

# A HISTORY OF THE **FARM BUILDINGS ASSOCIATION**

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**Built on knowledge  
and experience**

and successors from the 1950s to date,  
as people continue to share experience,  
knowledge and expertise with each other  
within the sphere of Farm and Industrial  
Buildings with personal observations



**CLIVE MANDER**

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This work is dedicated to the many people and giants of the association who have given above and beyond their duty, perhaps to the detriment of other interests and commitments in their lives.

I must also record my thanks and give credit to the many people and ex-colleagues who have assisted and contributed to this endeavour.

Jim Loynes, with the archive he has saved from various source, is the star. But I must also thank John Young, David Allott, Jamie Robertson, Seaton Baxter, Tony Hutchinson and Mike Kelly.

If it had not been for her enthusiasm, support and the undoubted expertise of Myra Haywood [née Southorn], I could not have commenced this effort.  
Thank you Myra – a long standing friend.

I must also thank my wife Sue for her support in typing and amending the drafts and her understanding of the commitment and time spent on this project when we could have been enjoying other activities.



Clive Mander

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# Foreword

by Clive Mander

It was our RIDBA livestock consultant, Jamie Robertson from the University of Aberdeen, who strongly suggested I should write and record the history of this Association.

Initially I was very unsure that I was the right person for the task, but as I considered more deeply, I began to realise perhaps it is important that I, at least, made an attempt. I think it is important that our history is recorded because it is powerful, eventful and very far reaching. In addition, much of my life story is closely involved with the Association story. Whilst I have lots of insights into what happened, and why, there are a lot of details I have no knowledge of. Thankfully I do know many people who were very involved at certain times. It is my ambition to set out a framework and invite others to write about their connections and experiences throughout this time period. Above all I wish this work to be as accurate as possible.

All too often conjecture becomes recorded as fact and thereafter the fact becomes accepted because no one has the first-hand knowledge to challenge these assertions.

For this reason, I do so hope others will come forward and accurately record what they remember. I am also minded that the sands of time seem to run ever faster through the hourglass.

As this venture develops and is circulated, I would remind everyone that current technology allows insertion of text or photographs anywhere or at any stage of the script. I hope that anyone with strong impressions, opinions or memories will feel free to contribute their own memories and experiences for inclusion.

I am also aware that as others write there may be a degree of overlap or repetition of the narrative. I hope the reader will forgive this inevitability. In a court of law similar accounts by witnesses of the same event mean it must be true. I rest my case.

## FARM BUILDINGS ASSOCIATION

It is well documented that the Farm Buildings Association was formed at the 1956 Royal Show near Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The Royal Agricultural Show was a major event staged by the Royal Agricultural Society of England (RASE). There were many cross-connections between the RASE and the development of the Farm Buildings Association (FBA).

The list of founder members is not definitive but included:

- **David Soutar**  
The main proponent. David, as an architect, was aware that a large amount of government money was being invested in agriculture but was not necessarily wisely spent.
- **John Mackie MP**  
Believed it was important to produce as much food/acre as possible.
- **Bob Forsyth**  
An architect with a farming back-ground who was Head of the Farm Building Department at the West of Scotland Agricultural College.
- **F W Pemberton**  
Bidwells Land Agent in Cambridgeshire. Royal Show organiser and longstanding RASE Council member. Owner of Trumpington Hall, site of the 1960/61 Royal Shows.
- **H R Davison**  
Technical Editor of the *Farmer and Stockbreeder*.
- **Travers Legg**  
Editor of the *Farmers Weekly*.
- **Ken Lycett**  
An architect with MAFF.
- **James More-Molyneux**  
Building manufacturer.

- **W G Benoy**  
Farm Building Architect, Reading University.
- **Peter Girdleston**  
A consulting engineer with a penchant for modern milking systems.
- **Peter Aston**  
Farm Building Adviser.
- **Normal Snell**  
A farmer, no further information.
- **Rex Paterson**  
An eminent large-scale farmer.
- **Wilfred Cave**  
A farmer and terrific FBA supporter.
- **J Bilt**  
A farmer, no further information.
- **R E MacBratrey**  
A farmer, no further information.

Strangely this list does not include **Peter Buckler** as a founder, for it was undoubtedly he that organised the tea party at the 1956 Royal Show, which led to the formal Association. Tea drinking was a great passion of Peter.

Peter Buckler was certainly well acquainted with Francis Pemberton of the RASE (Royal Agricultural Society of England).

These founders were very much the eminent people of their time and I strongly believe they were well associated with each other informally before the 1956 Royal Show.

The fact that a sitting Member of Parliament was the founder Chairman I think tells a great deal. This Association has always punched above its weight because it is unique. No one else occupies this space between engineers, advisors and consultants, farmers, government, and veterinary and animal welfare issues, plus a host of machinery and equipment suppliers.

I was formally acquainted with several of these founder members and can understand their wish to associate.

As I begin to write I am very aware that WWII was a recent event in the lives of the founders. War history has been well recorded by others, but to me the significant fact is that once in power, Churchill set the whole country on a war footing.

No one was unaffected. Anyone out of line soon got scolded, "Don't you know there's a war on?" Because Hitler was always winning in those early days, I think the Germans were not quite so focussed or intent.

Wartime and domestic agriculture came under tremendous pressure and scrutiny because up to 60% of food was imported. The U-boats might starve Britain.

Accepted Government policy after the war was that never again should domestic food supply become vulnerable to external factors. Indeed, food rationing did not fully end until 1954 – nine years after the war's end.

Post war everything changed, and everything needed to change. Government was highly supportive of agriculture with all sorts of grants and subsidies to support the sector. Tractors now ruled, not horses, and there was no possibility of going into reverse.

The 1947 Agriculture Act was a very significant piece of legislation which alongside capital grants, through a system of deficiency payments put a bottom in the market for commodities. If the imported price of a commodity fell below the guaranteed price here, a deficiency payment was paid to the producer.

This system, together with building and land drainage grants plus the advisory and extension services of NAAS (National Agricultural Advisory Service), the ALS (Agricultural Land Service) and the others, produced a very fertile environment. It was into this fertile government ground that the roots of the Farm Buildings Association established.

As Government support developed it was into this melting pot that the founder members, each eminent in their own field, realised that collective knowledge was missing, but they knew the knowledge and experience probably existed, the difficulty was finding and disseminating it.

It was immediately recognised that the Association would not organise or run any research or development project, nor would it be able to operate a general information service. It would however do all it could to ensure that such work was carried out by others and the results disseminating.

Soon after the First World War there was a very serious agricultural depression in the UK as cheap food products from around the world were imported once again. Government had promised support after the war, but it came to naught. Within agricultural circles it became known as the "Great Betrayal".

The result was great hardship and large areas of land were uncultivated for many years. Agriculture land values plummeted and land was on offer for next to zero rent. The Wall Street Crash in 1929 made things even worse. By 1939 barely 40% of food was home produced. By the end of WWII 91% of food was home produced. (Dig for Victory also contributed.) The current equivalent is less than 70%.

The deficiency payment system of support continued until the UK accession to the EEC. My mother, who was shrewd in business and a keen political observer, opined that the EEC support system effectively put a top in the market which led to wine lakes and butter mountains. Again under 'set aside' rules land was left uncultivated here because farmers were paid not to grow anything. Post Brexit there is again concern that trade negotiations have given access to our domestic agricultural markets, possibly causing downward pressure here, for little obvious return.

Two books I particularly recommend for people with a wider interest in agriculture in the inter-war period are:

*Farmers Glory* by A G Street

*The Farming Ladder* by George Henderson

It is very apparent that soon after or perhaps an ambition at the formation, that the lack of any government support or funding for farm buildings research was a very major concern. It would appear that in Denmark, Holland and Scandinavia research and development was ongoing. David Soutar was foremost in this campaign by the FBA.

The Foreword to the first FBA Journal in 1957 by the chairman John Mackie, reports direct pressure upon the Minister of Agriculture for research. It was a result of a motion passed at the first FBA conference at Perth.

A paper in the journal notes that some research is being carried out by various universities but finds the results uncoordinated, of limited value regionally, of little depth and the dissemination of results inadequate.

By winter 1963 the First Editorial of the new magazine Farm Building is suggesting £60

million/year is spent on farm buildings when there is so little factual information.

The magazine also notes that the FBA campaign for research established by Government has again been refused and their insisting that established research facilities are adequate.

A formula for the activities of the Association seems to have developed very rapidly soon after, or perhaps before, its official formation in that a one day conference be held in December in London to coincide with the Smithfield Fatstock Show and a three day Spring Conference/Study Tour based on a different region of the UK each year. The December conference was initially held at the RASE offices in Belgravia and was subsequently held at the Commonwealth Hall in London.

An overseas tour, into Europe, was initially held every second year. This formula of meetings, together with an annual journal, became the established routine and was largely unchanged for many years. It was so successful that membership boomed with all manner of people with interest or indeed enthusiasm for farm buildings. Part of its success was due to the fact that people joined as individuals, not as corporate entities. There was no advertising in the journal, although offers of help or accommodation for meetings was very welcome.

It is startling to see that in the December 1959 Farm Buildings Association Journal the names and addresses of 330 members are recorded. Effectively less than three years since formation. In the December 1968 Journal 880 members names and addresses are listed. There is scarcely a farming estate or significant agricultural enterprise not represented.

The only first-hand record known to exist of the very early days of the Association are those of founder member David Sainsbury given as an address to the Golden Jubilee Dinner at Patshull Park Hotel in 2006. It is reproduced here from the summer edition of the RIDBA Journal.

Others will be far more knowledgeable about Dr Sainsbury's work, but he did contribute a great deal of scientific works on the ventilation of livestock buildings. Post war most new livestock buildings used the new products of corrugated

steel or asbestos cement sheets. The natural ventilation aspects of these new buildings were terrible, and Sainsbury was the first to identify the problems. Some might suggest 60 plus years later we still have avoidable problems.

The more I have become involved with this venture the more amazed I have become at the sheer volume and technical merit of the written material this Association has supported and produced. I feel inadequate to describe or record these efforts of the past, but an archive does exist, currently under the care of Jim Loynes. It must continue to be cared for. It is also worth recording that various universities have their own archive with valuable insights, particularly the University of Aberdeen which holds FBA and Scottish Rural University College (SRUC – Craibstone, Aberdeen) records.

It is to be noted that all the FBA minute books are missing/lost. This tome is produced from many other sources of information and there may be errors of detail.

## Chapter 1

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# The Early Days of the Farm Buildings Association

by Dr David Sainsbury

It is quite difficult to know where to start as the Association had its founding origins some years before the formal start in 1956. However one thing can never be disputed – the credit must go above all to David Soutar.

I first met David in 1954. He had been responsible for the design of some pig buildings at Wye College. I was studying pig housing design as a PhD student after qualifying as a Vet, when many losses amongst fattening pigs could often reach 50% and morbidity even 100% with so-called virus pneumonia. In the simple McGuckian inspired housing of Soutar design, one would be unlikely to lose any pigs and morbidity could be trivial. My own studies were concerned with an analysis of the environment to compare and contrast with other housing and compare it to others.

In the 1950s as one travelled from the South of England to the North of Scotland there was an obvious steady improvement in the standard of housing – partly due to the need for better environmental protection as one travelled north and in part due to a whole tradition of better building. Scotland had a much more enlightened service for farmers at a time when farm building design was in a desperate state of uncertainty or even ignorance. They based their service on the three regional Colleges of Agriculture – North, East and West and the North in Aberdeen had acquired the services of David Soutar as Director.

Thus was Scotland given a far better advisory service than England with its Land Service based in office and with central control from London.

It was recognised that in the design of Farm Buildings it was necessary to have a wide spectra of wise specialists – Architects, Engineers, Farmers – livestock and crop, Veterinarians, Surveyors and building materials specialists. So was borne in the mind of David Soutar the need for an

Association which would bring together those of diverse interests and he arranged a meeting at the Royal Show in Newcastle in the first week of July 1956 and an interim committee was formed. Interesting names were gathered for this:

David Soutar – Originator; John Mackie of Bent in the Chair, later MP, a Minister of Agriculture and then to the House of Lords; Bob Forsyth, provisional secretary from West of Scotland College, David's opposite number; F W Pemberton of Bidwells, Cambridge and Royal Show organiser; H R Davidson pig farming guru and technical editor at the *Farmer and Stockbreeder*; Travers Legge soon to be Editor of *Farmers Weekly*; Ken Lycett building manufacturer and likewise James More-Molyneaux; W G Benoy, leading farm architect based at Reading University; Peter Girdlestone, agricultural engineer and farmer; Peter Aston, building adviser; and foremost farmers Norman Snell, Rex Patterson, Wilfrid Cave, J Bilt, R E MacBratrey and myself as a Vet. The FBA was conceived and then in December 1956, after a five month gestation, the FBA – Farm Buildings Association, was born in Smithfield week. The pattern was to have this meeting and then a Spring Conference together with eventually visits to foreign parts. Local very active branches soon formed and membership quite quickly reached 1,000.

There were two outstanding early events I would refer to. Our first Spring Conference was held in Perth. Seventy members attended and on the second day of the conference, after visiting nine farms – quite a feat in itself, John Mackie our Chairman, entertained us in a memorable Barn Supper, with the haggis piped in, and the most exceptional hospitality. This conference set a standard of efficiency, technical merit, interest and camaraderie which set a pattern. Other Spring Conferences in the early years were centred on



*Harrogate Conference – March 1959*

Bath, Harrogate and Oxford. Then there was the memorable visit to Scandinavia in 1961 – as David Soutar said ‘Never to be surpassed’. Nearly half a century ago but still vivid in my mind. After the harsh strictures and shortages of our war years we found the adventurous developments in all aspects of building, especially in Sweden, together with enthusiasm of the first order, contagious in the extreme. We were received with great hospitality. We travelled of course a great deal. Certain events stick in my mind. Travelling from Oslo one afternoon to the top of a ski slope looking down over a most magnificent view of mountains and a fjord and hearing a Midland burr behind me saying it was almost up to the standard of the Birmingham Reservoir, the charms of which I have yet to see, but I really must get round to it. Or entering a department store in Copenhagen with a very British farmer friend who decided he would buy his wife a jumper to take home. The girl asked for the lady’s bust size. The friend had no idea but tried to shape his hands appropriately and provided only embarrassment. So the wonderfully helpful assistant summoned a number of attractive assistants of varying bust

sizes, lined them up and the farmer walked down the line to establish the best fit. By this time there was a goodly audience of our members and locals. To Sweden we travelled overnight by train from Norway and sleep was not possible. I especially recall Alex Gale, who was not at all a well man, but an enthusiast like the rest and regaling us with his tales as the famous doyen of the Gales Honey family, reminding us he was the largest employer of female labour in the World with countless millions of bees. After a day visiting farms and establishments in Sweden we were given a wonderful meal – the repast was in front of us to help ourselves. This we did with gusto and decided we must summon the chef to say ‘Thank you’. He came – he seemed puzzled – what we had tucked into was not the meal at all, only the Smorgasbord or hors d’oeuvres. In spite of our mistaken gluttony, we managed to enjoy it.

One further item should be mentioned. Great efforts were made to persuade Government and the Agricultural Research Council to set up appropriate Farm Building Research facilities. For some time I held the Chair of the FBA Research and Development Committee. I will not go

into the work of this in detail, the efforts were prolonged and hard, meeting after meeting, but we failed, though there were a number of efforts and schemes put in place, but by and large they did not answer the need, and in consequence, many millions of pounds were wasted on half-baked building work. This is no time to go into the details but at least David Soutar set up a splendid place in Aberdeen – the Scottish Farm Buildings Investigation Unit. This was tragically closed down some years after his retirement. I had a small unit based at the University of Cambridge. After my retirement from the University it was rapidly bulldozed and replaced by the striking Bill Gates funded Microsoft Centre for Computer Research. How can one compete?!

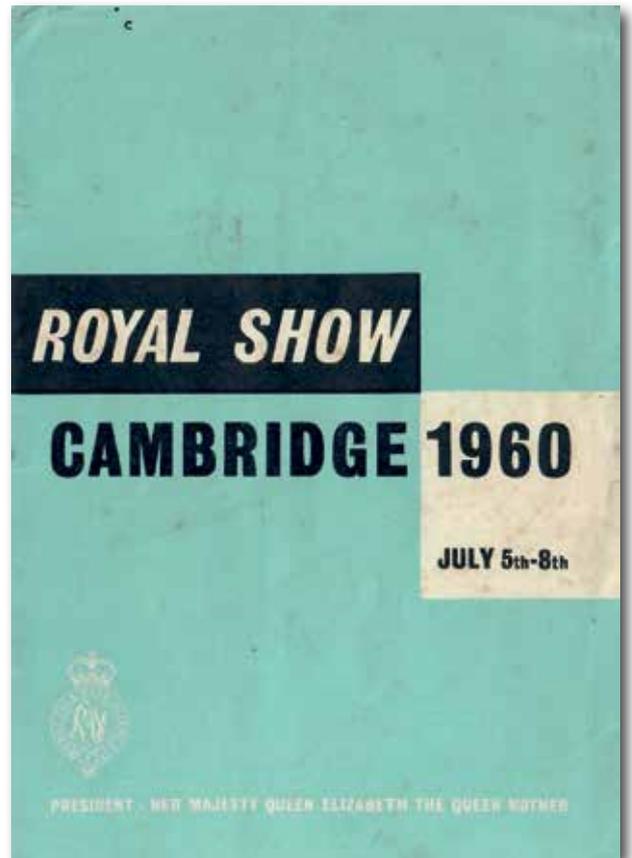
There were striking features of the FBA through its first years that will be indelibly printed in the memory of those who took part. A wonderful and contagious enthusiasm – a determination to get up and go and get things done. A splendid mix of professionals and interests – farmers, architects, surveyors, builders, material suppliers, research associations, livestock advisors, veterinarians, animal researchers and so on. It was a time of agricultural expansion in this country following the lean war years and immediately after.

These were golden years for agriculture from the 1950s to 1990s. There were however some totally different attitudes to those of today. For example, one recalls the unselfish, generous exchange of information between all parties. Was this the after effect of the war years when we had a common goal – Victory? We had other common goals – survival and self-sufficiency. We proved it could be done. Now, by and large there is far too little exchange of information and free advisory services are no longer in existence to the detriment of agriculture.

I have dealt only with the first years of the FBA and others will continue onwards. In conclusion I would congratulate all those who have kept the Association going in a dynamic and adaptable way. I was sorry it had been felt necessary to eliminate the word 'Farming' from its title and 'Rural' is very PC. Rather too much like the death of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food which is now DEFRA or the Department for the Elimination of Farming and Rural Affairs or

words to that effect. Don't mention Agriculture or Farming!

