trigger illness. But it can also be the other way around and the illness can lead to financial difficulties. For many people, tackling money problems can immediately ease some of their stress and anxiety.

## **What sort of financial assistance?**

We can contribute towards domestic bills, pay for relief staff to work on the farm if the farmer is unable to work and organise free business appraisals and debt advice.

At time of crisis we can also arrange to pay an emergency grant and help with claims for state benefits.

## **What else?**

We do not offer our own counselling service but we do put people in touch with other key organisations so they can benefit from a wider network of help. For example, when people need ongoing emotional support, we work closely with the Farming Community Network (FCN) and other local organisations that specialise in mental health.

Our own team members are NOT specifically qualified in mental health support. However, they are trained in suicide awareness and mental health first aid which means they can recognise signs that someone needs specialist help.

We can help initiate access to wider support and the first step is to encourage people to seek treatment from their GP if they haven't already done so.

Whether it is practical or financial, our support is tailored to suit you and your needs.

## **It can be a big decision to ring us, so what happens when someone contacts our Helpline?**

R.A.B.I doesn't have a 'call centre'. What we do have is a small, experienced welfare team in our Oxford office and one of them will answer the phone. Everything discussed is confidential.

After talking things through, we may arrange for your local regional welfare officer to contact you to get to know you and your situation better.

Every day, we talk to people dealing with the pressures of farming and our welfare team

provide a caring, human link to tailored support.

Having a conversation can be the first small step towards better mental health.

## **What are the future plans for mental health support?**

We know that some people prefer to communicate via the internet these days and we are working to pilot easy access to online counselling services for the farming community. This will be with approved, qualified counsellors. The service is likely to include one-to-one consultations that are free for farming people to use, 365 days a year.

We always liaise with other farming organisations and charities (under the Farming Help umbrella, for example). Right now we are working with the NFU and other organisations to better understand, through research, the issues farmers face.

Going forward, we want to use that research to develop fresh solutions to address the needs of today's farming community, including sustainable support for better mental wellbeing.

## Emergency funds for flood victims

R.A.B.I once again released money from its Crisis Fund in February to provide emergency grants to farming families via its Helpline – 0808 281 9490. Following weeks of heavy rainfall, an initial £50k was released to provide emergency payments to those affected by the impacts of extreme weather across England and Wales. Alicia Chivers, R.A.B.I CEO, said: "Having previously provided around £75k of emergency grant support to those affected by extreme wet weather this autumn / winter, we know how devastating the impacts are for farmers in both the immediate and longer-term. Simplifying our criteria and application processes allows us to fast-track immediate assistance to affected farmers. "These funds, whilst a relatively small element of the help we expect to provide over the longer-term to those affected, can make a real difference dealing with urgent priorities – and help to alleviate pressing financial worries, allowing farmers to concentrate on dealing with the immediate concerns of extreme weather."

R.A.B.I works with other rural support networks across the UK.

NFU guidance is available at [nfuonline.com](http://nfuonline.com)

The NFU has been providing advice to flood-hit members via its CallFirst telephone service 0370 845 8458

Up to date information about flood warnings can be found at [www.flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/warnings](http://www.flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/warnings)

The Farming Recovery Fund provides money in emergency situations to help farmers whose agricultural land has been affected by flooding. The scheme is administered by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) on behalf of Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). For more information go to [www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-farming-recovery-fund](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-farming-recovery-fund)

Remember to report incidents to the Environment Agency incident hotline by calling 0800 80 70 60.

Barclays launched a £50m adverse weather fund to support rural businesses (small / medium sized enterprises). For more details go to [www.barclays.co.uk/business-banking/](http://www.barclays.co.uk/business-banking/)



NFU Director General Terry Jones with President Minette Batters.

## Our relationship with the NFU is hugely important

For the fifth consecutive year, the National Farmers Union (NFU) held a prize draw at their annual conference dinner to generate funds for R.A.B.I. This year, the draw proceeds totalled £10,550 – the highest figure ever raised.

The NFU champions the interests of more than 46,000 farmers and growers across England and Wales and is a valued supporter of R.A.B.I's work.

R.A.B.I CEO Alicia Chivers said: "We place significant value in the relationship between ourselves and our colleagues across the NFU. On an individual, regional and national level they not only raise huge amounts of money for us, but, as a key partner to so many in farming, we know they are a vital link into the community we seek to serve and support."

"Whilst both organisations often have very different perspectives, objectives and skills, both ultimately exist to serve and support. By understanding and harnessing the unique but complementary strengths and skills the two organisations can offer, we can achieve more for the farming community."

The two-day NFU Conference was held at the International Convention Centre (ICC) in Birmingham and welcomed more than 1,500 guests. Representing R.A.B.I at the Conference, along with Alicia, were: Jeanette Dawson (Chair);



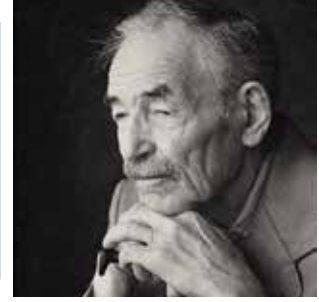
By understanding and harnessing the unique, but complementary strengths and skills the two organisations can offer, we can achieve more for the farming community.

Dan Whitbread (Head of Operations); Stephen Noble (Head of Fundraising and Development) and Suzy Deeley (Corporate Partnership Manager). Suzy Deeley said: "I'd like to thank the NFU, their members and supporters for their donations at the conference. "This is an amazing sum of money which will go a long way to helping farming people in difficulty."

"Three weeks ago, my wife died. I've got three young children and desperately need help with childcare and benefits advice."



"I was diagnosed with cancer and since then I've had chemo, radiotherapy and surgery. We've used all our savings."



"I'm shut down because of TB. The debts are getting out of control, too big for us to make a difference. I don't know what to do."



"Our farm is struggling because we lost lambs to scab. We need help paying bills and buying heating oil."