Congratulations to the indefatigable Tony and Jeannie Hutchinson whose energy and cheerful efficiency are superb. And finally, can we raise our glasses to David Soutar OBE and Honorary Fellow of the Royal Agricultural Society of England and without whose endeavours there would have been no FBA or its successors.





*Almost certainly the significant livestock demonstration area at the 1961 Royal Show at Cambridge, but possibly the 1962 Show at Newcastle. A caption at the top of the tower silo reads "RASE Demonstration". The railway sleeper roadway in the foreground is exactly as I remember.*

## Chapter 2

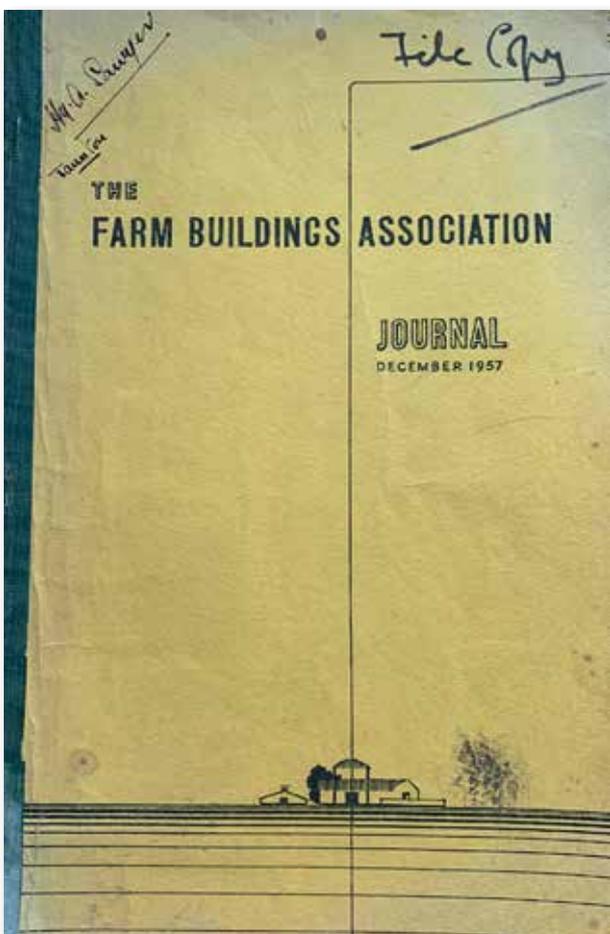
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# The Constitution

## The first FBA Journal – December 1957

The first FBA Journal produced is rare now. It is reported that there is a copy in the archive at SRUC. The Chairman's Foreword to this first journal is so apt and time proved that the members intentions and visions were so accurate. The convening of the Autumn and Spring Conferences and the publication of the Journal was all so successful that the same formulation continued for about 40 years. The membership rocketed as a result.

In this journal there is a full report of the Spring Conference held in Perth. This was highly successful with about 70 attendees and was a trend setter. No wonder people wanted more.



### FOREWORD

This is the first issue of the proceedings of the FBA. I hope it is the forerunner of many more. We are a body formed to help ourselves to a better understanding of all the problems in the layout, design and erection of Farm Buildings. We started just over a year ago, making a modest but not inauspicious start. One of our first jobs was to press the Minister of Agriculture for research on the subject and this we continue to do. We have about 200 members drawn from farmers, advisory officers, estate agents, landlords, materials manufacturers, building contractors and so on. Over sixty of these attended a three-day conference at Perth in the Spring. A fairly full report of this is part of this proceedings. Already plans are well in hand for next Spring's conference. We meet at Smithfield for our Annual General Meeting and to hear papers on important aspects of farm buildings. We have had many queries and requests for help. I hope the matter in these proceedings will answer many of these.

I commend these proceedings to you. There is a wealth of information in them though there is perhaps much more that many people would have included. However, as I said, this is only the first and I am sure our Editor, David Soutar, would welcome criticisms and suggestions. Meantime we must congratulate him on giving us a really good start with this publication.

JOHN MACKIE – Chairman

## **The Aims of the Farm Buildings Association**

The Farm Buildings Association was formed as the outcome of a Meeting at the Royal Show, Newcastle, 1956, when a number of people directly concerned with the development of efficient farm buildings decided that much would be gained if their interests were united in some form of Association. It was suggested that this Association would serve as a long desired link between the many farm building “enthusiasts” and could be of very considerable assistance in the development of an efficient agriculture in this country.

It was realised that the Association itself would not organise research and development projects nor would it be able to run a general information service, but it would do all in its powers to ensure that such work was carried out by the appropriate official concerns. It was suggested that the Association’s activities would involve perhaps two meetings per annum, one being in the form of a three-day Conference, while farm buildings developments, as observed by members, might be reported in some form of Annual Proceedings.

## **Constitution of the Association**

The objects for which the Association is established are:

- a) To provide opportunities for those interested in and concerned with farm buildings to meet and exchange information, ideas and experiences relating to the design and construction of farm buildings.
- b) To encourage the investigation of problems and matters pertaining to farm buildings and their equipment.
- c) To collect and publish information relating to farm buildings.
- d) To stimulate the incorporation into practice of advances resulting from research, experimental work and practical experience.
- e) To receive subscriptions and other payments and to accept gifts and donations for the general purposes of the Association or for any one or more of the objects of the Association.
- f) To co-operate with any other organisation in furthering any of the objects of the Association.
- g) To make and frame such regulations and by-laws as may be considered necessary for the conduct of the Association and the attainments of its objects.
- h) To admit to membership of the Association persons concerned with or interested in the objects of the Association.
- i) To do all such things as may be incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objects or any of them.

## Chapter 3

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# Profiles of the Founder and very early Members



### **JOHN MACKIE** MP

Information extracted from *Farmbuildings*  
No 8 Autumn 1965

Here is a big man in every sense of the word. Physical attributes apart, he thinks 'big' and is certainly very big-hearted. He was born some fifty-five years ago at North Ythsie, Tarves, Aberdeenshire, and it was his good fortune to have as a father one of the most far-sighted and highly respected of men, known far and wide for his services, not only to agriculture, but to public causes in general – all attributes which are being carried on so ably by his son.

Dr Mackie – as he now is – has always believed in letting youth have its head and when his son, John, left Aberdeen Grammar School at the age of seventeen he made him grieve (bailiff) of his out-farm of Little Ardo. As if that was not a sufficient task John Mackie attended courses at the North of Scotland College of Agriculture at the same time.

In 1931 he took over the 700 acre Kincardine-shire farm at Bent and here his mechanical turn of mind had ample scope. He had the first crawler tractors in the country and when production trailers failed to come up to his standards he made his own. In 1934 he married Jean Milne, a member of a prominent Angus farming family. Their own family numbers three sons and two daughters, the eldest son now managing Bent. In 1947, along with two brothers-in-law, he took over the 2,000 acre farm of Glentworth in Lincolnshire, now run as Glentworth Scottish Farms, and a few years ago, probably confident of his political future and equally determined not to be separated from his beloved agriculture, he acquired the 500 acre farm of Harolds Park, near Nazeing, only twenty miles from the House of Commons.

Probably only in the political field has John Mackie found himself strongly opposed to any of his father's views. But this is a family characteristic. At present his politically Conservative father has one son, John, a Labour MP and Under Secretary for Agriculture, another son, George, a Liberal MP, another son, Maitland, an erstwhile Liberal candidate, and a daughter, Mary, a Labour candidate for the next election. John Mackie's political career was not blessed with early success for he was defeated in North Angus in 1951 and in Lanark in 1955 before successfully contesting Enfield East in 1959. At the 1964 Election he was again successful and with his party's return to office he was honoured with the appointment of Under Secretary of State for Agriculture.

Although Mr Mackie has carried on successful production in the widest range of agricultural products, from soft fruit to dairying, his main interest has been in mechanization and in the design of rational farm buildings. In acknowledgement of his prowess in the buildings sphere Mr Mackie was appointed to

the commission that visited America at the end of World War II, and produced a report which considerably influenced developments in this sphere. In 1956 he was co-founder and first chairman of the Farm Buildings Adssociation, a society which has grown in numbers from the twelve who attended the foundation meeting to over eight hundred today. He gave it a magnificent start. None who attended its first conference will forget his efficient organization, his energetic leadership (nine farms visited one day), or his generous hospitality at Bent at the concluding barn supper. Of the many educational project with which he has been concerned, including his service as Chairman of the Scottish Machinery Testing Station, none has given him greater pleasure than his work for the North of Scotland College of Agriculture, of which his father had been Chairman of Governors for many years. It was with great regret that he had to relinquish its Vice-Chairmanship on being appointed to his present ministerial post.

It is reported that on a visit to Glasgow in the 1930s John saw children suffering from rickets. Rickets is a disease, mostly affecting children, caused by the lack of vitamin D and/or calcium. Milk was an obvious source of calcium and in 1946 legislation ensured that children were given 1/3rd pint of milk each day at school. This continued until the 1970s, although under 5 year olds can still receive free milk. In 1937 an investigation had revealed there was a link between low income groups, malnutrition and under achievement in schools.

I think John Mackie's visit at that time had a great affect on him because he was well aware that milk was so beneficial for good health in cities but was being poured down the drain in Aberdeenshire.

He was elected MP in 1959 and became Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture 1964-1970. He had an older brother Maitland Mackie who was another farming innovator, particularly pioneering the use of silage. He also became an early FBA member.

It is interesting to note that John Mackie had FBA registration number 371 and Maitland 372.

*Clive Mander*



**DAVID W B SAINSBURY** MA, PhD  
(Vet Sci), MRCVS

Information extracted from *Farmbuildings*  
No 3 Summer 1964

Dr Sainsbury attended the Royal Veterinary College at Camden Town in London and qualified as a veterinary surgeon in 1951. From 1952 to 1955 he lectured in Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Hygiene at the Royal Veterinary College, and since 1956 has been Lecturer in Animal Hygiene at the University of Cambridge.

Research into the problem of animal housing and environment, particularly of pigs and poultry, has occupied a great deal of his time. He is a founder member and ex-Chairman of the Farm Buildings Association, and at present chairman of its Research Sub-committee. He has served on the sub-committee of the Agricultural Research Council concerned with experimental farm buildings and he has travelled extensively in Europe to study farm buildings. He is one of the handful of people whose hard work and enthusiasm established the FBA in the early years and, more recently, helped to get the Farm Buildings Centre started.

## Jamie Robertson writes . . .

**Dr DWB Sainsbury**, School of Veterinary Medicine, Cambridge was one of the founders of the FBA, and one of the original sixteen committee members under the chairman John Mackie of Kincardineshire. David Soutar was the vice chairman; he had a senior role as a farm buildings adviser at the North of Scotland College of Agriculture in Bucksburn, Aberdeen. Dr Sainsbury produced a paper for the second FBA journal on Broiler Chicken Housing where he promoted the approach of understanding the optimum environment needed for the birds and how this might be provided. The main areas of discussion were methods and levels of ventilation, the choice of materials, thermal insulation and lighting. His contribution to the 3rd FBA journal was a discussion on animal housing design and disease prevention. He comments on the importance of building size whereby the intrinsic elevated risk of constant stocking can be removed by matching building size to farm throughput, and a designed period that allows complete and competent cleaning between batches of livestock. This was a period when earthen floors were still present in all types of housing, and his comments on floors and drainage are still relevant today.

Dr Sainsbury was chairman of FBA in 1961, and in his foreword of the 1961 journal observes that the failure to obtain government support for R&D in farm buildings may reflect the observation that FBA had presented their case badly. The outcome was a memorandum on the organisation required for Farm Building R&D in Great Britain, presented at the FBA winter conference in 1961. By this time Dr. Sainsbury had established studies at Cambridge veterinary school looking at livestock environments, and the impact on animal health and productivity. Their objective studies included the use of environmental chambers where inputs and outputs could be constantly monitored. This reflected the use of environmental chambers at the Rowett Institute in Aberdeen that provided primary information on ruminant nutrition and became the foundation of quantitative studies of thermal dynamics and gaseous emissions from livestock systems.

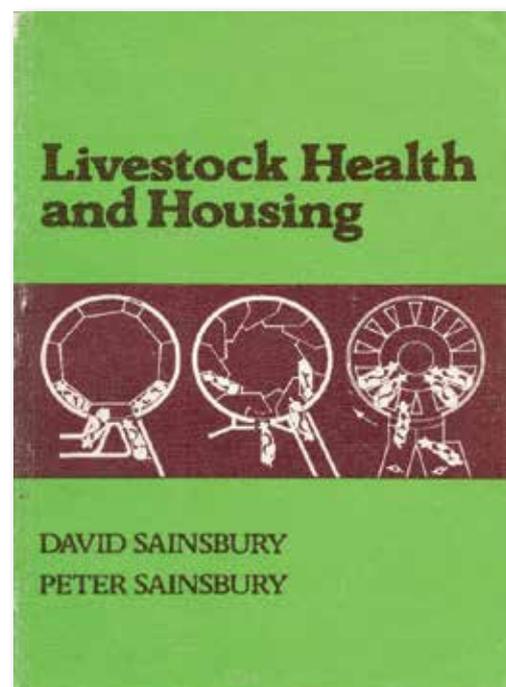
Dr. Sainsbury presented a paper repeated in the *FBA Journal* No.14 (1970) on the environmental requirements of the beef animal, in which he starts with two points. The first was that he would rather make no comment at all on the subject until there was more hard data on what the requirements might be, and second that the subject should surely include disease. These themes provided a link between the main UK farm buildings R&D facilities for the next 25 years, and from 1972 onwards was a global link via the International Commission of Agricultural Engineering (CIGR).

Dr Sainsbury wrote many referred papers and books on the subject of animal health and welfare and the environment, including buildings. He made significant contributions for the evolving intensification of pig and poultry production, and further papers that included cattle and equine interests. He was a member of the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Committee in the 1960s.

He was a member of the Farm Animal Welfare Committee and produced two books on the subject.

Sainsbury DWB (1963) *Pig Housing*, 188pp. FARMING PRESS (BOOKS) LTD Ipswich, 1963

Sainsbury DWB (1967) *Animal Health and Housing*, London. Balliere Tindall & Cassell  
In 1979 the title changed to *Livestock Health and Housing* and the cover is reproduced here





**DAVID S SOUTAR** ARIBA, AA Hons.dip

Information extracted from *Farmbuildings*  
No 1 Winter 1963/64

Few people have pioneered more new notions in buildings and equipment than David Soutar, Head of the Farm Buildings Department of the North of Scotland College of Agriculture at Aberdeen.

Successful pig-keepers all over the country owe much of their profit to piggery designs which he has developed. He pioneered slatted floors too. In his own north-east of Scotland there are well over 200 slatted layouts for beef. "We've now lost count of them" he says. His latest interest is in mechanical handling – mainly getting feed for animals on slatted floors and muck away. Augers, pumps and fore-end loaders have been tried.

Son of a well-known architect, he qualified at the Architectural Association in London and joined the family practice. He took up his present appointment in 1948. A founder member of the Farm Building Association he has edited their journal for several years until forced by other commitments to hand the job over quite recently. The success of the association owes much to his enthusiasm and hard work. In April he will be chief host when the association's spring meeting is held at Aberdeen. His second love – after his work – is skiing.

**Seaton Baxter**, an ex-member with a very successful and accomplished career, writes . . .

I worked alongside David for about 15 years until he retired in 1977. He was the perfect mentor! With an old-fashioned etiquette and elegance and a modern, inventive outlook, I learned a lot in a short time.

His original, architectural inventiveness was enhanced by his time in 'Combined Operations' in World War 2 and he regularly and humorously regaled us with his stories of the 'Giant Panchandrew' etc. His open mind, positive and always helpful advice was welcomed by the NE Farming Community who responded with reciprocal openness. He was politically astute, learned mainly from his friendship with the Mackie farming family. He was the perfect leader for SFBIU and its desires to innovate and problem solve in farm buildings and equipment in a rapidly changing agriculture. His problem solving style was pragmatic. Like many inventors, he thought clearly, sketched his ideas but got most from making and prototyping solutions on the farm, especially on the College Farm at Craibstone or on commercial farms of innovative farmers.

David was also an astute communicator, wise enough to resolve minor tensions between the other less progressive advisory services by publishing a quarterly farm buildings journal (*Farm Building Progress*) which, in addition to communicating the work of SFBIU, also welcomed the ideas of others for publication. *Farm Building Progress* became rapidly accepted worldwide as the mouthpiece of David and SFBIU.

I will never forget David. He set the standard for the whole of my future career.

Thanks David

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**Clive Mander** writes . . .

I was fortunate enough to visit David and the SFBIU in 1971. David was a generous and engaging host. As mentioned he was a very accomplished cross country skier and he had his own 'Bothy' in the mountains. There is a suggestion that he experimented with a paracute affair to blow him up the mountain slopes. He also enjoyed

his motor cars and used to race on the famous Brooklands oval track. I think his favourite was a Frazer Nash.

At dinner one evening I made a comment about the wonderful granite buildings and architecture of Aberdeen. Being a nice evening he took me to the nearby granite quarry. I still have a shard of granite I picked up from the ground which I included in a small pencil rack on my desk. All this before 'oil' in Aberdeen.



## WILFRED E CAVE

Information extracted from *Farmbuildings*  
No 5 Winter 1964

Observation has done much to make Wilfrid Cave the great farmer he is. His enquiring mind makes him also a very practical, understanding and compassionate man. Listen to him discussing the farm programme with his workers – and you have a lesson in labour relations such as no textbook can teach you. Hear him talking to farmers – and you hear the plain speaking that comes from wide observation and sure knowledge. “If it doesn’t pay – give it the chop” is one of the Cave principles. Listen to him talking politics, which for him stem more from personal convictions than from any party line – and you can understand how he whittled down the Conservative margin as Labour candidate for Devizes (although after the 1959 election he decided not to stand again. He farmed for a few years in Buckinghamshire

before moving to Wiltshire in 1934, where he now farms 2,500 acres in partnership with his cousin, Mr D T Cave.

This is thin, bleak, almost treeless land on the northern edge of Salisbury Plain, but it produces up to 1,200 acres of excellent corn, as well as 200 acres of herbage seed and 200 more in lucerne for drying. Almost all the rest is in leys. Some 400 cows are milked in three herds using a yard and parlour with self-feed silage; 250 breeding sows are kept and the progeny fattened. Manure from pigs and cows is irrigated on to the pastures.

Wilfrid Cave has travelled widely – to the USA, Denmark, Holland, Russia and New Zealand to study farming methods. After the New Zealand trip he came back convinced that we should be able to keep sheep at the same high stocking rate and produce lamb as cheaply as they did, provided we used New Zealand methods. The Caves have tried to do this on hill land purchased cheaply in Wales and Cornwall, which has been, and is being, reclaimed and equipped with sorting yards and wool sheds on New Zealand lines.