## Some genuine reasons why people asked for our support

### Regional Welfare Officers

Find out what we can do for you by calling 0808 281 9490

**TOM ARMSTRONG  
NORTH**

*Northumberland, Durham, Scotland*



**CATHY DENSLOW  
SOUTH**

*South Somerset, Dorset, Hampshire, Isle of Wight*



**JOHN BASNETT  
NORTH EAST**

*North, South & West Yorkshire, Derbyshire*



**LINDSEY CHURCHILL  
SOUTH CENTRAL**

*Oxfordshire, Wiltshire, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire*



**JACKIE CLEGG  
NORTH WEST**

*Cheshire, Lancashire, Cumbria, Merseyside*



**SALLY HUBBARD  
EAST**

*Suffolk, Norfolk*



**LOUISE WILKINSON  
LINCOLNSHIRE +**

*Lincolnshire, East Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire*



**CHLOE RIGLER  
SOUTH WEST**

*Cornwall, Devon*



**CAROLINE HARRISON  
HEART OF ENGLAND**

*Staffordshire, Leicestershire, Warwickshire, West Midlands*



**JENNY TYLER  
EAST CENTRAL**

*Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire*



**MEL JONES  
NORTH WALES & SHROPSHIRE**

*Anglesey, Conwy, Caernarfon, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Merionethshire, Shropshire, North Powys*



**DEANA CURTIS  
SOUTH EAST**

*Berkshire, West and East Sussex, Kent, Essex, Surrey, London*



**ELONWY WILLIAMS  
SOUTH WEST WALES**

*Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire*



**CLAIRE CRICHARD  
SOUTH EAST WALES & BORDERS**

*Brecon & Radnor, Glamorgan, Monmouthshire, Worcestershire, North Gloucestershire, Herefordshire*



*All enquiries to our welfare department will be handled in confidence*

**R·A·B·I**   
Supporting Farming Families



## 2019: Financial support for all ages

**£813k**  
For working  
families



**£749k**  
Towards  
domestic bills

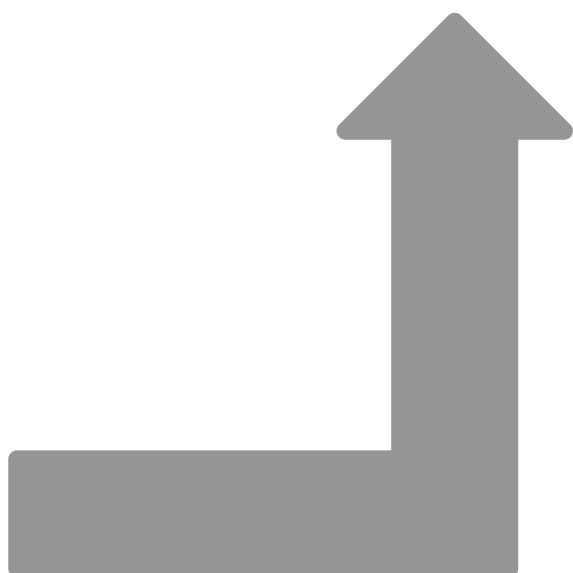


**1,369**

The number of individuals / families who  
received financial support



**£214k**  
Spent on disability aids,  
equipment & adaptations



**£2.9m**  
Given out in grants



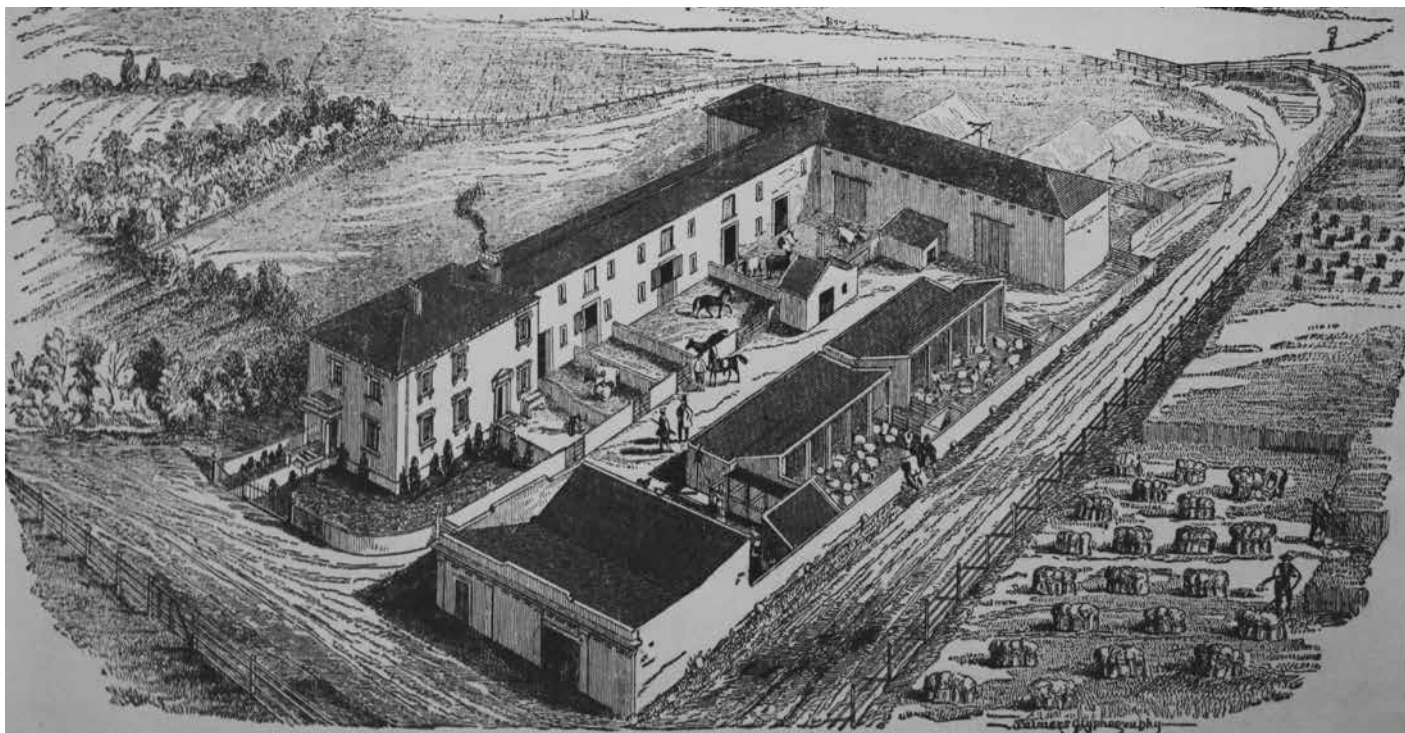
**£80k**  
For relief farmworkers

**Confidential Freephone Helpline 0808 281 9490**

Website: **[www.rabi.org.uk](http://www.rabi.org.uk)** General enquiries: **01865 724931**

Unaudited figures (rounded up) cover the period January 1 to December 31, 2019

# 160 years of history launched by son of an Italian refugee



**AHEAD OF ITS TIME:** Tiptree Hall in Essex, where John Mechi developed new ways of farming. This graphic depicts Tiptree Hall in the mid 19th century. Photo courtesy of Essex Record Office (reference LIB/631 MEC). **INSET:** John Mechi.

**R**.A.B.I., which celebrated its 160th anniversary in February, owes a huge debt of gratitude to the son of an Italian businessman who founded the charity.

John Mechi certainly wasn't born into farming stock; his father took refuge in England during the 'Reign of Terror' and found work in the household of George III at Kensington Palace.

John worked as a clerk from the age of 16 until he had saved enough money to buy his own shop. It was here that he made his fortune by designing an innovative shaving razor, the 'Magic Razor Strop'.

Mechi reinvented himself and constructed a model farm at Tiptree Heath in Essex. He developed a keen love of farming and new ways of doing things. With the industrial revolution gaining force, he warned others that farm labourers would have to be paid more and housing conditions improved to stop workers drifting away from the industry. He wrote letters to *The Times* to canvass support from influential landowners. Donations poured in and the first meeting of the Royal Agricultural Benevolent College took place on February 7, 1860.

Subsequent council meeting reports refer to the charity as the Agricultural Benevolent Institution. A year on



from his public appeal, Mechi was one of three trustees responsible for the charity (alongside the Duke of Richmond and Earl Howe), as well as being one of 35 vice-presidents that included two Dukes, seven Earls, a Viscount, nine Lords, five Knights and an MP.

Money now came in from over 700 regular subscribers and even Benjamin Disraeli indicated his intentions to get involved in the charity's work, until his growing political commitments took over. The charity's purpose was straightforward: 'To secure a home for, or pension to, the bona fide farmer or widow of a farmer and to maintain and educate the orphan children of farmers'. The Agricultural

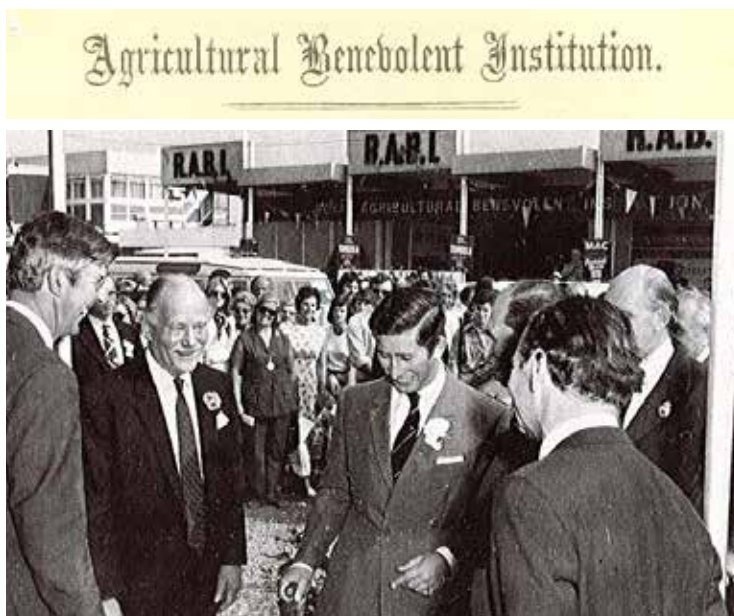
Benevolent Institution evolved considerably with royal connections running deep to give the charity its royal prefix. Queen Victoria gave her nod of approval to the organisation just three years after it was set up and became the charity's first patron. She made an annual subscription of £25 per year and R.A.B.I.'s council passed a resolution that one duly qualified female pensioner from a selected list of candidates would be placed at 'Her Majesty's disposal' to receive the subscription.

Mechi's own personal story, ended tragically. Ironically, he suffered the same fate as so many of those he had desperately tried to help when the failure of the Unity Joint Stock Bank, of which he was a governor, and the Unity Fire and General Life Insurance Company, led to his insolvency. That, coupled with failing health, meant he died penniless 'of a broken heart' on Boxing Day 1880 at the age of 78. The farmers of England raised a subscription of £5,000 (equivalent to £500,000 today) to help him out of his financial problems and this included £200 from the Royal Bounty at the express wish of Prime Minister William Gladstone. Sadly though, Mechi did not live long enough to benefit from this money and died 12 days after going into liquidation.





ABOVE: R.A.B.I residents play croquet on the lawn at Ridgemean, a home in Surrey. TOP RIGHT: The first logo. RIGHT: HRH The Prince of Wales visiting R.A.B.I's stand at the 1975 Royal Show.



ABOVE: A knees-up at a Beaufort House Christmas party, date not known. BELOW, LEFT: Current Head of Welfare Trish Pickford, pictured with Karen, in 1995. BELOW RIGHT: Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra with R.A.B.I Vice President, Commander Oliver Wright, at the 1970 Dairy Show.



ABOVE: R.A.B.I President The Duke of Beaufort presiding over the 1962 AGM at the Criterion in Piccadilly.

Pam Romer-Lee officially opened R.A.B.I's Shaw House office in Oxford in September 1979. Previously, R.A.B.I had been based at Vincent, Square, London. Pam was the great-granddaughter of Charles Shaw, who helped found the charity in 1860 and was R.A.B.I's first secretary.



R.A.B.I holiday-makers, off to Felixstowe, 1970s.



# £90,000 and counting...



## Did you know?

The beef and veal industries are worth around £3 billion to the UK economy.  
(Source: Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board).

British Beef has a greenhouse gas footprint two-and-a-half times lower than the global average.  
(Source: Tackling climate change through livestock; a global assessment of emissions and mitigation opportunities, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 2013).

65% of UK farmland is best suited for growing grass for animals to eat.  
(Source: Farming Statistics - provisional crop areas, yields and livestock populations at June 2018, Defra).

Great British Beef Week supports the Red Tractor mark, promoting farm assured quality meat. All beef carrying the Red Tractor logo can be traced back to the farms the livestock came from. The quality mark also guarantees the provenance of the meat you are buying. The flag on the Red Tractor logo identifies the country of origin so if it carries the Union flag it comes from a UK farm.

**R**.A.B.I is again the charity partner for Great British Beef Week, which is due to return for its 10th anniversary campaign from April 23-30.

However, because of the Coronavirus, R.A.B.I will not be holding any beef week lunches, dinners or fundraising events this year. Great British Beef Week is spearheaded by Ladies in Beef, a group of more than 150 female beef farmers from across the UK.

"The group was formed to help drive awareness of the quality and versatility of British beef to consumers using a countrywide network of dynamic lady beef producers," said Ladies in Beef co-founder and Devon farmer Jilly Greed.

"All of our 'LIBs' are British beef farmers and proud of it! Ten years on, the importance of promotion

**ABOVE: R.A.B.I Regional Manager Laura Ractliffe with NFU President Minette Batters and Ladies in Beef founder Jilly Greed.**

has never been more critical."

It's estimated that Great British Beef Week has already helped generate £90,000 for R.A.B.I since the charity first became involved in the campaign. Ladies in Beef co-founder and NFU President Minette Batters believes beef farmers must engage with consumers to communicate key messages on quality and farm assurance. She said: "Ladies in Beef is entirely a voluntary organisation.

"Very soon after formation we quickly discovered how we could help influence consumer trust in our product, where the public could relate to nurturing,

cooking and caring for the family alongside raising livestock to high production standards. It's such an achievement to reach a 10th anniversary as well as raise thousands of pounds for the vital work of R.A.B.I."