Buildings have always figured prominently in Wilfrid Cave’s frequent essays into new systems of farming. He was one of the first to look critically at slatted floors for dairy cows. Characteristically he adopted and then rejected them, without prejudice, when in his particular circumstances they wouldn’t work. His latest preoccupation is with fattening systems for pigs. After much enquiry he established that nobody had yet compared the various systems side by side. He determined to do just that – and the comparisons are now in hand. In addition to the very practical development work on his own farms, Wilfrid Cave has campaigned unceasingly for proper farm buildings research. He is a founder member and one of the early chairmen of the FBA and it was very largely due to his energy, backed by a substantial guarantee from his own resources that the Farm Buildings Centre was established last year. He is in fact a great enthusiast and it is fortunate for the industry that much of his enthusiasm is devoted to the farm buildings cause.

## Clive Mander writes . . .

Wilfred Cave farmed in Hampshire but also owned land near Camelford in Cornwall. He was a very enthusiastic member and great supporter of the FBA and the later Farm Buildings Centre. He was always quick and generous to offer financial support. He was always a very modest man and never wished for publicity for money he gave. Wilfred was always eager for a glimpse of anything new and always open to any new ideas. His constant thought was that whatever problem or difficulty he found in his farming life, someone else, somewhere, had faced the same problem and overcome it. The trick was to find the other person. The FBA networking opportunities helped him enormously in that quest.

I had the pleasure to visit Wilfred at Collingbourne Ducis in 1971. Amongst other enterprises he produced milk using a low cost facility perhaps greatly influenced by the Hosier system.

A herd of perhaps 80 to 100 cows was housed in very cheap Langmead cow kennels, remote from the main farm steading. Thus the unit could be placed centrally to the surrounding grazing area. What was totally unique was that the slurry from the double row of kennels was simply pushed up the ramps and allowed to settle. There was no attempt to load it into spreaders or contain it in any way. Most of us would expect the slurry to run and spread over a large area, but it didn't. Wilfred reckoned the entire winter's production had only covered about 1/4 acre and that felt like a bargain to him against the cost of a containment store. Moreover he likened it to a giant cow pat whereupon it tended to form a skin on the surface and coupled with its natural angle of repose, it was not diluted and spread by rainwater.



*The very simple but very effective way that Wilfred Cave stored cow slurry*

I suspect the naturally free draining land helped although I did once suggest a customer of mine pushed his slurry over the top of a steep bank because his landlord was reluctant to invest. It looked a mess but caused no serious pollution.

Wilfred didn't touch his giant cow pat until August/September each year. It had dried considerably by then and was very easily handled as a solid and not slurry. Whilst loading the manure it was important not to create a depression which might hold water and cause difficulty the next year.

On another occasion I remember him asking if we had knowledge of 'river feeding' of pigs? This involved a continuous flow of liquid feed through the pigs' feeding troughs at all times. This greatly simplified the necessary feeding equipment and Wilfred was way ahead of me. I couldn't help him. My brother had a novel idea whereby he adopted a similar system to water his pigs. A river of water flowed past the pigs continuously. This removed the endless problem of leaking water bowls or pipes within each pen.

At his farm, *Rough Tor* in Cornwall, Wilfred was experimenting with lambing his flock of sheep indoors. Lamb mortality could be quite high when lambing indoors because of cross infections, or so it was thought. Wilfred's idea was to throw ewes and lambs outside once the lamb had its first bellyfull of milk and gained strength. Almost every flock is now lambed indoors, another revolution, but Wilfred was ahead, although not perhaps the first.

These are just a few examples of the clever, open man I had the privilege to meet. Wilfred and Constance Cave set up their own charitable foundation formally established in 1965.

Since 1998 it is simply known as the Cave Foundation. The trustees are all direct descendants. The Foundation normally requests that any grants are not publicly acknowledged.



**ANTHONY ROSEN** ARIBA, AA Hons.dip

Information extracted from *Farmbuildings*  
No 6 Spring 1965

The new chairman of the FBA is best known for his work at Bury St Austen's Farm, Sussex, which he used to manage for Mr P R V Wheeler with whom he now farms in partnership.

Born in 1930, he began his interest in farming as a boy, spending his holidays with an uncle who farms in Suffolk. He went to Framlingham College until 1948 and then spent a short time doing mechanical engineering – “and tearing about at motorbike scrambles – which must be why I didn't learn very much.” Having joined up in 1950 he left his first regiment – the 17/21st Lancers – for a commission in the Gunners.

After getting married he got a job as a tractor driver on a Gloucestershire farm – 370 acres of heavy valley clay. He stayed there for 15 months – and the experience of working with difficult land stood him in good stead when he went to Bury St Austen in 1956. Since he has been there he has transformed the farm – and taken in another five farms, to make a total of 670 acres. 96 fields have gradually been turned into 25 and every acre has been drained. Of the 570 ploughable acres 400 are down to corn and 170 to grass. The corn is mainly continuous winter wheat which has grown on the same land for up to seven years. Three thousand yards of concrete road cross the farm, the buildings have been given a facelift and four new cottages have been erected.

Building development never stands still: the dairy, originally planned as a one-man unit with 45 cows, is now 120 cows with two men milking week on and week off. Cubicles are a recent addition. One of the best features of the setup is the granary. The original 360 ton bin setup has been extended by 575 tons of on-the-floor storage.

Anthony Rosen's connection with the FBA began in 1958. “We were spending a lot of money here,” he said, “I wanted to be sure I would know if we were going wrong and I felt that the FBA was the best way of meeting the experts.” He brings to the FBA the same energy, imagination and irrepressible sense of humour that has coloured his work at Bury St Austen's. He is a founder member of the Farm Managers' Association and a member of the Oxford Farming Conference Committee.

The Rosens now have two sons and Anthony Rosen spends his free time flying, taking photographs and playing hockey.

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**Clive Mander writes . . .**

Anthony Rosen was a very charismatic and able individual who was FBA chairman in 1965. Following this time his career undertook a very significant development. In the early 1970s within this country inflation was stubbornly high in the region of 15-20%. City money people understood that agricultural land was an excellent asset to hold in these circumstances although they understood little about farming. With city backing he set up a company called Fountain Farming which looked after the management of these investment farms. By 1975 Fountain Farming became the largest farming company in Europe with more than 30,000 acres, 6,200 cows, 3,000 beef cattle, 25,000 sheep and 200 employees. There was an additional large vegetable producing operation in Iran prior to the fall of the Shah.

By 1978 the same city backers wanted to join alternative fashionable investments and without such funds Fountain Farming collapsed very quickly. A sister company, Fountain Forestry, looking after woodland investments was a similar management operation and still exists. City people still often buy farmland as an investment as it provides an inheritance tax exemption and

a lifestyle choice. These farms are often run or overseen by management companies exactly as Rosen pioneered.

The advent of Fountain Farming together with city money was not universally popular with the general farming public because it was thought to be out competing the local communities who could not match the incoming money buying land.



## **PETER BROAD**

Information extracted from *Farmbuildings*  
No 2 Spring 1964

We welcome Peter Broad back to this country to take up his appointment as the first director of the Farm Buildings Centre set up by the Royal Agricultural Society of England and the Farm Buildings Association at the RASE showground at Stoneleigh Abbey, Kenilworth, Warwickshire.

He has wide experience at home and abroad which gives him that lack of insularity which will be so necessary for the successful establishment of the centre.

Of all countries abroad to have been in longest, Sweden is perhaps the most useful at the present time. The rapid expansion of our own supplies of timber and the trend away from traditional bricks-and-mortar construction may revolutionize our attitudes to farm buildings in the next decade and Mr Broad will be well equipped as one of the inevitable thought leaders in this era. Valuable

too, will be his experience with the Swedish Society for Rural Buildings (LBF), which has some similarity to the centre.

After taking a degree in agriculture at Reading University, Peter Broad was awarded a colonial agricultural scholarship and spent a year at Cambridge University. He then spent about three years in the Sudan Government Service before returning in 1949 to Cambridge where he was on the staff of the National Institute of Agricultural Botany for seven years. In 1956 he went to Sweden and soon afterwards joined the staff of the Research Institute for Farm Buildings. There he became interested in the application of method study to the planning and re-planning of buildings.

In 1959 he joined the farm buildings department of the (then) Swedish Society for Rural Building (LBF) and was mainly concerned with technical intelligence. For the past five years he has been associated with the planning of buildings for agricultural industries, including grain silos and feeding stuffs factories. In 1960 he was a member of a team planning a complete grain storage system for Syria.

For the moment he has had to leave his charming Swedish wife and children behind in Stockholm, but hopes they will be joining him at the end of this term.



**PETER C GIRDLESTONE** TD, MA (Oxon),  
AMinstCE, MIMechE, MISstructW

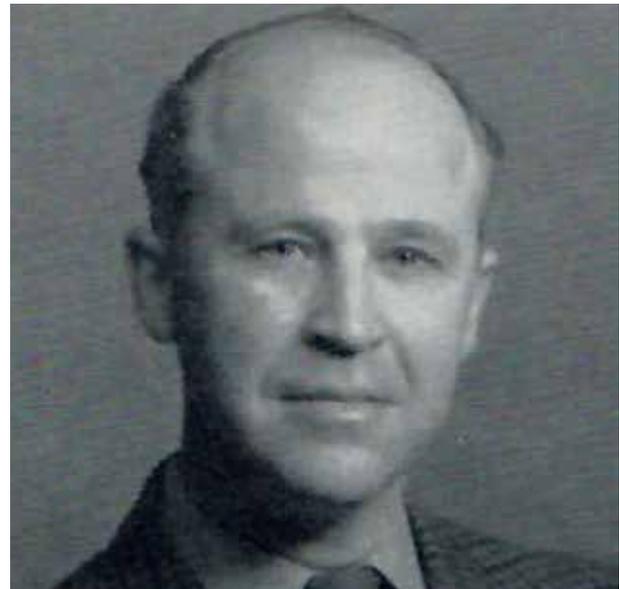
Information extracted from *Farmbuildings*  
No 3 Summer 1964

It is fitting that at this time when the FBA is becoming well-known and accepted, and seeing one of its most cherished projects – the Farm Buildings Centre – gathering strength, Peter Girdlestone should become Chairman. He was one of the founder members and has worked hard on some of the most arduous jobs – such as the production of the journal. Particularly so as his easy going nature and genial manner – which have earned him the unofficial title of ‘Bishop’, if only behind his back – tend to hide the depth of experience and capabilities and the effort he is prepared to put into what he undertakes.

Born in Australia, where his father was a headmaster, he went to school there before reading honours engineering at Magdalen College, Oxford. He was spare man for the Oxford crew in the 1924 Boat Race. Emerging into the depths of the depression he got a job with a crane manufacturing company and then with the structural department of a steel firm in Bristol. From 1933 to 1939 he was works manager and very much concerned with the supply of steel to the then rapidly-developing motor industry. He spent the war in and out of the services, being

judged fit when wanted urgently and unfit in the lulls, he says. For his work in the rehabilitation of Holland immediately after the liberation he was made an Officer of Orange-Nassau with Crossed Swords.

He has developed his practice as a consulting engineer since the war, especially in the printing business, and it was this association that led him to agricultural work when one of his clients bought a farm. He developed the automatic-tieing cowyard yokes that were a feature of many early loose housing setups, and pioneered direct-to-can milking. He also invented modifications to a tractor in which a farmer who is crippled is able to get about his farm in a wheelchair and take an active part in its management.



**ROBERT J FORSYTH** DA (Glas), ARIBA,  
FRIAS

Information extracted from *Farmbuildings*  
No 10 March/April 1966

Bob is known as a first class co-operator and a willing helper of anyone in need of assistance. A farmer’s son, born at Stranraer, he was educated at Stranraer Academy and Daniel Stewart’s College, Edinburgh. On leaving college he worked on his father’s farm and, for a time, in a lawyer’s office but later he opted for architectural studies at The Glasgow School of Architecture, qualifying in 1939. Restriction on building work at that time resulted in his being engaged exclusively in designing buildings for agricultural purposes.

Later he found himself with the RAF in Singapore, and still later, in 1947, as the only white man among 8,000 primitive natives on the small tropical island of Car Nicobar (8 miles by 7) which is in the middle of the Indian Ocean, where he carried out extensive survey work for the British Government. Although he had ample opportunity of observing wild pig charging through the jungle, he does not claim that this experience had any influence on his subsequent work on farm buildings.

In 1949 he was appointed head of the newly created Farm Buildings Department of The West of Scotland Agricultural College. In recognition of his work he has been honoured by being elected a Fellow of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland. He is particularly well known for his work on dairy cattle housing and was one of the judges in last year's CLA/FW Cow Cubicle Competition. In January 1954 he was selected for a Kellogg Foundation Scholarship, which enabled him to pursue post-graduate studies in agricultural architecture in the United States. He is one of the three Scotsmen originally responsible for the launching of the Farm Buildings Association, and acted as Honorary Secretary during its early days. His hobbies include horse riding, gliding, sculpture and pottery.

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***Dr Mike Kelly, took over as Head of the Farm Buildings Department at the West of Scotland College following the retirement of Bob Forsyth in 1979, so never had the chance to work with him.***

### **Mike Kelly writes . . .**

The department under Bob was modelled to some extent on the Craibstone arrangement, with a library, advisors and drawing office staff, but was a much smaller unit of 10 staff, serving an area of Argyll in the north to Stranraer in the south.

Upon retirement from the college Bob worked as an Architect in Ayrshire on a few local projects with a young team, but not on farm buildings.

Bob had previously worked in Singapore or other British colonial areas on schools and other municipal buildings. He liaised closely with David

Soutar on many matters including the FBA where he was the first secretary of the Association from 1956-57.

Bob had a reputation for a neat and tidy approach to his work and always acted in a gentlemanly way. Mike describes him as ideal support for the more 'cut and thrust' approach of David Soutar and his SFBIU team.

The equivalent unit at the East College unit in Edinburgh was under Douglas Harper, a chartered surveyor who was also instrumental in setting up the FBA, but not perhaps a founder. Douglas Harper was parachuted into Arnhem at a very young age (perhaps 18 years old). No situation or conflict in his subsequent career came close to that.

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### **Clive Mander writes . . .**

I remember Bob Forsyth well and Mike's description of him as a gentleman is very apt. At a time when I was organising meetings and exhibitions all around the country Bob would often attend even though he had driven considerable distances. I always appreciated his support.

In the late 1960s/70s the West College was effectively split between two campus, one at Auchincruive near Ayr and the other was in Blytheswood Square in Glasgow, along with teaching staff and student courses.

I took an agricultural engineering diploma course at Auchincruive in 1969/70. Strangely the subject of farm buildings was never part of the course, so I never met Bob at that time. Fortunately the subject of 'field engineering' was and I gained a distinction in that subject which served me very well as my life took an unexpected turn.

Eventually the Glasgow faculty closed and all operations moved to Auchincruive. On a visit there in August 2022 I discovered Mike's office and all the other offices and teaching buildings had been demolished. The site was derelict.

## **Bob Forsyth (First Secretary FBA) Retires**

written by Bill Marshall

*FBA Journal* 23 (1978)

The retirement of Bob Forsyth in December 1978 after thirty years service as Head of the Farm Buildings Department, West of Scotland Agricultural College will inevitably mean that the Association will see less of one of its most popular members – a found member and first Secretary of the Association.

Son of a farmer in Galloway, Bob chose to break with family tradition by studying at the Glasgow School of Architecture but after a spell in the RAF during the War and certain unsatisfying tasks in the frustrating post-war building era, his farming upbringing influenced his decision to use his architectural talents to further farm building developments.

In 1949 he was appointed to form a Farm Buildings Department for the West of Scotland Agricultural College with his base in Glasgow in premises which were anything but convenient or conducive to the pioneering work he was being called upon to undertake. It says much for his dedication to his work and his diplomatic handling of his farming clientele that he very rapidly made his mark, particularly in the design of dairy production units, in an area steeped in traditional practices. Bob always maintained the highest standards in his work and this was particularly evident in the bulletins he published with attractive card covers and glossy paper for text, drawings and photographs – bulletins which were eagerly sought further than his native Scotland. Those on 'Safer Buildings for Bulls' and on 'Silos' became 'classics' in sound advice. While the more recent bulletins published under his direction sport bright yellow covers, the same high standards of production and detailed design are maintained.

His artistic sensibility and his own high standards of craftsmanship were given scope in the novel exhibition presentations he employed to put across to the farming community in most palatable form many new building developments.

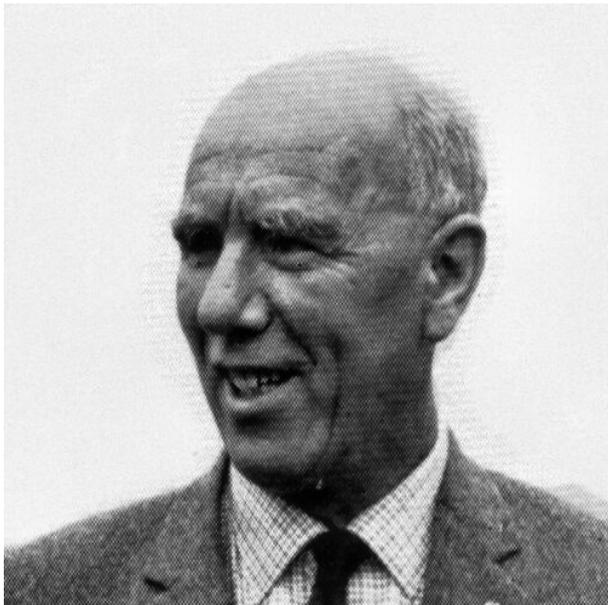
It is significant of the length of Bob's service that whereas one of his earliest publications was titled *Building a Byre*, he led the revolution against traditional practices of his very traditional dairying area when he introduced cubicle housing in the mid-sixties, a move which meant economic salvation to many West of Scotland dairy farmers.

Along with a group of farm building enthusiasts in the days of exciting innovation in the early fifties, Bob realised the value of close co-operation in a sphere bereft of essential research facilities and to further mutual aims, in 1956, he undertook the onerous task of Secretary to the embryo Farm Buildings Association – a service for which we must be ever grateful.

While his technical abilities have always been held in high regard, resulting in an ever full lecture engagement list, Bob's cheerful bonhomie will be the first thing to come to the minds of many FBA members. To travel in his company on a conference tour bus was often to be entertained to side-splitting hilarity – particularly if the company included Anthony Rosen. In the field of rapid-fire repartee Bob was probably the only one to better Tony.

He has served FBA enthusiastically, first as Secretary and then committee member, as a regular speaker at Conferences and culminated his efforts in the excellently organised Stirling Conference in 1972 which gave members a very fine insight into the farm building developments of the area he has served so well and so long.

We in the FBA wish you, Bob, a very happy retirement and a "haste ye back" any time the opportunity permits.



## **REX PATERSON** OBE

Rex Paterson would have been a contemporary of fellow founder Wilfred Cave.

Milk production had become very uneconomic in the 1930s and as related by A G Street in his book *Farmers Glory* bankruptcy was beginning to look inevitable to many. In Hampshire, particularly, their salvation was an ultra cheap milk production system based on a Hosier milking bail. Having taken a very rundown 1000 acre farm Arthur Hosier reasoned that it was easier and much cheaper to take a milking operation out to the cows in the fields rather than bring them back to the farmstead twice a day.

The system could only work on the very light land of the Marlborough Downs or similar. The cows were outside winter and summer and therefore the land needed to be very free draining to avoid poaching of the grassland and compromising next year's growth. The bail consisted of a very simple shelter with four stalls and an engine driven vacuum pump. It was all mounted on wheels and move a few feet daily. There was no concrete involved, no building involved and no manure to clean up. Just the milk was carted away. The only real snag was the winter working conditions for the man milking. His first problem was to find the cows on a dark foggy winter morning.

It didn't take long for other Wiltshire farmers to see the benefits of this system and by the outbreak of WWII Rex Paterson was farming towards 10,000 acres in Wiltshire; a truly phenomenal size

of farm in those days, still largely reliant on horse power. Perhaps not all dairy, but his trick was man management. He gave his dairy men complete freedom to operate and manage 60 or 70 cows on their own. By 1966 he had over 3,000 cows divided into 43 herds.

The son of a clergyman, he spent a short time at Wye College and then time learning technical drawing in the office of his uncle, A V Roe of Lancaster Bomber fame and the Vulcan V Bomber. He went to farm in Canada but found the economic situation grim. He started farming in Kent before moving to Hampshire. He also had an involvement in Agricultural Engineering and with Taskers of Andover developed a buckrake using the Ferguson Hydraulic system and then the Tasker Paterson Fertiliser in the 1970s.

During the war he had a serious run-in with the Hampshire County War Agricultural Committee because he had supposedly not carried out a detailed cropping plan that had been agreed with the local committee.

The gist of the problem was that the War Ag had told Paterson that he had insufficient labour on hand to look after his cows and he should therefore plough more land, thereby reducing his grassland and his cows. His argument was that he had already ploughed his agreed amount, and the whole point of the Hosier system was that it needed little labour to produce milk compared to conventional systems.

Graded as an 'A' farmer the NFU published a report in support of Paterson. The result eventually led to a parliamentary question to the Minister of Agriculture (Hudson) recorded in Hansard on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1944 where upon the Minister agrees to withdraw his devolved instruction to deliver detailed direction to Paterson. The dispute had become very very serious to him and was effectively a power struggle with the local committee who could not understand his reasoning or be seen to back down.

An enthusiast for grass silage, Rex Paterson continued to prosper after WWII and was buying farms in Pembrokeshire. Ultimately he farmed over 12,000 acres and was milking 4,000 cows. He was an inspirational character in farming circles in the 1950s and 1960s and was awarded the OBE for services to agriculture in 1964. He also chaired

the Oxford Farming Conference that year. In turn I am sure the FBA would have been inspirational to him.

As his son took over control the enterprise had become unmanageable in many ways and was reduced in size, although the Paterson farming company still exists at Sutton Scotney, near Winchester.

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## The War Ag

**The Second World War had highlighted the dire need for domestically produced food. This political imperative continued after the war and resulted in massive Government investment in agriculture. Below is a brief account of the War Agricultural Committees and how they operated.**

Its proper name was the County War Agricultural Executive (CWAE). Its power was devolved directly from the Minister of Agriculture and given to a committee for each county and devolved to 8 to 12 county officers and a full time executive officer.

Their role was to implement the changes and increase agricultural production in response to Whitehall demands for food. Apart from the general administration to meet these requirements, they attempted to give as much technical advice as possible but had a range of sanctions to impose against any farmer who resisted these challenges.

The War Ag was a very blunt tool causing lots of local difficulties but it has to be recorded that prior to WWII about 70% of food was imported and by the end of the war the country was over 90% self sufficient. Such was its success. Although there had been something similar in the last two years of WWI the whole enterprise was a master class in the devolution of power out of central government. The snag was that at local level, power was devolved to the local bank manager, solicitor or other notable worthy. This was serious because they were making big decisions with no background knowledge or experience of agriculture. They were knowledgeable and articulate in their own field but could not easily communicate nor understand practical farming issues.

Success was not without difficulty though. Farmers were judged and graded A, B & C according to their perceived production within the parameters of their farm and its resources.

Between the wars cereal production had reduced due to plentiful imports from North America and cane sugar from the Caribbean, as examples. Most farms here produced livestock products of milk, meat and eggs. Some land had lain uncultivated for years since WW1. Many landlords prevented their tenants ploughing their land because it was recognised that the natural fertility was locked up in the turf. They did not want that perceived capital asset liquidated.

The War Ag was formed in March 1939 and agricultural production was to change and major on cereals, potatoes and sugar beet. This was the opposite to the existing practice of livestock production known colloquially as 'dog and stick farming'. Whilst war with Germany was not declared until September 1939, I am amazed at how the country was quietly already moving onto a war footing. Another example was the construction of 'shadow' factories, particularly in Coventry, from 1937 onwards.

Both my grandfathers were farmers and both served on the local War Ag authorities. My paternal grandfather found the task very difficult and I think it bothered his conscience in that he had to sit in judgement of other farmers. In his earlier life he had worked in his father's building business from the age of 14 but had decided he wanted to farm in his 20s. Although academically unqualified he was an excellent and diligent farmer, but felt he was not qualified to judge his fellows. Most of his job was to travel to the farms in his patch and schedule which fields would be ploughed up. Mostly I guess it was in agreement with the farmers but on occasion it was with some 'insisting'.

The reluctance of farmers to plough has to be understood in a much wider context. 50,000 skilled farm workers had been called up for military service. This deficit was ultimately rectified in part by the advent of the Women's Land Army who have been praised ever since. Farmers suddenly expected to plough and grow potatoes or sugar beet did not necessarily have tractors, the relevant machinery, the expertise

nor produce storage facilities necessary. Appeals not to have to grow potatoes on totally unsuitable ground fell on deaf ears. The Ministry of Agriculture itself had little knowledge of the condition of the land, production, and available mechanisation.

There were few carrots and some very big sticks available to the War Ag Committees. They were empowered to take all necessary measures to ensure land was cultivated. They had authority to take possession of all, or part of any farm, including farmhouse if needed. (This was possibly against the tenants of the 'Magna Carta'.)

There was a desperate situation in Stoke Itchen in Hampshire in July 1940 when farmer Ray Waldon was being evicted. After an all night siege and gun fight reminiscent of the Wild West, Waldon was shot dead in his own house.

In total it seems more than 10,000 farmers were dispossessed of their holdings. Apart from the obvious stress there were many suicides. No compensation for their loss was possible. One man, in trying to fulfil his directive to grow potatoes on totally unsuitable land had lost £600 over four years.

It was against this background that my granddad struggled to do right. On one occasion he visited a farm with the field scheduled already ploughed.

Someone had tipped him that said farmer had sold the turf and then ploughed it. Granddad suffered serious verbal abuse when he calmly scheduled another field because he maintained the fertility of the first field was lost. He had then got two fields ploughed.

One farmer could see lots of daylight however. He wanted granddad to schedule different fields each year. Thus he broke his landlords tie preventing him ploughing all his land. As it got to the third or fourth year, granddad was a bit reluctant to schedule more fields since he had the same landlord. After a bit of discussion granddad suggested their pigs might escape. Because they would soon root up the turf, make a terrible mess, the only remedy would be to plough it. By the end of the war, and ever after the farmer could take his plough anywhere on the farm. Eventually all these non ploughing covenants were broken, nationwide.

By and large the War Ag was very successful but did produce many local disputes and difficulties because there was no appeal against mandates from local committees. Balanced against this was the bravery and self sacrifice of the Royal and Merchant Navies in their convoy systems bringing supplies from abroad, opposed by enemy U-boats.

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## **TOMMY DALE**

Tommy Dale was another early FBA supporter. He farmed at Scoughall, North Berwick. He was a shrewd observer and wrote a regular column in the Scottish Farmer and perhaps other similar publications. In the early years he would contribute poems for inclusion in the Journal. Some were quite lengthy but my favourite is reproduced below. Following his death a collection of his articles were produced for the 1988 Highland Show and an obituary appears in the FBA Journal.

He never missed a Spring Conference but by the time I met him in the early 70s he was extremely deaf and this had also made his speech almost unintelligible. I have no detailed knowledge of his affliction. His younger son

constantly accompanied him to interpret dialogue and they always travelled together in an ancient pre-war Rolls Royce.

I remember Peter Buckler telling me of a trip down the A1 as a passenger in the Rolls. Being short of time, at a filling station, the driver of the car in front blocking the pump was dithering somewhat and causing annoyance. Tommy ordered his son to bulldoze the offender out of the way with the Rolls and fill up. Tommy then gave the other driver £10 or so, not an inconsiderable amount in those days and all was well.

Sometimes I wonder about doing the same thing when a vehicle blocks the pump and the occupier disappears inside to do a weeks' shopping!!

**THEN AND NOW**  
**A cri-de-coeur by Tommy Dale**

I used to lie upon my bedding  
And think how I'd improve the steading –  
I'd fit three other pig-sties in,  
Or make four walls enclose a bin;  
I'd use old wood and dig the sand  
To make the buildings that I planned.  
My eyes assumed a sparkle bright  
When on a demolition site –  
I'd buy the purlins, trusses, board  
And bring them home to swell my hoard;  
Then with planning I would cope  
By sketching on an envelope;  
With long pine rafters I would choose  
'Gainst all my walls to make lean-to's;  
With prefab roof sheets I would clad 'em  
(Wasn't it lucky that I had 'em?)

Aye, I got buildings and had fun  
With what I wanted, cheaply done;  
It's lasting well – for good pitch pine  
Of older vintage is like wine –  
Hard sleepers, crossing timbers too,  
Get tougher as the years ensue.  
I used it well, it can be said,  
That erstwhile sleepless hour in bed –  
With structures built to suit my end  
And minimum of cash to spend.

Alas! today I'm getting old;  
My back gets sore; I feel the cold;  
While nothing any more seems cheap;  
In bed I always fall asleep.  
Now on the farm we need to plan

For fifty feet, at least, clear span,  
And unobstructed floor space wide  
So anything can turn inside.  
Again in science of today,  
What's not exact is not OK –  
The ventilation can't be crude  
And anything one-off's no good.

Demolishers don't keep what's sound –  
They bash the whole lot to the ground –  
The drotts and cranes they have on hire  
Can't wait to save – so light a fire.  
So now, e'en if we do not shirk,  
We lack the stuff to do the work.  
With piggeries and holidays  
The package-deal's become the craze –  
And modules, metrically made,  
All ease the passage of Grant Aid.  
No envelopes for modern man –  
Pay 10% and get a plan.  
You'll have the buildings that you like  
If all the chaps don't go on strike.

Aye – as times change, then so must we –  
For self-sufficient we can't be:  
We cannot e'er a tractor breed  
Or raise a hybrid barley seed –  
And so with buildings, in a way,  
We must for others efforts pay.  
To keep them, so they do not stray,  
It's good we've got the FBA.

And so no worries me encumber  
As, on my bedding, sound I slumber.

## Chapter 4

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# Peter Buckler and the RASE

by Clive Mander

It is only possible for me to write and record a considerable amount concerning Peter Buckler because he left memoirs mostly concerning his life with the church.

Alongside David Soutar, Peter Buckler was one of the most influential members of the Association. He always had a great vision for the future and was a master at combining the efforts and ambitions of many organisations and people into one objective. Although not listed as a founder member, I now think he joined in 1957.

Peter was born in Nuneaton, Warwickshire in 1917 into a family background of farming and butchery with a retail shop in the town. They were of modest means and lived in a terraced house in Nuneaton.

They were a religious family engaged mostly with the Plymouth Brethren. This was a powerful influence in his early life endorsed by the fact it had an active youth leader who would organise many trips and outings. These activities might have been denied to many youngsters during the later 1920s.

Age 17 in 1934 with great encouragement and self sacrifice from his father, he attended Wye College in Kent and gained a BSc in Agriculture four years later. His association with the church there was also very formative and helped him in many ways.

Upon graduation in 1938, he had ideas to go to the Sudan as an agricultural missionary. Because places on the training courses in tropical agriculture were full, he was advised to re-apply in 1939. To earn his keep he took a seasonal job in a sugar beet factory in the autumn. As the beet factory closed at the turn of the year, he returned home and took up his previous Saturday job with my grandfather farming at Ansley, near Nuneaton. He also took up with their daughter Mary.

When the war was declared in 1939 he volunteered for the army. Because he had worked at the beet factory he was placed on a “grey” list which meant he could be called back to the sugar beet factory at very short notice.

He then had a short spell working for the War Agricultural Committee until he managed to take a small, very run down farm at Bentley, near Atherstone. His future mother-in-law, decided he wouldn’t manage to farm on his own so he and Mary married in January 1941.

Despite their hard work the farming didn’t go well for them. The culmination of events was the sudden death of Peter’s father who collapsed and died in his butchers shop in January 1942. Also they had at least one harvest disaster when a violent hail storm destroyed their cereal crop. It was so bad that it wasn’t even worth the effort of going into the field to harvest it. Since his mother had other children to support and educate the financial backing given to the farm had to be repaid. With great reluctance they gave up the farm with the determination that in time they would farm again. It never happened.

During this period of the war, local preachers were also in short supply. Peter began as a lay reader for the Church of England and was on the Methodist circuit. It was a seamless transition from his earlier life.

In 1946 he moved to a post in agricultural education at the Wye College in Kent. He shared an office with the Young Farmers Club County Organiser, a Miss Hinds. The Kent Federation was well established and Peter was leader of a school group plus organising various trips and outings for them.

This was all in addition to his paid employment within agricultural education.

Three years later he was appointed County Education Advisor in Shropshire. Whilst starting various courses and extension services throughout the county from scratch, he maintained very close contact with the new National Federation of Young Farmers Club. This dovetailed well and Peter maintained a supportive role with the YFC movement at national level throughout his life.

After another move for a short time in Hertfordshire in late 1953, Peter was appointed as the first Principal of the new Agricultural College at Bishop Burton near Beverley in the East Riding of Yorkshire. This was a big responsibility and commitment and both Peter and Mary worked very hard to ensure everything was ready for the first group of students in the September of 1954: 40 students in total of which 28 were male and 12 were female.

Early in 1951 the East Riding County Council had bought part of Bishop Burton Estate to establish an Institute of Agriculture as colleges were called in those days. It was a total of about 425 acres including some woodland.

The County Architect would have been responsible for the accommodation and teaching block as pictured. I remember visiting at the time very clearly. The farm buildings would have been more of Peter's responsibility although many of the traditional buildings at the Home Farm were converted to workshops etc. There was also an existing but extensive range of glasshouses.

The running of the farm and the modernisation of the existing farm buildings would have been very much Peter's responsibility. Up until this period cows were housed and milked in a tied byre or shed. Each cow had its own 'standing' where it was tied by the neck with a chain and was fed and milked in the same position. In summer cows were only brought into the cowshed for morning and evening milking. In winter they were only loosed out during the day to consume bulk feeds like kale or cow cabbage whilst the sheds were cleaned out. This system was almost universal but the snag was if you only have 36 cow standings, you can only keep 36 milking cows. Milking parlours, where cows are milked in batches and the man has so much better working conditions because the cow stands at an elevated level were, I think a New Zealand innovation. The animals were then housed "loose" in straw yards before the advent of cubicles and scraped passages.

It is my belief that Peter wanted to install a yard and parlour system at Bishop Burton but I cannot be certain. What I do remember clearly as a six year old child was Peter and my dad with drawings all over the kitchen table discussing the proposals. As ever my dad wasn't short of ideas. What would have frustrated Peter was the lack of any authoritative guidance on the designs and how much space one should allow for a cow in a strawed yard. How much straw would she need? Very much in the public eye he dare not "mess up". Having said all this, stables for horses were



*Cowshed showing the standings.  
Discovered by CM in 2020.  
Pressure washed and vacuum  
lines refitted it could be back in  
use in a few days.*



*An aerial view of the new teaching and bedroom block at Bishop Burton College upon completion in 1954. The Principal's house is in the middle distance with splendid garden, and sits against the large walled garden of the original manor house.*

also planned but perhaps not built. It would appear that initially a one man unit of 25 Friesian cows was established. Black and White Friesian cows were a rare sight on British farms in those days being larger and higher yielding.

I think the opening of the college in September 1954 was a great success. The first intake of students became lifelong friends of Peter and Mary, and Mary did all she could to make them feel at home. The College was formally opened by Princess Mary, the Princess Royal in June 1955.

Mary delivered fresh flowers each day to the student common room with the lovely south facing bay window, I remember well.

In a surprise move Peter left the college in 1957 to become Supervisor of Farms and Research for R Silcock & Sons who were animal feed merchants based in Liverpool. In Shropshire they owned and operated two demonstration farms: Barhill and Millmore, and Peter managed them both. I remember visiting on several occasions. (BOCM did similar things at Stoke Mandeville, managed by Bill Marshall, who eventually became FBA Secretary.)

Little is perhaps known of their feed trials and experiments, being commercial secrets in

those days, but the advent of slatted floors in Scandinavia had been observed in 1955/56 tours. What is certain is that slatted floors were installed particularly for store cattle at the Silcock farms. I remember them well. What was an enormous surprise was the amount of feed, particularly hay, that was being wasted from the feed trough. It was immediately apparent underneath the slats but relatively invisible in the usual deep straw bedding.

Through his practical experience with slatted floors he became the authority on the subject and gave endless talks to farmers groups around the country. An article in the 1960 Journal gives full insight.