To find out more about Great British Beef Week go to [www.ladiesinbeef.org.uk](http://www.ladiesinbeef.org.uk)

To donate to R.A.B.I go to [www.justgiving.com/campaign/gbbw2020](http://www.justgiving.com/campaign/gbbw2020)



It's such an achievement to reach a 10th anniversary as well as raise thousands of pounds for the vital work of R.A.B.I

*Minette Batters,  
NFU President*



# Regional News

## Big Farming Auction in memory of Charles



**The family of the late Charles Clark helped organise the Big Farming Charity Auction in Sedgemoor, which raised over £73,000 for four causes.**

The Big Farming Charity Auction, in memory of Charles Clark, raised £74,240 for four good causes, including R.A.B.I. The mammoth auction was held at Sedgemoor Auction Centre in December. The auction honoured Charles Clark, who sadly died of cancer in 2019, aged 59. Charles was hugely respected throughout farming circles, having worked as an auctioneer at Greenslade Taylor Hunt for 35 years.

During his lifetime Charles raised over £2m for various good causes by conducting charity auctions. Friend and colleague Richard Webber paid tribute to him by saying: "He was a remarkable man, totally unique. If there was a medal for bravery in battling illness the way Charles did, he would be awarded the equivalent of the Victoria Cross." Fittingly, the charity auction was run by some

of the auctioneers who sold alongside him for many years. The auction generated £18,560 for each cause: R.A.B.I.; the Farming Community Network; St Margaret's Somerset Hospice and the Somerset Bowel Cancer Support Group. Pam Wills, R.A.B.I. Regional Manager for the South West, represented the charity at the event. She said: "It was an incredible afternoon, the ring was rammed and not

everyone could get in. "It brought together people from across the farming community, from bank managers and accountants to those farmers who regularly attend the market. "On behalf of everyone at R.A.B.I. I would like to thank all connected with the event for thinking of us and for their generosity." The top selling lot was a stay in a luxurious house in Ireland, which went under the hammer for £5,100.

### Pride of the north



In 2018, David Clarke from Tullythwaite bought a heifer in the North West Auctions 200th anniversary celebrations. This February, David sold the heifer calf (pictured) at the same Cumbrian auction centre to raise funds for R.A.B.I. The calf was initially bought by David Barton, from Lupton, for £400, who then offered it for resale to Mark Simpson, from Underbarrow for £500. Both men generously donated this money to R.A.B.I. too – which meant a total of £1,450 was raised.

The Cheshire YFC Entertainment final took place at Northwich Memorial Hall and, following an incredible event that ran for several months, a whopping £12,000 was raised. The YFC chose to donate £4,000 to R.A.B.I, also giving a sizeable donation to the Alder Hey Children's Hospital. Pictured left to right are: Claudia Bayley (YFC Vice-Chair), Georgina Lamb (R.A.B.I Regional Manager), Dave Nicholas (YFC Chair), Emily Hamand, Maddie Roebuck, Bella Oakes (YFC Chair), Lisa Oakes and Adam Dixon (Alder Hey Children's Hospital).



## That's entertainment!

## Cauliflowers for everyone

The 15th annual Spring Ball at the Langstone Cliff Hotel in Dawlish raised more than £1,800. That took the tally generated over the past 15 years to over £25,000. Some 180 guests attended this year's event, organised by John Yeoman. John took over from Andrew Goodridge, who is currently preparing to represent England's veterans in the Hockey World Cup in Japan this November. Devon committee member John Smith wielded the gavel (it was actually a spoon) for the charity auction, selling off a varied range of lots that included dinner, bed and breakfast at the Langstone Cliff Hotel, a five course dinner at the Cottage Hotel, vouchers, Devon County Show tickets, a wheelbarrow and hampers. The auction alone brought in £629, with a silent raffle adding £663. The evening was rounded off with music from 'Spinach with Norman'. Special thanks to John Tucker, who came carrying large crates of cauliflowers to raise further funds. A date has already been set for next year's Spring Ball on Friday February 26.

### Three-course barn-stormer

A charity dinner at the Tewin Bury Farm Hotel was organised by the Hertfordshire committee and raised over £1,900. The dinner celebrated R.A.B.I's 160th anniversary and 110 guests sat down in the Tythe Barn for a three-course meal, with music from Aimee P.



### £1,300 from Somerset Lodge

James Miller of the Somerset committee was presented with a cheque for £1,300 by the Somerset Farmers Lodge. James is pictured with Colin Vigar (Master of Lodge), left and Nick Male (Steward), right.



## Racing mice on farm in Dorset

- An evening of mouse racing was organised by the Dorset committee at Gorwell Farm in Weymouth. The mice – and the racing – was overseen by the Ilminster-based Harlequins Club and local businesses supported the evening with the winning owner of each race receiving prize money and a beautifully painted jug, donated by Richard Bramble. The night generated over £1,300. This was the second year running that this event was held at Gorwell Farm, home to the Pengelly family.

- Cows on Tour presented R.A.B.I representatives with a cheque for £3,000 at the Welsh Winter Fair. The money was raised through various 2019 initiatives, which included carrying 'Bessie', a fibre glass cow, to the top of Snowdon and sending her down the UK's fastest zip line at the Penrhyn Quarry.

- The Old Thatch Inn, Adstock was the venue for the Bucks autumn dinner, which was attended by 70 people and raised over £1,200.

- Shropshire's grand draw raised £1,828. The draw took place at the Market Drayton Livestock Market.

- More than £1,500 was collected by the Cottesmore Hounds, who are based at Hill Top Farm near Oakham.



## Catching up at LAMMA

R.A.B.I had a stand at LAMMA in January, the UK's leading farm machinery and equipment event.

The two-day event at the NEC in Birmingham showcases innovative technology from over 600 large-scale machinery manufacturers and smaller UK agricultural firms.

R.A.B.I Welfare Officers Caroline Harrison (Heart of England) and Mel Jones (North Wales & Shropshire) spoke at the Farm Safety Zone about the help R.A.B.I can offer when accidents happen.

Suzy Deeley, R.A.B.I Corporate Development Manager, said: "I'd like to thank LAMMA for another great show and for kindly providing us with free stand space. It was good to catch up with supporters old and new."

Pictured below on the R.A.B.I stand on day one of the show are Hannah Pinnells and Sally Conner.



## African summit conquered



Shropshire farmer Ruth Morris completed a three day hike up North Africa's tallest mountain – Mount Toubkal in Morocco. She scaled 4,167m to the summit and raised over £700 for R.A.B.I in the process. Ruth said: "I decided to do it as friend was already taking part. I have never done anything like this in my life but thought it was time I challenged myself to do something totally out of my comfort zone."