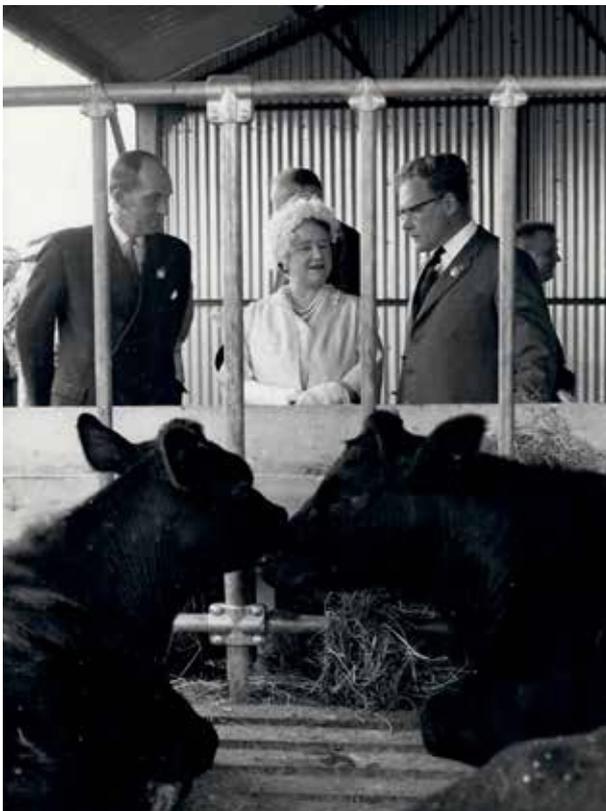
What was perhaps equally apparent to him and others during this time of innovation together with nutrition trials, was the unquantifiable influence of the internal environment of the livestock buildings in use. The animal might be fed a superb diet but what were the effects of poor ventilation, too hot, too cold, overstocking, genetics, too little trough space (bullying) and poor water provision? Thus in parallel came the need and interest in farm buildings and livestock housing which has continued ever since. The answers are very variable, interactive and difficult

to establish. This illustrates why the FBA thrived initially but also why I think Peter Buckler had such a pivotal position influencing the livestock demonstration units and the Farm Buildings Centre.

It is perhaps only in recent times with the advent of electronic technology that animals can be individually identified and monitored via an eartag or necklace to enable continued research into such parameters.

During his time in Yorkshire, Peter had suggested that since the Yorkshire Agricultural Society owned its own site near Harrogate and a small farm, they might consider a small demonstration farm linked with the college. This they had turned down but a chance meeting with one Alec Hobson led to him writing a paper suggesting the RASE might consider a central demonstration feature.

At the same time pressure had been put on the RASE council to return to its roots and demonstrate new techniques and advances in agriculture. Its motto has always been "Practice with Science".



*Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother at the demonstration area at the 1961 Royal Show in Cambridge. The slatted floor is visible in the foreground, together with a wider, deeper trough, in an attempt to minimise fodder wastage. Some fodder wastage is visible in the photo.*

Up until 1962 the Royal Show was peripatetic and moved site almost every year. As the show had grown and developed it entailed a phenomenal amount of work by the permanent staff for a whole year prior to the show. These members of staff upheaved themselves domestically each year. There is a tremendous story here, which is relatively untold and therefore unknown. However this nomad existence was being increasingly inefficient and hampering development in the light of the Great Yorkshire Show owning its own site. The new site, as part of the Stoneleigh Abbey estate, and being geographically fairly central within the country, was initially leased for a trial period of three years with the first show there in 1963.

The bold decision had been made to set aside an area of 17 acres at the 1960 and 1961 Cambridge Royal Shows for a farm demonstration area. The Ministry of Agriculture pondered whether to be involved for some months but eventually declined. The Agricultural Engineers Association did not want live machinery demonstrations.

Hobson had introduced Peter to Francis Pemberton, an FBA founder who asked 'what could Silcocks do?' In a great leap of faith and, because Silcocks had not returned to the show scene since the war and also that Dick Silcock had a different perspective with their presence at agricultural shows, the die was cast. Most companies offered generous drinks and refreshments at these events for their customers, which still happens to a large extent. Dick Silcock reasoned that most of this hospitality never really got offered to their actual customers, the drinks were given to other worthies, acquaintances of the salesmen or others they wished to impress, almost never to the customers. I had a similar experience at the 1980 Smithfield Show in London. Along with a few others I could have become very drunk on the Coventry Climax stand, part of British Leyland, when it was obvious to all, they were going bankrupt. British Leyland had bought Coventry Climax in 1978. Dick Silcock reasoned it would work far better for him to show a thriving pen of pigs or healthy calves as a demonstration of how livestock could perform so well, given his feeds.

Exhibiting the livestock at the 1960/61 shows fell to Peter and Mary Buckler and this began his long association with the Royal Show and the Royal Agricultural Society of England (RASE). I visited the Barhill and Millmore farms on several occasions. I remember one occasion so well with a group of visiting farmers seeing that the yard in front of the range of traditional farm buildings had been fully concreted. There were sharp intakes of breath as they wondered how much it cost, and then a great debate about how much labour it would take for a man to sweep this expanse of concrete once a week. As a child it was heady stuff because I was well used to brushing out a cow shed after milking.

Whilst on holiday in spring, Peter and Mary had visited the Norwegian National Show and had been very impressed by what they saw and this had a great influence on the Cambridge demonstration area and subsequently in them accepting this task, Peter made two stipulations: There would be no committee above him interfering and he would need at least two caravans close by for them and stockmen to tend the animals. This contravened all the existing RASE rules.

The new demonstration area proved a very great success at the 1960 and 1961 shows and was repeated at the 1962 show in Newcastle where the emphasis was more on sheep. Disaster occurred just a few days before the opening when a vicious

storm blew away all the tents and damaged many of the temporary structures. Lots of students from Newcastle University Agricultural Faculty turned up to help rebuild. One stood head and shoulders above the others in the way he organised and got on with it. His name was Keith Thornton. By 1963 Keith had finished his degree, the show had moved to Stoneleigh in Warwickshire, and Keith was made a Silcocks staff member to run the Farm Demonstration Unit there.

The RASE history has too much to detail here but Francis Pemberton and Peter Buckler would have pushed hard for Stoneleigh. It meant that demonstration areas could be developed over a longer period and their success was visible. The farm demonstration venture was given a key site between the members pavilion and the flower show. The creation of this area with more substantial buildings meant that livestock could be kept all year round at the showground. An absolute revolution in the sphere of agricultural education and development all brought together with an enthusiastic Keith Thornton. For shows, there was a wealth of exhibits. A dairy herd was put on loan and milked twice a day. There were calves, beef cattle, poultry, sheep shearing and clipping, modern grass and grain storage were demonstrated.

On the first year on-floor grain storage and the second year the first national exhibition and



*Peter Buckler with His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh outside the pig fattening house*



*Princess Margaret with Peter Buckler and Keith Thornton at the newly established Pig Unit at the Royal Show at Stoneleigh c.1966/67*



demonstration of cow cubicles attended by the innovator of the revolution, Howell Evans. The Queen and Prince Philip were both impressed and cow cubicles were soon installed for the Jersey herd at Windsor. Howell Evans was awarded an MBE. In addition to all the above, I am sure I remember a biological digester made of GRP and painted blue.

It had been a policy of the RASE up to these times that it did not accept sponsorship from commercial companies. No-one had told Peter this and Peter told no-one that all the significant buildings used for demonstration were sponsored by commercial enterprises. Well before the 1966 deadline the decision had been made to locate permanently at Stoneleigh and the success was so apparent that the livestock units were moved to the perimeter of the showground and sponsorship, particularly by the feed companies encouraged. The pigs and poultry units moved first followed by the establishment of beef, calf, sheep and bull testing units. One of the great strengths was that these units each had their own management committees. These were not quite what they seemed in that they had no powers other than they made suggestions and comments on the workings of the unit. I had most contact with the Dairy Unit committee which was largely of other eminent dairy farmers and some Ministry officers and advisors who wanted to demonstrate best practice. It was very much a two way street in

that the advisors could see the real practicalities and the farmers could adopt what they saw was good and could compare productivity with their own enterprise. Peter Buckler's hand was behind it all. He always knew what was going on.

As all this occurred Peter, up to 1966, continued his work with Silcocks as Chief Agricultural Advisor and enjoyed the position of Honorary Technical



*Peter Buckler (right) escorting Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip at the Royal Show, Stoneleigh*



*Right: The original entrance to the Town & Country Centre, showing posters advertising the first 'Town & Country Festival'*

*Below: Mary Buckler, as Chief Steward of the Town & Country Area, escorting Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth*

Director with RASE. He was Senior Steward at the Royal Show, a member of the RASE council and chairman of one of its committees. Thus he had tremendous input into the development of the showground but unbeknown to many he was also training for the Ministry. Throughout he had continued as a lay reader for all denominations but mostly the Methodist Church and Church of England. So he did commercial work for Silcocks all week and pastoral and Church work all weekends.

After the Royal Show in 1966 he discovered he had passed his Ordination Examinations and tendered his resignation to the RASE so that he could develop a continuing role under the auspices of the Bishop of Chester. As it happened a senior family member knowing of Peter's success lobbied the Bishop of Birmingham for Peter to take the parish of Grendon in North Warwickshire. Against all odds and some rules, Peter was installed at Grendon with the wish from the Bishop of Birmingham that he continued his work at Stoneleigh (now called the National Agricultural Centre) for four days a week. In a reverse turn he was released from R Silcock & Sons in December 1966 which was taken over by Unilever near this time.

The support of the Bishop of Birmingham for Peter's work would have very powerful positive consequences which the Bishop could not have



envisaged or imagined. Perhaps it was an act of faith in the man.

As near as can be told Peter Buckler joined the FBA in 1957 and he became chairman in 1962 and 1963. Peter and Mary would have known Travers Legge, editor of the *Farmers Weekly*, very well by this time. Mary was very involved with the Home and Family section of the *Weekly*. She had a column which encouraged young children to write essays and awarded prizes for the best. I remember great hilarity on one occasion because a child had written describing the birth and early days of a calf. It was called Sputnik because it kept running round and round its mother (Sputnik was the Russian space satellite – October 1957). I cannot remember details but they were both very involved and took prize winners on canal boat holidays and such like many times.



*Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth in the Town & Country area of the Royal Show at Stoneleigh*

As the initial demonstration area was vacated with the establishment of the new livestock units, Peter effectively nabbed the site. It changed to what became the Town and Country area. Peter considered it important that people from the town were kept engaged with agriculture and countryside matters. It is another big story but the Farm Building Centre was first established in temporary offices there. Soon, after the National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs built new head offices when they departed London, Mary became Chief Steward in this area during the shows.

This was a splendid site between the main concourse and the very impressive Flower Show marquee. By inheriting the vacant demonstration buildings a considerable craft and rural pursuits element to the show developed. This interested many ladies who attended who were not so interested in tractors and machinery perhaps. The WI and WRVS were also closely involved.

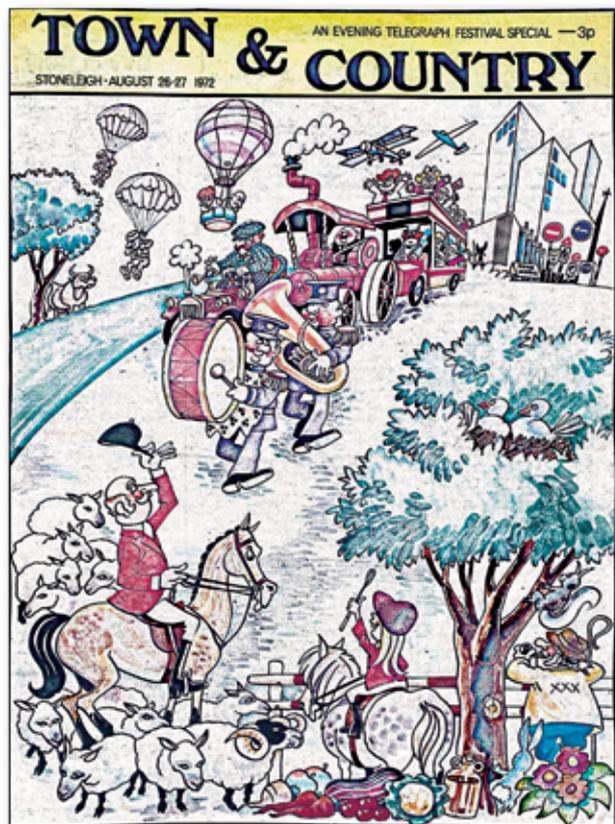
1971 was the start of some financial difficulty for the RASE because attendance at the show was well down, probably as a result of farmers playing catch up after some difficult weather. Some critics thought the decline inevitable because of the fixed site. To an extent I think RASE panicked and appointed a Chief Executive above the established staff. John Hearth came from the shipping industry and had no agricultural knowledge or background. I never understood the appointment and in future years they succeeded in making ever more disappointing appointments.

I mark the gradual decline of the Royal Show from soon after this period although I now think John Hearth found himself very much in the deep end and understanding little. In time he became very supportive of the Rank Centre.

During this period Peter enjoyed the support of both the Bishops of Coventry and Birmingham. He was never on the RASE payroll. As a result of the financial difficulties he withdrew from his purely technical involvement with the society although he returned as an elected member of the council.

A year or so earlier an RASE committee had foretold that many challenges to the industry would come from the non-farming community. Peter and Yef Tuyn, a great supporter and colleague, were tasked to see what might be possible to engage with the public utilizing the showground assets. It is another tremendous story but the result was effectively a steam engine rally including associated societies and the wider interests of many enthusiast groups and organisations.

The first *Town and Country Festival* was held on the August Bank Holiday of 1972. Because of the



*Front cover of the Coventry Evening Telegraph Festival Special newspaper*

1971 hiccup in attendance, the RASE had little budget and what they did have was wasted on a London promoted Recreation Show which was a dismal failure. John Hearth seriously suggested the Town & Country event be cancelled despite the detailed planning and accurate market research. Undeterred Peter approached the *Coventry Evening Telegraph* who agreed to sponsor the venture. The expenditure was minimal because all the showground staff were made to volunteer to help over the holiday weekend, me included, but it was a tremendously successful event and about broke even. Subsequently it grew and grew to take over the whole showground and with attendees to rival the Royal Show of 120 to 140,000.

In answer to criticism that as a clergyman (he regularly wore his dog collar) he should be encouraging people to church on Sunday. His reply was that he saw nothing irreligious in mums, dads and children spending time together and each enjoying the show.

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## Arthur Rank Centre

During the 1960s the Church of England, the Methodist and others became aware that all their efforts seemed to concentrate on the urban situation and problems. The rural areas were tending to be ignored or un-serviced. It was thought that a base for the Rural Church needed to be established to promote understanding between town and country. As it happened Lord Rank was President of the RASE at this time. At a meeting in London on 25th January 1972 he offered to fund a Church Pavilion at the Royal



*A boys choir singing outside the Arthur Rank Centre. Peter Buckler can be seen in the centre of the picture.*

Show which would also act as a showground reception centre throughout the rest of the year. He wanted it ready for the 1972 Royal Show which was 5 months hence, which it was, due to Peter's tremendous efforts and commitment and it was opened by Queen Elizabeth II.

Throughout this whole period it continued to be the Bishop's wish that he continued with all these responsibilities at the Showground. It was probably Peter's personal wish to just have a quieter life within a parish. He certainly never wished to be promoted within the church and he was perhaps too maverick for them anyway.

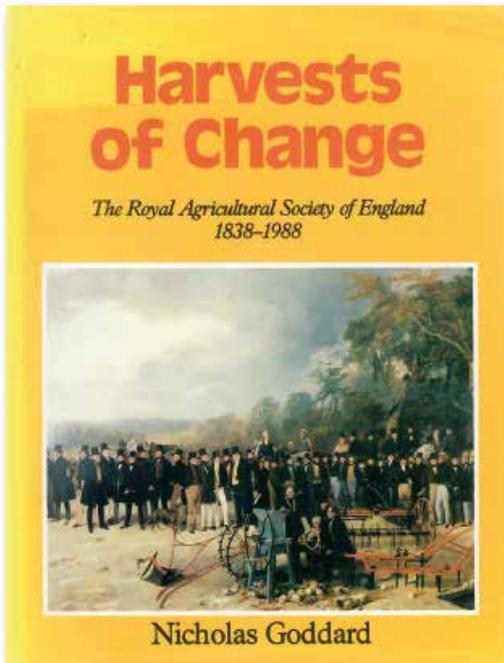
The continued history of the Arthur Rank Centre is too much to record here but it became very influential in the Factory Farming debate, the rural economy, tied housing, promoting housing associations, manpower service commission and the Midlands Caring Trust

An important report entitled 'Village Homes for Village People' gained considerable media coverage.

So many issues faced by the Rank Centre resonated with FBA members who were farmers or estate managers and had to make front line decisions. Peter Buckler could see it all and sometimes long before anyone else.

In the 1960s and 1970s Peter was a very powerful force for innovation, change and development at the NAC, as I have tried to indicate, yet he and Mary were also very involved with the staff social club. It was nothing for him and Mary to be clearing beer glasses at the end of an evening and kind of wishing everyone would find a home to go to. His pastoral care included everyone on the showground.

It would not be well known but PB, as he was often known, would have been a mentor to Henry Plumb at difficult times. As President of the European Parliament, Henry Plumb had to deal with people as diverse as Ronald Reagan, The Pope and Yasser Arafat.

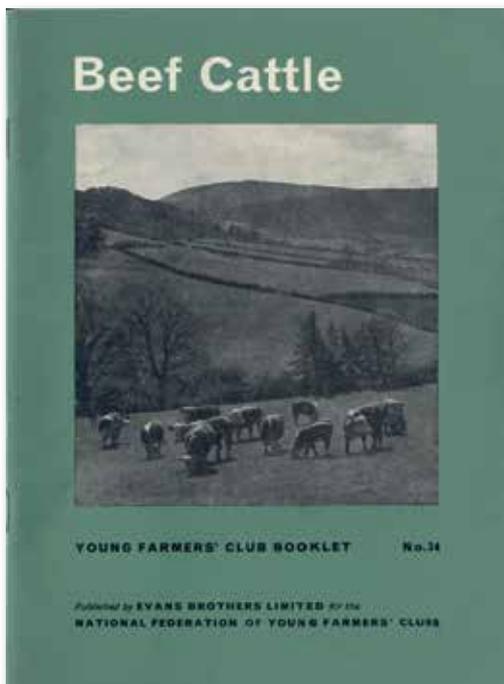


Nicholas Goddard

The fascinating record of the history of the RASE and detailing of the establishment of the Royal Show permanently at Stoneleigh. It is important to realise that the RASE were very supportive of the FBA and the establishment of the Farm Buildings Centre. Their history is also very rich and powerful but beyond the scope of this narrative.

There was a near record attendance at the 1988 show of 227,413 visitors. The 2007 Royal Show was a disaster due to the weather and the last Royal Show was in 2009, although the RASE continues in a reduced form.

The final ignominy is that the HS2 railway has taken part of the showground.



Gathering in the hay has been a "dodgy" business—a cut-and-mouse affair with those "scattered showers." Here clover and grass is baled on Mr. C. Jackson's Sycamore Farm, Bramford, Suffolk.

32 The Farmers Weekly, July 5, 1963

### Wet start

WHAT a pity that torrential rain beforehand softened up the Royal Show's Stoneleigh site.

Puddled corners and roadside verges dulled the traditional glitter and many stands looked shop-soiled from the start, particularly those adjoining unmetalled minor roads.

All very well to criticise the narrow width of concrete roadways, as many suede-shoe visitors did, but it takes far more than a ha'p'orth of tar, or concrete, to provide enough hard surfaces to make a big show weather proof.

We can't expect too much too soon and after all the site is still not signed, sealed and delivered on a fully permanent basis.

### Shady seat

PACKED stands in the demonstration areas showed quite clearly that this is the stuff that people come to see.

I had a ten-minute wait before I could get inside the Farm Building Association's intensive beef exhibit to compare the stock there with our own at Cowbyers on the similar metal grid floors.

The CLA's models of the winning entries of its buildings competition

## The Editor's Diary

Twenty-one today! Last Tuesday, to be precise, this Large White cross Wessex Saddleback had that number. The sow is owned by Mr. J. C. Bunn, Little Merebrook Farm, Hanley Swan, Wores.



were seen by a steady stream of visitors.

But although there was congestion sometimes on the demonstration stands themselves, there was plenty of room immediately around them. Garden chairs had been placed under many of the fine oak trees on the show ground and for the first time at any Royal that I can remember there was always a seat in the shade.

### A crowd-puller

MY own impression of the whole show is that there are already many obvious advantages of "going permanent." Increasing the technical and educational emphasis seems to be well worth while.

The crowds certainly came this time. I'm pretty sure they will have seen enough to bring most of them back next year.

By that time, I hope, the risk of mud and narrow approach roads will be removed and the focus in the demonstration areas will be sharper and clearer.

Farmers Weekly, 5 July 1963 referring to the Stoneleigh demonstration area

One of a series of instruction booklets published by the NFYFC written by Peter Buckler whilst with Silcocks. He always maintained very close contact with the Young Farmers Movement.

# SLATS ON TRIAL

**JACK HARGREAVES** visits Millmoor Farm, Cheshire, where slatted floors in wood and concrete are being tried out for many classes of stock

**S**LATTED floors have been successfully used for various types of livestock in trials at Messrs. M. Silcock & Sons' farms and research department in Cheshire. One investigation, initiated last year at Millmoor Farm, was designed to test the future of slatted floors as a means of reducing labour costs (both materials and labour) by finding the best layout of the slats, suitable materials, dimensions, manure disposal, costs, the behaviour of stock and problems of management.

When I went to Millmoor I found that Mr. Peter Buckler, who is in charge of the work, had some of the answers, and that the trials had already developed beyond the original scope. Wider experiment is now in progress.

First I visited the major trial where Shorthorn x. Ayrshire steers have been raised on slats in one bay of a covered fold yard. Although this trial has been concerned with beef there is no reason to suppose that the lay-out would not be equally suitable for raising dairy heifers.

The area covered by the slats is 41 ft. by 13 ft. providing 20 sq. ft. a beast (yearlings). Because of the fall of the fold yard floor the pit under the slats varies in depth from 3 ft. to 5 ft. 6 in. Access to the platform by the animals is via a concrete ramp.

Slats are supported on 9 inch brick walls every 12 ft. Further support is provided between the

walls at 6 ft. intervals by 8 by 6 in. timber beams set on portable concrete plinths. Trials have shown that the Norwegian-type slat is best suited to this purpose. Each slat is 12 ft. long, 8 in. wide at the top and tapered to 3 in. thickness in section. Film is regarded as highly suitable. Space between slats is 2 in.

For ease of removal and cleaning out, the slats are in units of three nailed together with cross pieces. These also maintain the gaps and are so positioned as to fall inside the supporting wall, thus preventing movement by the slat units. At Millmoor a sectional Swedish yoke is being used but an ordinary rack and trough could be equally efficient. But a good width of trough is essential to reduce spillage of hay on to the slats.

To exclude draughts underneath the slats and to reduce manure smell, the front of the pit is covered in with rough-hewn elm planks, resting in channel irons and wedged in place, though easily removed. A row of straw bales gives the attendant adequate height to feed easily.

The total cost of making this slatted floor bay by a local contractor was £310.

The slats are never cleaned. Reliance is placed on the cattle treading the manure through, but to assist in absorption of urine a little sawdust is strewn, not more than two bags a week.

Twenty-four yearlings are housed on the slats. A 15-year-old girl looks to the animals in 40 minutes a day including watering (20 minutes at each end of the day). There is considerable saving in labour, particularly as no straw has to be spread.

As to results, Mr. Buckler is con-

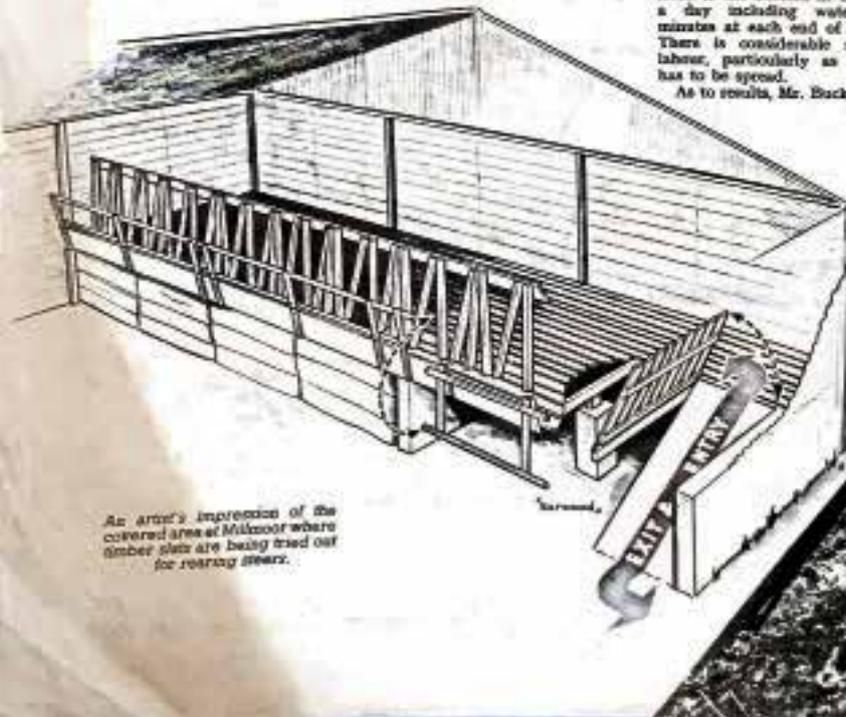
ident that the cost of the installation will be regained in 12 months. Slats have cut out the buying-in of straw which has been 69 10s. a ton this winter. These steers are housed for the full 12 months as they are being utilised for a zero-grazing experiment.

The steers are kept on a medium plane of nutrition and on this system of management are putting on a liveweight gain of 1½ lb. a day. Weighing is regular and the results on slats are the most consistent of any being recorded on these experimental farms. It is interesting to note that the animals were on straw before being transferred to slats when they immediately put on a higher daily gain.

The steers are surprisingly clean. No trouble has been experienced with bad feet, twisted legs or lameness. The hooves are harder and in better trim than those of stock kept in the conventional straw-yards. They are very quiet at all times.

For mucking out, the slats can easily be removed and stored. The best method of cleaning is by fore-loader with the tines on. And the

Continued on page 167



An artist's impression of the covered area at Millmoor where timber slats are being tried out for rearing steers.

A description of probably the first ever slatted floor in the UK, as described in Farmers Weekly, 16th October 1959

## Chapter 5

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# The early years of establishment and innovations occurring

### A review of the earlier years

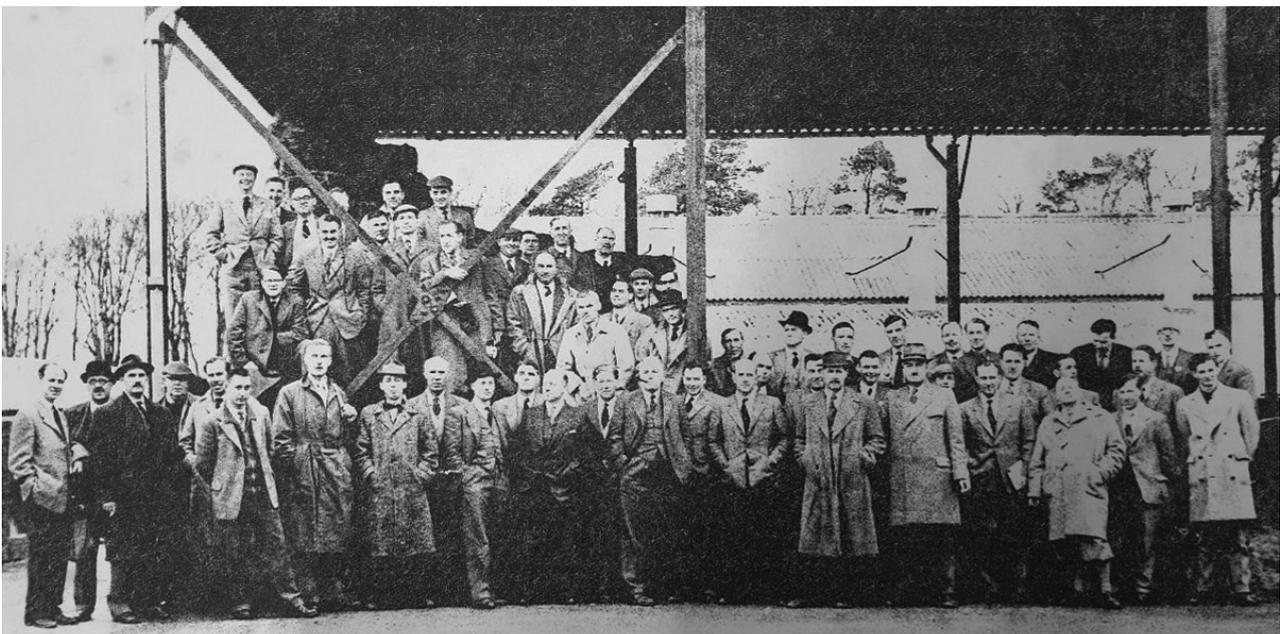
by Jamie Robertson

The FBA was conceived by a group of enthusiasts who met up at the Royal Show in 1956.

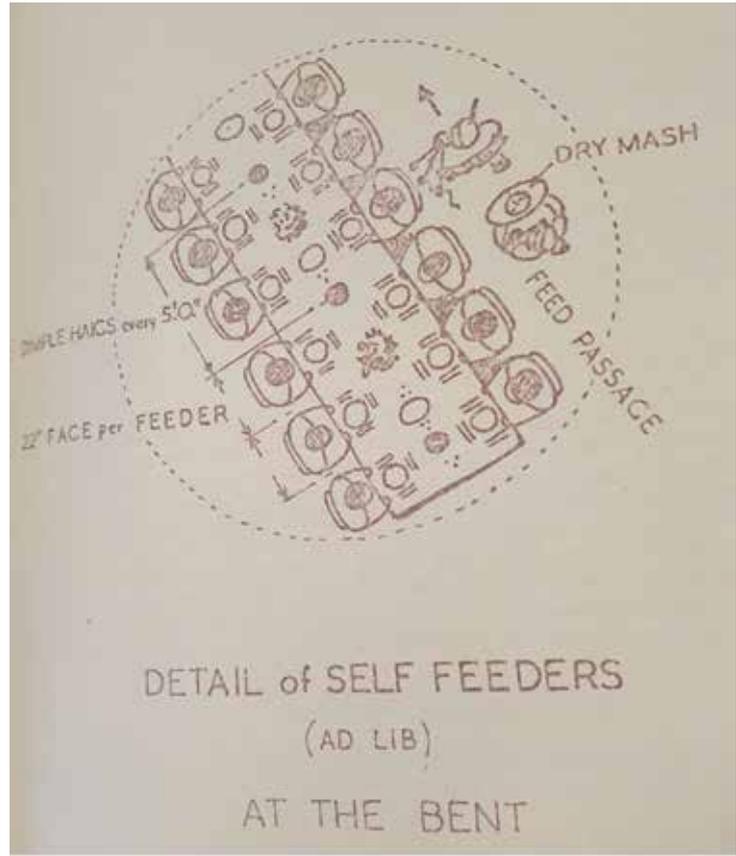
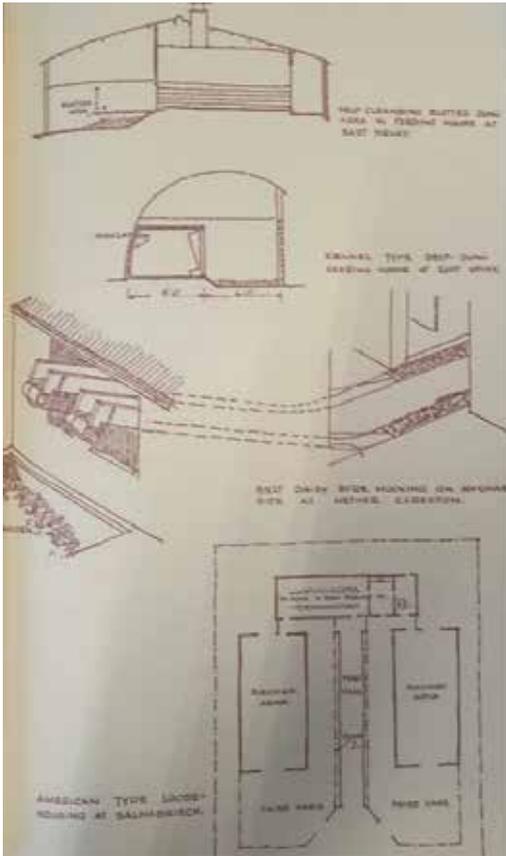
The First issue of what became the FBA journal was in fact the proceedings of the first annual conference held in Perth on 3-5th April 1957. The conference was attended by over 60 of the 200 members of the FBA, formed the previous year. Members were farmers, advisory officers, estate agents, landlords, material manufacturers and more, and “one of our first jobs was to press the Minister of Agriculture for research (on the subject of farm buildings)”. The conference included visits to 12 farms and on the third day, presentation of papers with a focus of more time on discussion than presentations. Mr David Duncan provided sketches of various items seen on the visits (*see overleaf*) and a lighthearted sketch of feeding arrangements for dinner (*see overleaf*).

Publication of the second journal provided a forum for a wide range of articles written by members and the introduction of links to similar interests from Denmark, West Germany, U.S.A. and Iceland. A reference section contained links to all the U.K. farm buildings advisory services, relevant research institutes, and publications concerning farm buildings. Building your own Farm Buildings (1955) by Frank Henderson was available for 21 shillings, whilst a pamphlet on The Housing of the Pig (1953) by W.T. Price was a priceless 2 shillings. Surely a bargain at 10p in 2024 money.

By 1959 the FBA had established a focus to influence the government on setting up a better provision of R&D and knowledge transfer on matters related to farm buildings. The 3rd journal contains a memorandum sent to the Minister of Agriculture with support from the NFU and the National Union of Farm Workers, seeking financial support for research facilities, guidance for the



*FBA members at the first annual conference held in Perth – 3rd-5th April 1957*

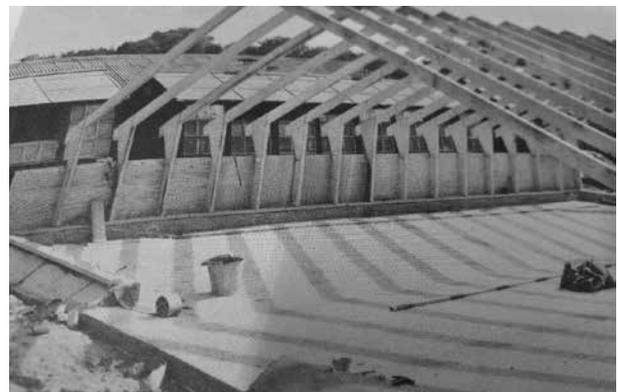


Left – Sketches of items seen on the visits  
 Right – Lighthearted sketch of feeding arrangements for dinner

advisory service to become involved in research, and pointing out the significant economic advantages that are likely to accrue from such activities.

The foreword of the 1960 FBA journal contains verbal hand-wringing about the continuing support for “traditional, often out-of-date design” new farm buildings, “combined with the steadfast refusal of the Government to carry out a planned research programme to seek designs for the future”. How we have been around the block. More than sixty years ago the FBA set in motion a target for R&D that did materialise in locations around the U.K. working on farm building design, that did produce an amazing amount of objective guidance for the farm and building sector and has now been comprehensively sacked. It is ironic but the new capital allowance grants for youngstock housing and Farming Equipment and Technology Fund (FETF) from DEFRA in 2024 do at least promote good design into the farm infrastructure.

The efforts of many resulted in the establishment of a Centre for farm buildings research on the



Pic of rigid frames of CLS Western Hemlock with Canadian fir plywood gussets at Cambridge Vet School Broiler house – 1961

Royal Showground, Stoneleigh on the 1st January 1964. This was achieved with the support of the CLA and guarantees from RASE and FBA to provide for salaries for the first three years. Further funding came from members of FBA and a Farm Buildings Scholarship at Cambridge was funded for three years by a group of farmers in the South of England. The FBA journal of December 1963 notes that 50 new members had joined since the April of that year. Articles from members covered

beef housing and environment, ventilation, grass conservation, drainage, irrigation, waste management, product storage and an intriguing 'electrically heated floors for cattle yards'. This last article concludes that "It would be imprudent in the extreme if any firm conclusion were drawn from the experiment, but it would be true to say that the results are interesting and warrant further investigation". With all the PV on cattle building roofs, maybe this needs another look?

The eighth edition of the Journal 1964 announced the inauguration of Farm Buildings R&D in Scotland, co-ordinated by the Scottish Farm Buildings Unit at the North of Scotland College in Aberdeen, under the guidance of David Soutar. Investigation work was also planned for Farm Buildings Departments at both the East and West of Scotland Colleges of Agriculture. The widening spread of interest included articles from Canada, Denmark, Holland, Iceland, Italy, Norway and Sweden. By 1965 membership of FBA had grown to over 850, the Farm Buildings Centre at Stoneleigh was producing results, but government support was still absent.

1966 saw further progress, with the promise of government financial support for the Farm Buildings Centre, a Spring Conference in Northern Ireland, and the FBA's first document for general publication. "The Appearance of Farm Buildings". There is mention of air quality and its relationship with animal health, with comments from researchers in Germany and the Netherlands concerning airborne concentrations of carbon dioxide, ammonia and hydrogen sulphide. The Farm Buildings Unit in Aberdeen had produced the first of its quarterly journal 'Farm Buildings Progress' which was to continue until the unit closed in 1996. By this time the FBA had organized members to include area liaison officers across 26 areas of the UK and Ireland, with the specific remit to encourage the sharing of information related to farmers' successes and failures with new farm buildings.