"We are hill farmers in South Shropshire and aware of the ever-increasing struggles for farmers. I attended The Crazy Life of a Farmer's Wife Ball last year where a representative from R.A.B.I talked to us about the fantastic work that the charity does. Hence, R.A.B.I was the first charity that sprung to mind when I needed to choose a cause to support."

"It was a tough few days, but the sense of achievement was amazing – not only getting to the summit, but also raising money and awareness for such a great charity."

## 30th anniversary celebration



R.A.B.I supporter Megan Jones Roberts organised a Welsh language concert to raise £2,350. The concert, which packed out the function room at the Llety Parc Hotel in Aberystwyth, marked the 30th anniversary of R.A.B.I's Ceredigion committee. The evening was led by entertainer Clive Edwards who was in fine voice and also had the audience

in stitches. Local male voice singing group, Bois y Rhedyn, from Llanddewi Brefi (pictured) performed some popular Welsh songs and a unique sketch based on the popular hit 'California Dreamin'. Folk singer Wil Tân and his wife Ceri didn't disappoint either and their set included crowd favourites 'Yr Hen Geffyl Du' and 'Bodafon'.

## Year-long drive

South West Regional Manager Pam Willis accepted a donation of £1,000 from Lloyd Hewish, the outgoing Chair of Wedmore Young Farmers in Somerset. They have been fundraising over the past year for R.A.B.I and the Somerset and Dorset Air Ambulance.





# Specialists in their chosen fields



At their February rally the Dedham Vale Detectorists Club presented Peter Hickling from the Essex committee with a cheque for £1,000. The club detect on local farms and help raise money for charities. In February, R.A.B.I was their nominated charity, thanks to Dan Wormell. The club is always looking for new areas, fields and farms to dig and any landowners willing to support can contact Anthony Sutton on 07887 888810.

## Nominated to be charity of year



The Wales & Borders North Country Cheviot Sheep Society presented a cheque for £250 to volunteers in Carmarthenshire. The society held their seventh open day at David Pittendreigh's farm in Llanllwni last October and, more recently, donated funds from a raffle at their AGM / dinner. The society chose to support R.A.B.I as their nominated charity for the year.

## Readings in Rochester Cathedral



On a crisp sunny Sunday afternoon, Rochester Cathedral held its annual Plough Sunday service in the most beautiful soundings within the choir stalls. The service was well attended and Regional Manager Sally Field and Kent committee Chair

Charles Tassell both gave bible readings. Two Bishops attended, Rose Hudson-Wilkin, the newly appointed Bishop of Dover and James Langstaff, Bishop of Rochester. The collection was divided between R.A.B.I and FCN.

## Love in the Anglesey air

- A successful Valentine's Ball and auction on Anglesey raised £8,000 for R.A.B.I and Crimebeat. The ball was held at the showground and organised by Susan Jones, High Sheriff of Gwynedd. Susan chose to support R.A.B.I as one of her nominated charities during her year as High Sheriff.

- The Monmouthshire committee held their annual quiz night at the Livestock Centre in January. This event is now a firm fixture on the fundraising calendar and the mart café was again full to the brim with over 150 people attending. Sarah Byford MBE prepared and asked the questions and £1,760 was raised.

- Members of the Gloucestershire committee served drinks at the Cirencester Fatstock Show and collected donations of £224.77.

- Clare Morgan, NFU chair in Pembrokeshire, presented Katie Davies, vice-chair of the Pembrokeshire committee, with a cheque for £820. This money was raised at the NFU's county dinner and included a donation from the Preseli branch dinner.

- More than £1,660 was raised at the Hampshire committee's quiz at the Crosfield Hall in Romsey. This included donations from several people who could not attend. Stuart Morgan was quizmaster and a hearty ploughman's supper was served to all, along with homemade cakes.

- The North Worcestershire Vintage and Engine Club donated £60 when Regional Manager Kate Jones attended a club meeting to give a talk.

- Tina Finch arranged a felting workshop around the kitchen table of her home to raise £400.



# Reverend braves the chilly Walrus Dip on Boxing Day



Reverend Michelle Bailey, the Swansea and Brecon Diocese's Officer for Rural Life, raised over £700 for R.A.B.I, the DPJ Foundation and Tir Dewi by braving the cold Boxing Day sea at Pembrey Beach in Carmarthenshire for the annual Walrus Dip. Hundreds of people plunged into the

chilly waters in fancy dress to raise money for good causes. Michelle, who is also a member of the Brecon & Radnor committee, said: "As a rural life officer for the church, I believe it's important to support our farming community." Michelle, right, is pictured with R.A.B.I's Linda Jones.

## Top seed effort

- Thanks to everyone who attended the annual Winter Drinks event in Northants. Around £5,500 was made, with DSV UK Ltd making a generous donation of £1,000 of seed for the auction.

- Nine teams took part in a quiz night at Gwernyfed Rugby Club in Talgarth to raise £501.

Asking the questions was Farm Liaison Officer Steve Meredith, with Kath Shaw keeping the scores. A fiercely close contest ended in a tie, but the team featuring Aubrey & Ruth Price, Andrew Marshall and David Edlin won out following a sudden death decider.

- Merionethshire Vice-Chair Annie Parry and her husband John recently celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. Instead of receiving gifts from family and friends, they asked for donations towards the work of R.A.B.I and £200 was presented to committee members at the committee's first meeting of the year.

- Merionethshire Chair Arwyn Humphreys sadly passed away in January. Arwyn served on the Merionethshire committee for over 30 years and will be greatly missed.

## High School's bucket backing



Pupils at Nidderdale High School in Yorkshire have chosen R.A.B.I as their charity of the year. Planned fundraisers include bucket collections and a silent auction.



## Masons make gesture

Iwan Jenkins, charity steward of the Aeron Masonic Lodge, presented a cheque for £200 to Ceredigion committee treasurer Frances Jones and Chair Euros Davies. Geraint Thomas, Chair of the lodge, chose R.A.B.I to receive the proceeds of a raffle at a lodge dinner.



# Emyr's Stackyard British Blue herd provides a lasting tribute

Powys farmer Emyr Wigley (pictured) attended a recent Montgomeryshire meeting to present committee members with a cheque for £1,500. He has now raised more than £12,500 for R.A.B.I since developing a unique herd of British Blue cattle in 2017 in memory of his late wife, Evelyn.

Emyr's Old Stackyard British Blue herd exists solely to raise funds for R.A.B.I and Ovarian Cancer Action, two charities close to his heart.

Before their retirement, the Wigleys, from Llansantffraid, used to keep a small herd of British Blue cattle alongside a dairy herd. Following Evelyn's death, Emyr decided to start another herd in her memory and began buying prime heifers from some of the UK's top breeders.

The couple had sold their farm and built a house for their retirement, whilst keeping some land. However, Evelyn's cancer diagnosis changed everything and sadly she passed away in October 2015, aged 69.

In order to develop his new herd Emyr had to start again, but he has received tremendous support from friends, businesses and the local community.



This means he can keep his costs low and generate more money for his chosen charities when selling his cattle. Emyr said: "Our plans for travel, our caravan holidays, and walking in the beautiful British countryside, loved by us both were put on hold until our retirement. It was a devastating blow to learn in the first few years of our retirement, that Evelyn had ovarian cancer. She was a very special lady, kind, caring and multi-talented. Whilst tragically too late to help my dear Evelyn, I had to do something to help combat this evil disease, and be a tribute to my wife."

## Over £20k from Bucks Farmers

● Despite Storm Dennis, the Bucks Farmers Ball went ahead at Whittlebury Hall. Guests were welcomed by harpist Sara Oliver and the three-course meal included a beef main. Daniel Slade from Thame Farmers Market oversaw the auction, which included the use of a BMW for a weekend and a three-night stay in a yurt in North Wales. There was also a raffle and a voucher tree with many donated prizes. This outstanding event has resulted in over £20,000 being raised for R.A.B.I, a superb effort by all concerned.

● **Schoolboy Caleb Vater (below) from Monmouthshire raised £180 by donating one of his lambs to sell at the RWAS Winter Fair.**



## Prize lamb at Melton Fatstock

Four entries came forward for the R.A.B.I single lamb class at the Melton and Belvoir 67th annual Fatstock Show at Melton Mowbray Market. The sum of £466 was raised. The champion entry was a Beltex weighing in at 38kg, prepared by Robert West of JF Burbridge, Park Farm, Collyweston. The lamb was bought for £200. Pictured are Leicestershire committee members Sally Lane and Pat Bailey with Robert and his prize-winning lamb.



## Sunday soup day

Around 50 people attended a Soup on Sunday fundraiser at Longnor Village Hall, near Dorrington, Shrewsbury, where a choice of six soups were available – along with homemade bread, cheeses and cakes. The event raised £737.50. Pictured are Shropshire committee members Moira Roberts, Chris Downes (organiser) and Heulwen Charles.





## We are the champions

Seventy people supported the Shropshire annual quiz, arranged by Mervin Mullard and family. The quiz raised £1,125 and produced a repeat win for 2019 victors Andy Clough, Laurie Jones, Debbie Clough and Matthew Clough (pictured).



## Pub's bike trail

A donation of £800 was presented to volunteers in Montgomeryshire by the Dolau Inn in Mochdre, Newtown. Most of the money was raised via a charity trail bike ride.

## Three Peaks Challenge for trio

● **Three members of the South Dorset Hunt took part in the Three Peaks Challenge to raise £1,787.40. The money was presented to Dorset committee member Susan Hooper.**

● The sum of £254.98, half the collection from a Wells

Cathedral harvest service, was sent to R.A.B.I.

● **Raise a glass to Carol Smith who completed a dry January to raise £115!**

● A quiz night at Bishop's Nympton brought in over £300.



## Cheque mates!

**Regional Manager Laura Ractliffe gave a talk at the Salisbury Poultry Club, which resulted in a donation of £75.**

## Duo run the Cardiff Half Marathon

Linda Jones, Regional Manager for Wales, accepted a cheque for £500 from staff at KiwiKit Ltd in Crymch. Rob Massey and Darrel Dovey from KiwiKit ran the Cardiff Half Marathon to raise funds for R.A.B.I and the company also made an additional donation. Linda is pictured with Sarah Hinton (Operations Manager) and John Davies (KiwiKit West Wales).



## Wartime diary

The Derbyshire committee enjoyed an antiques evaluation evening at Hanson's Auction Centre at Etwall and over 60 people attended. This event was held prior to one of the centre's regular sales and guests were able to view hundreds of lots of jewellery, furniture, silver, ceramics, toys and collectables. In the absence of Charles Hanson, who was away filming for TV, Adrian Rathbone, Associate Director and Head of Fine Arts, spoke about recent sales and the centre's work. Adrian Stevenson, a specialist in medals and militaria, also showed people the handwritten diary of a soldier, recording the events of the first day of the Battle of the Somme, which made the hairs on the back of your neck stand up! Many guests brought their own items for valuation and a buffet was provided by committee members. With match funding from Barclays, the evening generated more than £700.



# Who doesn't love a farmhouse breakfast?



**THERE TO SERVE:** Left to right, Viv Higgins, Ken Higgins, Helen Moore, Craig Sigley (Barclays), Jean Morton, Julie Richards (Barclays), Cindy Simpson, Isabelle Robinson (Barclays), George Sigley (Barclays), Sharon Barnes, Karen Ellis, Roger Campion.

The annual Warwickshire breakfast was so popular this year that an extra table had to be laid to accommodate all the guests. The event raised £1,153. Organised by the Warwickshire committee, the event

welcomed 75 guests to the Jersey Pavilion at Stoneleigh Park, near Kenilworth. Four members of staff from the Barclays Agricultural team had a busy morning serving breakfasts.

## Thanks Laura

Burnett's Solicitors in Rosehill, Carlisle put on a breakfast for 65 guests which raised £1,050. Members of the Cumbria committee prepared and served the food and the fundraiser was supported by Pioneer Foods and Clydesdale Bank. Former Cumbria Chair Laura Wilson (below) was also presented with a bouquet of flowers to thank her for all her hard work in office. Nicki Quayle has taken over as Chair of the Cumbria committee.



## Chatter at Cranswick

A delicious Yorkshire breakfast and plenty of chatter saw £610 raised at the Cranswick breakfast in Driffeld.



# Kent volunteers get busy in the kitchen

In total, 12 farmhouse breakfast events were held in Kent in January and February, feeding more than 500 people and raising over £8,300.

Trustee Sue Lister updated diners about R.A.B.I's work at the Poacher and Partridge breakfast in Tudeley, Kent. Raffle ticket sales and donations meant the morning raised an impressive £2,500. Sheila Adams organised the event with support from Martial Chaussy of Elite Pubs and the helpful staff at the Poacher and Partridge.

Full English breakfasts were served in the picturesque setting of Chiddingstone Castle, located in 35 acres of wonderful Kent countryside and home to an extraordinary collection of Japanese and Egyptian artefacts. Roger Lingham, NFU Group Secretary Andrew Siggs and Fiona and Mike Glossop helped

arrange this event, which generated £978. The food was donated by: TM Allman Butchers; Rob Martin; Mark Weaver and Robert Mitchell.

A crisp February morning attracted close to 50 people for breakfast at the Medway Yacht Club in Kent. Karen Beer, NFU Group Secretary, organised proceedings and £553.50 was raised. Ticket sales and a raffle helped organisers make £750 from a breakfast at Macknades Farm Shop near Faversham. Rollo Parsons and Sarah Attwood from Acres Insurance kindly arranged the morning.