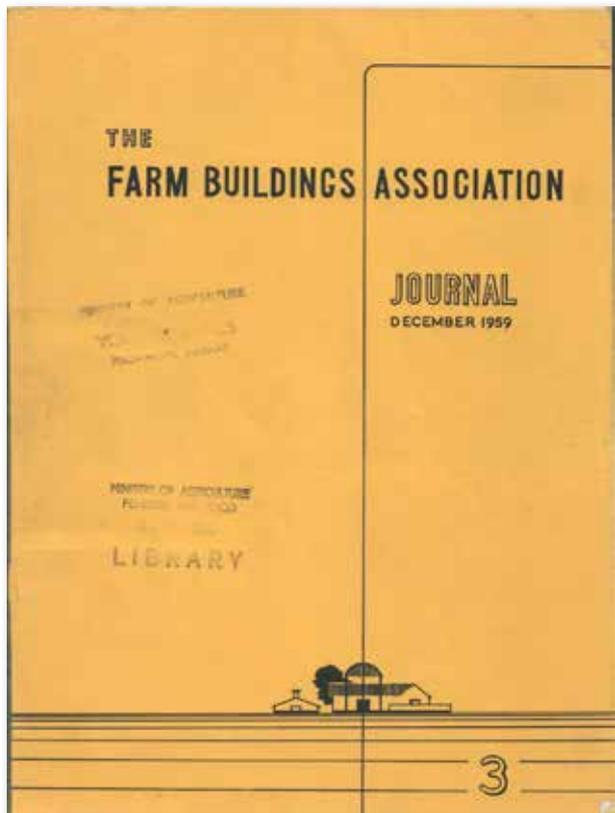
A total of 37 FBA members visited numerous farm and research sites in Canada and the U.S.A. in 1967 whilst an estimated 12,000 people visited the new demonstration buildings at the Farm Buildings Centre at Stoneleigh. Interest was growing. The Journal for 1967 contains

an interesting view from a new member, an architect . . ." shocked to see the apparent lack of planning and the gimcrack building which some farmers indulged in – 'NOCOST' shedding proclaimed itself everywhere..." No change in 45 years then. The author goes on to say that his researches soon took him to the door of the FBA and "a great deal of hope...". He adds "Traditionally farmers have managed their buildings splendidly, using simple local materials in a straight-forward way, but on their own they cannot cope with the design procedures necessitated by technical advances, nor can they handle the visual problems which come in the wake of using new materials. They must have the help of industrial designers, architects and landscape architects. Their time can be more profitably spent in working out their own problems of better husbandry, leaving the technical and aesthetic considerations of their buildings to others professionally trained in these matters." Plus ça change.

The growing interest in animal health and welfare is reflected in the contents of the FBA journal of 1968. David Sainsbury had delivered a lecture in Aberdeen on the 'Modern Developments in the Environmental Needs, Health and Housing of Pigs' which set the tone for pig-focused R&D at the Scottish Farm Buildings Investigation Unit (SFBIU) for the following 30 years. The appearance of farm buildings, new materials such as steel sheet roofing and tempered hardboard, space heating and ventilation were all covered, along with novel ideas and equipment to manage the wastes from the increasing scale of farm systems. By 1971 the FBA had four standing committees; Building and Equipment Manufacturers, Education and Meetings, Investigations and Development and the Regional Organisation Committee.

The FBA promoted access to Commission Internationale de Genie Rural (CIGR) in 1974, forging links with agricultural engineering organisations around the World. Seaton Baxter of SFBIU was the UK national correspondent for section II of CIGR, concerned with farm buildings and associated engineering problems. This contact was continued until 1996 when the Centre for Rural Building (CRB; the successor to SFBIU) was closed.

## FBA Journal



This is journal No.3 produced in 1959. It contains 125 pages and lists names and addresses of well over 300 members. My father and three uncles are listed as members. It is worth noting that there were no corporate members. People only joined on an individual basis.

The editor was David Soutar who was also Association Chairman at the time. The Foreword from him is reproduced here because it illustrates the scope of the Association and his long-standing ambition for a National Research & Development Facility for farm buildings. In addition the contents are truly fascinating in their historical context. It begins with a letter of memorandum to the Minister of Agriculture regretting the lack of research and development within the subject of farm buildings.

There is a full list of conclusions reached following the fourth Farmers Weekly three day conference in Oxford on pig housing.

Other contents include:

- A plea for Adaptable Buildings, preferably of Timber Construction – *John Mackie MP*
- Farm Management and Work Study – *G W Lugg*
- The Economics of Farm Buildings: Report on Postal Enquiry of Members of the Farm Buildings Association – *Peter Manning*
- Wondering About – *Major R M Stranack*
- Housing the Rural Worker – *Dennis Hodsdon*
- Points on Animal Housing Design and Disease Prevention – *Dr D W Sainsbury*
- Slatted Floors – *Peter Buckler*
- A Rubber-floored Cattle-yard – *Colonel C H Drew*
- Milking Parlour Design – *P C Girdlestone TD*  
With Critical Comment by Messrs Clough, Hollinrake, King and Elgar
- Ventilation of Calf Houses – *L Gordon Davies*
- Sheep Handling Yards – *R H D F Lee*
- Backwards or Forwards?
- Notes on Trends in Pig House Design – *Norman Snell*
- Permissible Ranges of Variation for the Environment of Poultry – *C N Davies*
- Organic Irrigation on a Staffordshire Farm – *A R Barfield*
- A Monorail Silage Unloader – *Capt J Elwes*
- The Insulation of Farm Buildings – *Frank King*

An aspect that has been lost over the years was News from Overseas.

This included:

- Farm Buildings Activities in Norway
- Letter from America – *Wallace Ashby*
- Farm Buildings in France – *P J M Aston*
- Developments in Switzerland
- Germany's latest Farm Building Publication

Also noted were the aims and objectives of the Association

## FOREWORD

This third edition of The Farm Buildings Association Journal provides proof of the increasing support being given to this relatively new organisation in its endeavour to further the development of efficient farm buildings.

Study of the list of Contributors, which includes research scientists, technical advisers in both private practice and public service, landowners and farmers, demonstrates the scope of the interest being taken in the Association's activities.

By reason of its very nature, the contribution which the Association can make towards farm building development is limited but it is continuing to advance the ever-increasing plea for a National organisation for research and development work. The initiative and inventive ability of our farmers, building designers and equipment manufacturers has never been greater. Pending the foundation of a co-ordinating unit on a truly representative scale, the Association, by organising conferences, publishing this Journal, and by bringing together those intimately connected with farm building development, endeavours to fulfil a most essential role.

Our geographical position has tended to prevent the inter-change of visits by and to our colleagues in Continental Europe and America. Information forwarded by our "Overseas Correspondents" is particularly welcome and the Association will always be very pleased to welcome and assist visitors from abroad.

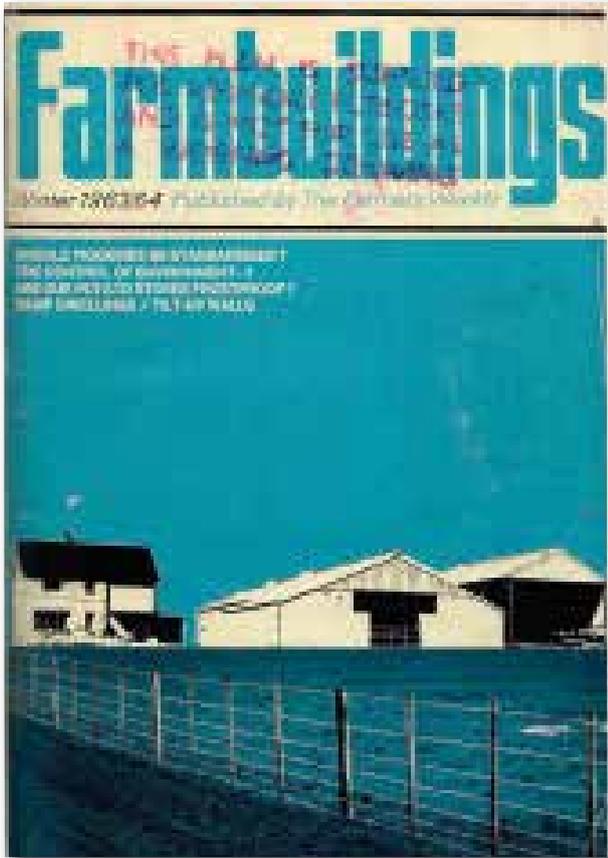
D S SOUTAR – Chairman

## Early days

For a very extended period the founders and early members tried to press the various Ministers of Agriculture about the need for research.

As noted, David Soutar eventually prevailed in Scotland but in England the answer was always 'no'. In hindsight this is as difficult to comprehend now as it was then, because large amounts of money were being given in farm building grants. Nevertheless I think it would be incorrect to regard the FBA lobbying and pressure as a failure because increasingly Ministry personnel became actively involved with the FBA which assisted in career development. Government funding was eventually given to the Farm Buildings Centre along with the secondment of John Young, for example.

# Farmbuildings Magazine



As changing conditions and innovative developments took place in the 1960s, the farming press in general were also well aware of these changes and the need and desire to communicate to a wider audience. They were not slow to report such innovations as Howell Evans' development of the cow cubicle for instance, but this was just one example that comes to mind. Such was the speed and universal thirst for knowledge of all such innovations. Certainly the *Farmer & Stockbreeder* and *Farmers Weekly* were forefront. Probably also the *Farmers Guardian* which was more prevalent further north.

Into this fertile ground was launched a new quarterly magazine entitled **Farmbuildings** by the same publishers as *Farmers Weekly* in the Winter/Spring of 1963/64.

The content of this quarterly very much reflects the topics of interest to the FBA, but it also reports on many of the meetings and events of the FBA. This was usually in the form of an FBA Newsletter page written by the current Chairman.

Whilst the FBA and its membership was perhaps forward looking and trying to glimpse the future in order to make sound long term decisions, *Farmbuildings* was an observers view of what was actually happening at the time.

In many ways this magazine now gives a wonderful and unique record of the FBA through the 1960s. It was subsequently merged with a sister publication called *Farm Mechanization*. Failure occurred when a marketing wizard offered two years subscription for the price of one in an attempt to increase circulation. So many existing subscribers took up the offer that there was no money left in the budget to produce the magazine in the second year of the unfortunate subscription offer.

The editor throughout this period was David Long who eventually became Director of the Farm Buildings Centre.

Of wry interest are the advertisements placed within *Farmbuildings*. Some eminent companies are still in existence but many more are not.

Three bound volumes of *Farmbuildings* exist within the Jim Loynes Archive and are a priceless resource for anyone wishing to review those times. The profiles of the founder members have been mostly harvested from this now rare and historic magazine.



The first issue of the **FBA newsletter** featured in *Farmbuildings* Number 1

## Extract from FBA Journal 15 December 1971

### Chairman's Report

Last year our chairman, Eddie Mander reported to the membership that the Committee had spent several months appraising the constitution and aims of the FBA. The result of these deliberations were two fold:

1. The original objects of the Association as drawn up in 1957 were considered to be the same in 1970.
2. The growth of the Association and its involvement in the national farm building field made it desirable for the greater participation by the Committee in running our affairs. To this end four standing Committees, whose activities are set out below, were inaugurated and during the current year have been 'running in'. From now on they will be undertaking some of the routine business normally referred to full Committee Meetings, and at the same time investigating various aspects of our affairs.

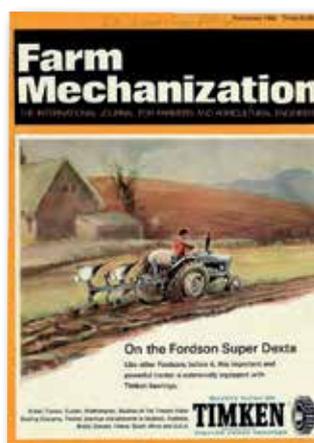
### Standing Committee Reports

a) **The Building and Equipment Manufacturers Committee** has met on three occasions. It was felt that our membership within this category was large, and that they warranted special meetings or representation. A Conference for these members was organised for 29<sup>th</sup> October at Stoneleigh to consider any special activities, and also, the role of the FBA and the FBC in co-ordinating farm building design or practice. After the discussion Mr Woodhams from the Ministry of Agriculture gave a paper on "Dimensional Co-ordination". The Committee feel strongly that they can help a great deal in bringing manufacturers of different components far closer together.

b) **The Education and Meetings Committee** has met twice. They are now taking over the routine control of national conferences, and are considering the overall pattern and timings of our principal activities. A standard guide to conference organisers is also being prepared.

c) **The Investigation and Development Committee** has been extremely active and under David Soutar's chairmanship has prepared and submitted a paper to the Agricultural Advisory Council on the lack of co-ordination in Farm Building Research and Development. We understand that the report was favourably received, and hope that the recommendation for a small co-ordinating body to be established by the Ministry of Agriculture, will be taken up. The report suggested that this would be the first step to the establishment of a full scale, unit with multi-disciplined support. This is the fifth such report to be submitted by the FBA, the last being in 1963, and we fervently hope that this time we will be successful in achieving something which the Association has sought for the last 14 years.

d) **The Regional Organisation Committee** has only met once, but the blueprint for this organisation was prepared before the Committee came into being. We had hoped that branch committees would be established early in 1971 and that by the end of the year full programmes would have been prepared for all areas. Unfortunately the postal strike destroyed these plans and progress has been slow. I can report however, that at least four branches are active, and that Committees have been formed with nine in England and Wales, three in Scotland and one in Ulster. In all areas the participation of keen younger members is keenly sought. This organisation is vital for the FBA as good local meetings will boost both membership and finance, and it is being undertaken at a time when technical information on building methods and systems is required.



*The sister magazine to Farmbuildings prior to them amalgamating*

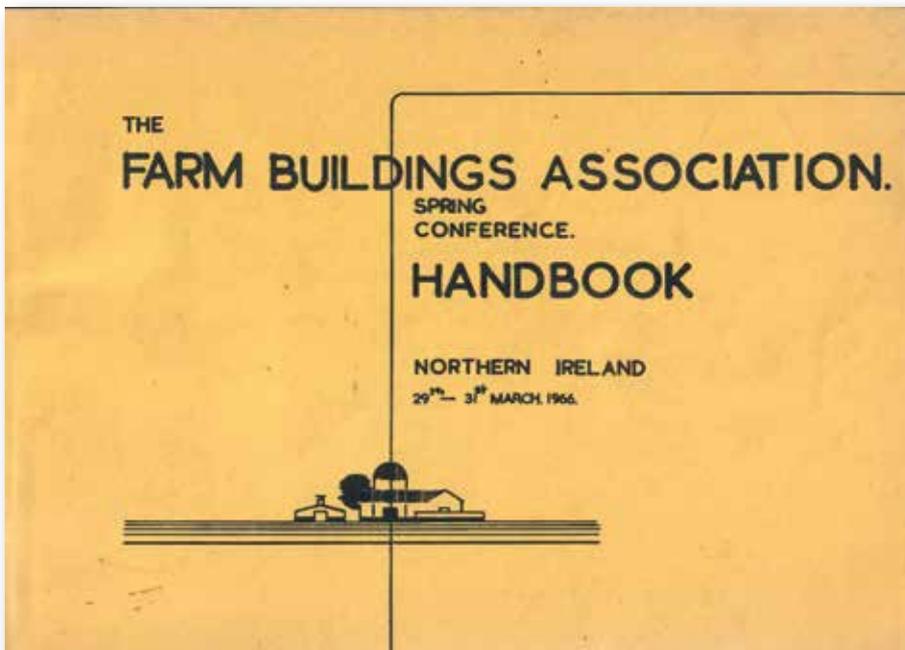
## Born to Farm

Reproduced from David Black's book, with his kind permission

This gives an indication of the benefit farmers derived from membership

I was keen that we join the FBA and we became early members of the organisation, as did Stephen Horvat. Through the FBA I travelled extensively looking at new developments in pig buildings at home and overseas: Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Scotland, Germany, the US and Sweden, to see some of the new designs in practice. Grandad, on my return, would always ask, 'Well, what have you learnt?' and it was considered terribly bad if one was unable to list two or three ideas to benefit the business. Fortunately I usually came home with some useful ideas or concepts which I had either seen or picked up through conversations with others. Developing and putting into practice new ideas made for exciting times.

On a trip with the FBA to Northern Ireland in 1958 we called in to see the McGuckian brothers, leading pig keepers and businessmen from Ballymena. At that time, they were able to obtain penicillin, which was not yet freely available in England. They were using it very effectively to treat pneumonia and other pig diseases and, when added to pig diets, it had the effect of improving conversion rates. We brought some home with us and we too found it very effective. Shortly after that, it became available in Suffolk and we used both penicillin and later another antibiotic, aureomycin, extensively. The use of antibiotics generally has subsequently become a very controversial issue, but they served us well. No doubt that when something works well there is a tendency to overdo its usage and it is only later that one becomes aware that there might also be negative effects. At David Black & Son we still use antibiotics, but only sparingly and our usage is now well below the advisory limits, made possible by careful management, hygiene and an all-in, all-out system which we have gradually introduced.



*The FBA Spring Conference Handbook for the tour of Northern Ireland 29<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> March 1966*

## Chapter 6

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# Post-war agricultural support

Politically all the research, development and financial support for agriculture was given through the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food (MAFF) with its own Government Cabinet Minister. The current responsibility lies with DEFRA – Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

It is not proposed to list all the schemes and activities of MAFF here but the support for agriculture was massive. Of significance to farm buildings was the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), the National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAAS) and the Agricultural Land Service (ALS).

The Department of Agriculture in Scotland devolved these activities to the Scottish Agricultural Colleges who provided extension services. Similar support was devolved to Northern Ireland via their Department of Agriculture.

John Young held office with the ALS and gives his thoughts below.

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### The Political Dimension by John Young

Post Second World War agriculture was governed by the Agriculture Act of 1947 and the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1948. The former guaranteed support for the industry though deficiency payments guaranteeing minimum prices for most agricultural products. The latter gave security of tenure for three generations to tenant farmers enabling them to plan the future with certainty and invest in their business.

In order to maximise food production it was necessary to modernise farms and encourage more efficient farming practices. This was to be achieved through price support and subsidies for investment, through research and development and by providing free on farm advice.

The modernisation of farm buildings was encouraged through grants under various Farm Improvement Schemes administered by MAFF in England and Wales, by the Departments of Agriculture in Scotland and Northern Ireland. These grants proved to be very popular but there was concern that the resultant buildings were not always as good as they could have been. Why was this? Lack of research? Inadequate advice? Poor liaison between the advisory services? Lack of practising architects and surveyors with expertise and interest in farm buildings? In fact a combination of all these was recognised by the founders of the Farm Buildings Association.