Doug Jackson, George Ashby and the team from NFU Mutual's Ashford, Tenterden and Whitfield branch, organised a breakfast at Ashford Cattle Market, which brought in £702.

Kent breakfasts were also held at the following locations (amount raised in brackets): The Greenfields Shooting Ground, Canterbury (£416); The Alma, Painters Forstal, Faversham (£345); The Dirty Habit, Hollingbourne (£589); Juddwood Farm Shop, Tonbridge (£548); Elham Vineyard (£480); The Dog & Duck, Plucks Gutter, Canterbury (£500) and the Kent Showground (amount raised to be confirmed).

**LEFT: Diners at Macknades Farm Shop in Faversham.**







## Seven in a row

**ABOVE:** For the seventh consecutive year, Jeremy and Melanie Newman opened the doors of their Winkworth Farm home in Wiltshire to serve up over 50 breakfasts to guests. Andy and Sue Waring kindly cooked the breakfasts and match funding was provided by Barclays Agriculture.

## Slick operation

- A slick operation saw over 250 breakfasts served between 8.45am and 1.30pm at Hellingly Village Hall in East Sussex. An incredible team of organisers was put together by Gill and Bryan Hesselgrave. Guests arrived in half-hour slots and were given an hour to enjoy their food and the company on their table before the next group arrived to eat! Gill and Bryan celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary recently and again chose to support R.A.B.I with donations in lieu of gifts. South East Regional Manager Sally Field said: "They are the most amazing and hardworking couple, loved and well respected by their local community, and R.A.B.I is very blessed to have them as such great supporters." The Hellingly breakfast raised the impressive sum of £3,253. Pictured are Gill and Bryan with Sally Field, centre.



## Big Cornish push at Grigg's



## Open doors

- **The West Sussex committee served their first breakfast at the Bartholomew Barn in Kirdford at 7.30am and by 11am they had dished up their 150th plate of food with people still coming through the door. The morning generated over £1,700. Thanks to Frances Atwell for the use of her wonderful barn as a venue.**

- Two farmhouse breakfast events were held at Sam Turner's in Piercebridge, Durham, with more than 150 people sitting down to eat over two mornings – raising close to £2,000 in the process.

Volunteers served 137 plates of food at the 'Cornish Breakfast' at MA Grigg's in Sticker near St Austell. A tremendous effort from all involved ensured over £3,000 was raised. Pictured above are some of the members of the Cornwall committee who attended. Left to right, Chris Cardell, Brian Harvey, Martin Howlett (Chair), Dawn Cardell, John Perry and Ed Buckland. Below are happy diners at the event.





# Sally scoops award for dedicated work



**Sally, centre, is pictured with family members Hollie, Mark Sam and Charlotte. INSET: With her award.**

The Driffield Agricultural Society presented R.A.B.I Regional Manager Sally Conner with the prestigious RH Mountfield Award, which is given annually for outstanding contributions to farming in East Yorkshire. David Tite, representing the society, said: "Sally has been the face of R.A.B.I here for some

time. We've always supported R.A.B.I but Sally has always supported us. She does fantastic work and I cannot think of anyone more deserving of this award." Sally received her award at a members evening at the Driffield Showground. "I'm humbled and incredibly proud,"

she said. "I've never received anything like this." Sally and her husband Mark rear pigs on their farm in East Yorkshire. Sally joined R.A.B.I in 2007 and has been a Regional Manager for 13 years, looking after Northumberland, County Durham and North and East Yorkshire.



## Club singers!

Regional Manager Lucy Bellefontaine gave a talk at a Southminster YFC meeting in Essex. The club presented Lucy with a cheque for £550, having raised the money with two nights of carol singing in December.

## Quiz at three venues on a single evening

- Volunteers in Carmarthenshire raised over £4,000 within the space of three weeks. The Carmarthenshire committee organised three quizzes simultaneously on the same night, at different venues. The top teams at each venue then competed in a quiz finals night. A Christmas carol evening was also held at Whitland Mart and attracted over 80 people. Performing on the night were local choir Côr Corlan, conducted by Ceirios Jenner and accompanied by Heather Jenkins. A collection was made towards R.A.B.I's work and a raffle was held. Christmas hamper raffles were held over three days at Carmarthen Mart too, and a bingo night arranged at the Carmarthen Mart Café.

- **Peter Leonard, Archdeacon of the Isle of Wight, was among the guests at R.A.B.I's festive celebrations at Arreton Village Hall, which brought in £650.**

- Ruthin Livestock Centre was the venue for the Clwyd committee's carol service. The event generated £584.

- **The Wiltshire carol service at Salisbury Livestock Market raised £496.62.**

- Minister Anne Lewitt oversaw the Petworth United Reformed Church's carol evening, which raised £295.

- **Hosts Peter and Jane Eardley raised £1,000 via a 'carols around the tree' raffle at The Windmill at Rowton, near Shrewsbury.**

- Organisers of a nativity at Longlands Farm in Worcestershire collected donations of £398.06, which was split equally between R.A.B.I and the Worcester Warriors Dementia Café.

- **Over £800 was raised at a 'festive fun' night at the Henley Community Centre in Suffolk.**

- Butsfield YFC, from County Durham, donated £255. The 23-strong club raised the money by splitting into two groups to go carol singing at 13 farms in the Butsfield area. Even bad weather could not put them off.



# Flashback to festive fundraising

## Donkeys from Fermor family

- A nativity service held in the cattle ring of Ashford Market in Kent was watched by over 200 people and brought in donations of £527. Richard Beaugie arranged the service with help from Bill and Hilary Jones, the children from Spring Grove School, Donna Ashlee from Brockhill Park School and The Fermor family from Perry Court Farm in Ashford. The latter provided a hamper for the raffle as well as two donkeys for the play!

- The sum of £480 was generated at the Northumberland committee's 'Christmas Sparkle' at the Warkworth War Memorial Hall in Morpeth.

- Eighty-two tractors took part in the inaugural Christmas Tractor Run, organised by South Staffs Water and Staffordshire YFC. The event raised £4,138.74 for R.A.B.I, Staffordshire YFC and Water Aid (funds split equally). Nina Yiannoukos-Benton, of South Staffs Water, said: "It was amazing to be involved in arranging this tractor run. We were so pleased at the numbers taking part and to see the smiles on the people's faces as we drove by. "We've already had people asking if we'll do it again next year."

- Guests young and old filled Hailsham Cattle Market for their carol service, with songs interspersed with readings and poems. The evening raised £410.

- The Driffield Cadenza Singers entertained a full house with choral music and readings at Swinton Castle in Masham, North Yorkshire. The event raised £500.



South Lakes Group Secretary Natalie Edmondson arranged a wreath-making workshop at the Victory Hall at Broughton in Cumbria (pictured above). Louise Wilson led the session which raised £1,000.

## Cumbrian services bring in over £8,000



- Willaston Sports and Social Club's Christmas Quiz brought in £850. The Nantwich-based fundraiser was a lot of fun with committee member Phil Smallwood and wife Dorothy again excelling in the costume department (Phil was dressed as a snowman). The committee also served turkey and chips to around 100 quizzers during the interval.

- A carol evening at Thame Market raised £1,283.07, with Daniel Slade auctioning off lots of goodies including various meat joints and puppy

vaccinations! The event was well supported by members of the Bucks committee and the Chinnor Silver Training Band.

- Thomas the donkey was a firm favourite at the Gloucestershire carol service, held at the Royal Agricultural University in Cirencester. The night raised £371. Reverend Graham Morris left it up to the congregation to decide which carols they wanted to sing.

- Pianist Richard Wadley accompanied the singing at a community carol

**ABOVE:** More than £7,000 was raised via three Cumbrian carol services. The services were held at the Hopes auction mart in Wigton; Mitchells, in Cockermouth and the Penrith auction mart (pictured). Another service in Kendal at the North West Auction Mart brought in an additional £1,500.

event at Monmouthshire Livestock Centre. The night brought in £1,100.

- A carol service at Llanerchaeron Church raised £380.10.

# Our helpline remains open

**R.A.B.I.'s Helpline remains open and staff will continue to provide support to people from the farming sector in need, despite the challenges posed by Coronavirus. We will be here for the individuals and families who need us. Our Helpline is open and anyone who is struggling and does not know where to turn, should call us on 0808 281 9490.**

## Ring the Helpline

The Freephone confidential Helpline 0808 281 9490 is operating as normal.

## One-to-One support

It's clear from speaking to callers that most people would prefer to access support over the phone for now. In exceptional circumstances visits can still take place if needed.

## Fundraising activity

In line with Government advice, our hard-working committees and volunteers have been advised that all fundraising events, awareness-raising events and committee meetings have been cancelled until further notice. We appreciate enormously the support of each of our committees and hope to reschedule wherever possible.

## Our AGM

At this time of year, all R.A.B.I. members would usually expect to receive an invitation from the Chairman and Council of Trustees to attend the Annual General Meeting and Conference in May. However,

Trustees have taken the difficult decision to cancel the conference and postpone the 160th AGM. R.A.B.I. is still required to hold a formal Annual General Meeting for members. The charity will follow Government guidance/restrictions and make appropriate alternative arrangements for later in the year, informing all members accordingly.

## The Shaw House office, in Oxford

Shaw House is closed until further notice. We are following government advice around working from home and other guidance.

## Our care homes

The priority at Manson House and Beaufort House is the welfare of residents and all possible measures are being taken to ensure people stay safe and well. In line with the measures being adopted across most other care homes, access is currently restricted to staff and other essential visits such as those from medical personnel. The teams at both homes are doing all they can to continue to provide excellent care, but also to ensure that residents are able to stay in touch with family via other means. Please telephone the home directly to check on loved ones or for further information and updates relating to care.

**Stay updated at [www.rabi.org.uk](http://www.rabi.org.uk)**

**All information / advice is correct at the time of going to print**

**Regional Manager Sally Conner collected a cheque for £500 from the Yorkshire Rural Support Network at their February meeting. This money was raised via a raffle at last October's Women in Farming Conference.**



# New President for Shropshire Chamber



John Hudson, Retiring President of the Shropshire Chamber of Agriculture, presented Kate Jones with a donation for £500 at the organisation's AGM at Tern Hill Hall, near Market Drayton. The Chamber was established in 1866. Malcolm Roberts has taken over as President and is arranging a fundraiser for R.A.B.I. in July.

# Regional Managers

## NORTH EAST – SALLY CONNER

North Yorkshire, County Durham, Northumberland, East Yorkshire  
Mobile: 07818 093506  
Tel: 01964 541400  
Email: [sally.conner@rabi.org.uk](mailto:sally.conner@rabi.org.uk)  
Twitter: [rabinortheast](https://twitter.com/rabinortheast)



## NORTH WEST – GEORGINA LAMB

Cumbria, Lancashire, South & West Yorkshire, Merseyside, Cheshire  
Mobile: 07917 114250  
Email: [georgina.lamb@rabi.org.uk](mailto:georgina.lamb@rabi.org.uk)  
Twitter: [rabinorthwest](https://twitter.com/rabinorthwest)



## WEST MIDLANDS – KATE JONES

Staffordshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire  
Mobile: 07876 492839  
Email: [kate.jones@rabi.org.uk](mailto:kate.jones@rabi.org.uk)  
Twitter: [rabiwestmids](https://twitter.com/rabiwestmids)



## NORTH WALES – HEULEN CYNFAL

Anglesey, Caernarfon, Conwy, Clwyd, Montgomeryshire  
Tel: 07946 253938  
Email: [heulen.cynfal@rabi.org.uk](mailto:heulen.cynfal@rabi.org.uk)



## WALES – LINDA JONES

Brecon & Radnor, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Glamorgan, Merionethshire, Monmouthshire  
Mobile: 07557 363016  
Tel: 01559 364850  
Email: [linda.jones@rabi.org.uk](mailto:linda.jones@rabi.org.uk)  
Twitter: [rabicymru\\_wales](https://twitter.com/rabicymru_wales)



## EAST – LUCY BELLEFONTAINE

Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire  
Mobile: 07739 297374  
Tel: 01528 602888  
Email: [lucy.bellefontaine@rabi.org.uk](mailto:lucy.bellefontaine@rabi.org.uk)  
Twitter: [rabieast](https://twitter.com/rabieast)



## SOUTH EAST – SALLY FIELD

Hampshire, IOW, Surrey, Sussex, Kent  
Mobile: 07799 798441  
Tel: 01903 882741  
Email: [sally.field@rabi.org.uk](mailto:sally.field@rabi.org.uk)  
Twitter: [RABISouthEast](https://twitter.com/RABISouthEast)



## SOUTH WEST – PAM WILLS

Devon, Cornwall, Dorset, Somerset  
Mobile: 07825 336224  
Tel: 01398 361819  
Email: [pam.wills@rabi.org.uk](mailto:pam.wills@rabi.org.uk)  
Twitter: [PamRABI](https://twitter.com/PamRABI)



## SOUTH CENTRAL – LAURA RACTLIFFE

Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire  
Tel: 07919 478518  
Email: [laura.ractliffe@rabi.org.uk](mailto:laura.ractliffe@rabi.org.uk)  
Twitter: [RABISCentral](https://twitter.com/RABISCentral)



## EAST MIDLANDS: POSITION VACANT

Lincolnshire, Rutland, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Derbyshire, Northamptonshire  
Please contact the fundraising & development team on 01865 724931 or email [info@rabi.org.uk](mailto:info@rabi.org.uk)