The Agricultural Research Council showed little interest in farm buildings in England and Wales and supported a minimal unit at Silsoe. In Scotland research, development and advice were combined at the three Agricultural Colleges, an arrangement that led to many new ideas in building design put into practice on Scottish farms. This was due partly to the system but also to the leadership of David Soutar, Bob Forsyth and others.

In England and Wales it was much more complicated. The National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAAS) was responsible for general farming advice and for development work on their Experimental Husbandry Farms. However, buildings were the responsibility of the Agricultural Land Service (ALS) which had duties other than farm buildings. The staff of land agents were supported by specialist farm building advisors (FBAOs) based in regional offices. As the land agents were responsible for the grant schemes they also provided most of the building advice on the farm and the regional specialists were only consulted on complicated cases. But little or no training was provided in farm building design for the majority of ALS staff working in the

field and they were not encouraged to join the FBA nor to attend the spring conferences. It was assumed that only FBAOs need to know about farm buildings!

There were further difficulties because NAAS officers inevitably discussed buildings in providing business advice to the farmer and liaison between ALS and NAAS staff was not always as good as it should have been. Milk Officers were also involved in schemes for dairy premises as they had a statutory responsibility for the Milk and Dairy Regulations. Where all services worked well together these difficulties were overcome and the farmer received limitless free advice from those best qualified to give it.

As ALS officers were administering the grant schemes they were discouraged from working directly with builders and contractors because competitive estimates were a requirement of grant aid. Often his local builder worked with the farmer in preparing schemes which may not always have been right for the farm. The farmer was not pleased when he applied for the grant and was told that it would not be approved. The best buildings resulted from the farmer, builder and ALS officer working together. In an ideal world this would have been organised by a competent architect or surveyor but they were few and far between.

### **Clive Mander writes . . .**

As John notes, the ARC had a minimal unit at Silsoe with about 10 staff. By contrast the NIAE, concerned with machinery and equipment, had over 100 staff and the lion's share of the budget, one guesses, because its results were more glamorous. The noteworthy fact was that agriculture's spend on buildings was very similar in volume to its spend on machinery.

As John also mentions, ALS officers were actively discouraged from joining the Association in the early years. Nevertheless many did join because they could gain wider experience and professional development. It probably helped that everyone joined as private individuals for a fee of two guineas.

I know of one person from a commercial company who used part of his annual leave to always attend the Spring Conference.

## Chapter 7

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# SFBIU

## Scottish Farm Buildings Investigation Unit



*SFBIU Offices  
1965*

### **Clive Mander writes . . .**

Since its formation in 1956 the FBA had repeatedly asked for Government support for research and development in farm buildings.

In the forward to the 1959 Journal, FBA chairman David Soutar continues with this plea.

A copy of an open letter to the Minister of Agriculture, agreed by the membership, on this request is also included. The press cutting from the *Farmer and Stockbreeder* in 1961 reflects this cry for research (*see page 49*).

In Scotland, because power was devolved to the Department of Agriculture, this developed differently. I have little direct knowledge but am aware that David, along with others, lobbied politicians relentlessly until in 1963 the SFBIU was established at the North College.

Seaton Baxter kindly forwarded David's account of the life of the unit and is included below.

No one must underestimate the value and respect the SFBIU generated for itself.

### **Extract from Farm Building Design Services in Scotland**

Recollections of David S Soutar OBE

#### **The Formation of the Scottish Farm Buildings Investigation Unit**

Over the years, officials of the Department of Agriculture & Fisheries for Scotland had taken a supportive interest in the innovations advanced by the College's Farm Buildings Departments, such as when they grant-aided slatted floors when their counterparts, south of the border, refused to do so.

Realising the potential benefits of extending the limited development work carried out by the College's Farm Buildings Departments, in 1963, consultation between the Department of Agriculture & Fisheries for Scotland and the Principals of the Scottish Agricultural Colleges resulted in a Farm Buildings Investigation Unit being formed as part of the Farm Buildings Department of the North College. This Unit was



*SFBIU Staff 1965*

required to serve all three Scottish Agricultural Colleges and its duties were defined to include the following:

1. The carrying out of such surveys, investigations and development work as may be required for the furtherance of efficient farm building design.
2. The responsibility for co-ordinating farm building investigation in Scotland.
3. The maintenance of an information centre covering farm building developments at home and abroad.

A Joint Advisory Committee under the chairmanship of Dr Maitland Mackie, later Sir Maitland Mackie, with representatives from the three Scottish Colleges, DAFS and the ARC was invited to advise on the policy to be followed and the programme of work.

In 1966 the Joint Advisory Committee agreed that such was the importance of the work involved that a Farm Buildings Research Institute for Scotland should be set up with the Unit as the basis. This proposal, however, did not receive the support of DAFS.

In 1967, on the suggestion of DAFS, it was agreed that the Unit should become an independent entity in order that it should not be considered

to provide its services more to the benefit of the North College than others and at that time it was given the Prefix 'Scottish' to clarify the position. In dealing with this matter at a Joint Advisory Committee meeting on 18 November 1968, the Chairman declared "That the Committee were seeking to evolve a separate Unit to serve Scotland."

This involved the subdivision of the North College Farm Buildings Department staff and I handed over my advisory responsibilities to WAG Gerrie, MC, ARICS (Bill Gerrie) whose support I had greatly appreciated over many years as had countless farmers in the North of Scotland.

This subdivision involved the Unit occupying the ground floor of the existing building in the Farm Square with Bill Gerrie and his staff occupying the upper floors.

Bearing in mind the responsibilities of the Unit it was obvious that an endeavour had to be made to provide more appropriate office and workshop accommodation.

Due to a certain parochialism prevailing in the Joint Advisory Committee the site of this accommodation, while within the Craibstone Estate, had to be such as to be seen as an independent entity. This was achieved adjacent to the East Lodge.

Efforts were made to obtain financial backing for the project from a number of individuals and trusts without success, but funding from DAFS saw the opening of a very efficient office block in 1973 which greatly enhanced all sectors of the Unit's work and in particular the information services.

The adjacent workshop with metal and wood-working shops provided accommodation for a wind tunnel and water flume, so valuable in providing precise data on ventilation and environmental problems.

It can be pointed out that in practically all spheres of the building industry involving design and construction, such as schools, hospitals, houses and factories, there is a recognised approach to solving building requirements, but not so in agriculture. There has also been a serious neglect of necessary supporting research and design. Because the discipline of farm buildings design is not supported by a national organisation of the scale and import afforded to other agricultural disciplines, the responsibilities which would have been properly the duty of such an organisation have largely fallen to the Unit. The Unit was unique in that no like organisation with similar facilities existed in the United Kingdom for the design and development of farm buildings and the research and investigation of the wide variation of facets involved. It has been described by the DAFS as "a small specialist 'higher grade' group". The SFBIU received wide recognition and was looked upon as a research and design organisation on a par, if smaller in scale, with those Western Europe Farm Buildings Institutes with which it was in regular contact.

The policy for the work of the Unit continued to be advised by the Joint Advisory Committee for Farm Buildings Work (JAC) but its administration was the responsibility of the North of Scotland College of Agriculture.

## **The Work of the Unit**

### ***General***

Whilst the JAC was formally responsible for the policy and work programme of the Unit, the staff, in reality were the source of motivation for most aspects of work. The extent of the requirements was very great when viewed in relation to the available work force. (These requirements ranged in character from basic research studies to on-farm support services to the Colleges Farm Building Advisers.) Under these circumstances, in order to make the most of the Unit's potential in answering these requirements, the correct assessment of priorities was of utmost importance.

Farm Buildings Research and Design calls for a multi-disciplinary approach, both in respect of the Unit staff and those of related agricultural disciplines. The Unit was unable to obtain a completely balanced team due to the failure to recruit enough personnel from the building science field, but it was extremely fortunate to have, within its ranks, men who have become recognised as national leaders in their specialisms

By service on related organisations and direct and indirect contacts with the commercial farmer the Unit staff were very much aware of the needs of the agricultural industry and it was most sensitive to any 'wind of change'. Not only had priorities to be kept under scrutiny but so had the depth of commitment of the relatively limited resources, particularly in respect of long-term projects.

The Unit was very conscious of the need to provide solutions to problems and to see these solutions put into practice on commercial farms - working generally through the Colleges' Farm Buildings Advisers. As will be mentioned in detail later, great emphasis was placed on the value of an efficient information service as a means of providing the widest dissemination, both of the Unit's findings and those of sister organisations.

### ***Research and Development Work***

The Research and Development work of the Unit was a dynamic process and consequently had changed in character and content as the Unit developed since its inception. This change was the result of a growth in the Unit's support facilities and the inevitable stimuli of government

and industrial demands as well as the fluctuating needs of the agricultural and construction industries. One thing, however, was consistent; the work was user-orientated and in conjunction with the information processing aspect of the Unit's work, was actively projected into the agricultural industry.

In the formative years of the Unit the choice of research and design studies was more than just simply decided by current farm problems. It necessarily converged on those areas where additional resources could be provided by the industry. This, of course, had the advantage of producing a close working co-operation between theorist and practitioner, both ultimately concerned with a workable, economic outcome. The work at Muir of Pert Farms was a good example of a user-determined complex problem which culminated after several years of farmer-researcher participation in a practical, progressive solution with far-reaching consequences. This one study sought to integrate a set of sub-problems and their solutions, ranging from a system of standardisation and prefabrication of building elements to a system of waste treatment for the prevention of pollution into a composite built environment. This type of study, concerned primarily with the synthesising of sub-problems and solutions, is now seen as the forerunner of many such interdisciplinary studies. Subsequent work undertaken along the guidelines provided by this exercise has included studies of calf housing, beef cattle housing and flooring for both cattle and pig buildings.

The Unit relied heavily on its communication and co-operation with the farming industry. However, its own increased resources were used to improve the in-depth aspects of problem solving and to provide reliable data of such a basic nature as to allow future solutions to be synthesised from stored data without the need to resort to further costly one-off studies.

Although the work of the Unit is primarily farm orientated more attention was paid to the needs of the building manufacturer and designer as a user of our information. Here the aim was to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of data transfer by directing the results to the influential user of building data and not just to the recipient and user of the completed building.

An example of this approach was the seminar held in November 1976 to which leading manufacturers of concrete building elements were invited with a view to passing on the Unit's latest findings on concrete slats. Their appreciation of this action and the subsequent developments undertaken by these manufacturers based on the Unit's work was most inspiring.

As with other research institutes the Unit tried to maintain a balance of short, medium and long term studies, the latter often containing a speculative element. Short duration studies were, on the other hand, the subject of immediate identifiable problems with high prospects of a satisfactory solution. These studies, exemplified by heat pads for baby pigs and straw drinkers for sows, though satisfying the needs of only a limited number of farmers, were nevertheless essential in establishing the Unit's continuing credibility with the industry. Medium or long term studies such as performance criteria for floors or the bi-climatic aspects of cattle housing, were chosen because of their wider application and their contribution to knowledge in farm buildings both nationally and internationally.

### ***Information Services***

Three members of staff devoted their time mainly to information work: an Information Officer, a Draughtsman/illustrator and a Librarian. A second Draughtsman was responsible for work in connection with exhibition material and he also helped out on publication production at peak periods. The Information Officer had a general responsibility for information services but spent the greater part of his time in editing, writing and supervising the production of Unit publications, working closely with the Draughtsman/illustrator who was responsible for design, layout and illustrations, and for the production of camera-ready paste-ups for printing. The Librarian performed the usual library functions of classifying, cataloguing and indexing all literature received, handling acquisitions, loans and borrowing, and liaison with the University and other libraries.

The information services of the Unit performed two functions: to provide staff with the

information they required in the course of their work, and to effectively disseminate information held in or generated by the Unit. Personal contact performed an important role in both these functions but was backed up by the printed work and other more formal procedures to ensure that information flowed efficiently to all users.

### ***Services to meet internal information needs centre on the Library and Librarian***

The aim was threefold:

- i. to provide a body of reference material of relevance to the current work of the Unit, with a back up of general works on farm buildings and basic agricultural and building texts;
- ii. to draw the attention of individual staff members to current literature relevant to their work. Incoming periodicals and abstracting journals were scanned by a staff member who selected items and marked them for attention of particular colleagues. Non-periodical literature was detailed on a monthly list which was circulated to all staff;
- iii. to locate and obtain information required by staff.

The main channel for outward flow of information from the Unit was its publications. The quarterly journal 'Farm Building Progress' was the principal mouthpiece of the Unit and was produced mainly to meet the needs of advisers, building designers, farmers and builders. Also covering needs in the same area were various leaflets, the annual 'Farm Building Cost Guide' and the first of a series of detailed handbooks on specific topics, 'Calf Housing Handbook'. For the research worker a report series, 'Farm Building Research & Design Studies', and an annual research index 'Farm Building Research & Design Index', was produced. The monthly list of library additions was also distributed to colleagues in the Scottish Agricultural Colleges and further afield on request. A scheme was also worked out for incorporating the Unit's library catalogue into the Colleges' catalogue. Full use was also made of other means of publication by submitting papers to scientific and professional journals

and conferences, writing articles for the press and distributing press information relating to newsworthy events or publications.

A small exhibition room was maintained to illustrate the work of the Unit to visitors and opportunities were taken to provide displays at agricultural shows and other events. Staff members did not have a direct educational or advisory function but sought to channel information through the farm building and agricultural advisers, working with them on individual cases as requested. Invitations were however; accepted to lecture to students, address farmers' meetings and to visit farms, all of which also provided valuable feedback. Regular contact with advisory staff was maintained and this included an annual seminar for all farm buildings specialists in the Scottish Agricultural Colleges and DAFS.

### ***Services to the Scottish Agricultural Colleges***

The Unit provided a widely based back-up service to the Farm Buildings Departments of the Scottish Agricultural Colleges in addition to its issue of regularly published information. The service might vary from a telephone call solution such as advice on the suitability of a new building material to an in-depth study involving model simulation in the wind tunnel. An example of the latter was support advice to the West College Farm Buildings Adviser on the ventilation requirements of a novel form of proprietary building. In another case model simulation using the water table provided data for the design of a canopy to a tower silo to overcome gusting wind blowing the haylage out of the trough.

In another case water table tests of a model of a proposed new building for the East College dictated a change of building form.

In certain cases Unit staff accompanied the Farm Buildings Advisers to help to elucidate on-farm problems. In one such case emergency action involving drastic building alterations to increase ventilation rates resulted in the saving of considerable numbers of feeding cattle after four had already died.

In addition to the annually published *Farm Building Cost Guide*, the Unit's Quantity

Surveyor answered frequent enquiries from the College Buildings Advisers on building cost problems and when these pertained to buildings proposed for erection by the Colleges on their own farms extensive cost analysis were provided.

Regular meetings ensured a full understanding of mutual problems and planned objectives as well as the recognition of each sector's responsibilities.

Not infrequently the Unit was called upon for advice by non-agricultural organisations, commercial firms and individuals, generally concerning opinions as to trends and developments, material specifications and kindred matters. As such enquiries were usually concerned with agricultural advancement the Unit was usually prepared to give assistance and not infrequently mutual benefits accrued. Advisory cases *per se* were redirected to the appropriate College Farm Buildings Department.

### ***UK and International Services***

Formal communication with MAFF involved biannual visits to the Unit by the Superintendent Surveyor, the service of Seaton Baxter, the Unit's Research & Development Officer on the Ministry's Farm Buildings R & D Committee, the exchange of costing data with the Ministry's office in Reading, and attendance at the annual ADAS Farm Buildings Advisers Course.

Unit staff served on the following bodies:

JAC Farm Buildings Committee and three study groups, Farm Buildings Association Council and Research & Design Committee, RICS Agricultural and Land Management Committee, British CIGR.

Papers were presented at meetings of many of the major agricultural societies and to ADAS and FBIC conferences. Acknowledgement of these services was signified when the Head of the Unit was given an Honorary Fellowship of the RASE "for services to United Kingdom agriculture".

In the international sphere the Unit had regular contact with all the principal farm buildings

institutes in Western Europe and each year published the 'Farm Building Research & Design Index' which recorded their project work and publications. This service was much appreciated by the co-operating countries. Seaton Baxter was UK Technical Correspondent for Commission Internationale du Genie Rurale. Interchange of visits had resulted in the Unit having personal contacts at each of the European centres.

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### **Jim Loynes writes . . .**

During my time as Head of Engineering at HAUC I became involved with the CIGR.

### **Commission Internationale du Génie Rural (CIGR)** (See: <https://www.cigr.org/>)

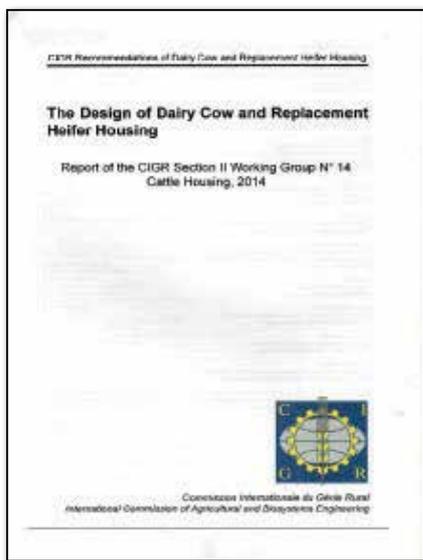
The International Commission of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering (CIGR) is an international, non-governmental, non-profit organization consisting of a network of Regional and National Societies of Agricultural Engineering as well as private and public companies and individuals worldwide. CIGR was created on the occasion of the First International Congress of Agricultural Engineering, held in Liege, Belgium in 1930.

I was asked to get involved in the CIGR Section II Working Group No 14 Cattle Housing in 2000. Prior to this, Jeff Owen and Jan Cermak, were the UK participants in the Group. They were both based in the Farm Buildings Research Team, at the ADAS Regional Offices, Coley Park, Reading and were members of the FBA.

The aim of the Group is to analyse and provide references on housing conditions and building construction for cattle in different climate regions of the world. The Group writes comprehensive guidebooks for beef and dairy cattle housing and short notes on more specific technical topics.

When I joined the Group, in 1999, it had nine regular Members. These were from the UK, Austria, USA, Netherlands, Italy, Belgium, Sweden and France and new Members were added from Ireland, Germany and Switzerland. By 2002 we had published a book covering the Design of Beef Cattle Housing and presented

this to the ASAE Conference, Chicago in 2003. We then concentrated on producing a revised version of the Design of Dairy Cow Housing book, which was originally produced by Jeff Owen's Group in 1994, and in 2014 we published the book, *The Design of Dairy Cow and Replacement Heifer Housing*. I left the Group in 2015 and asked my colleague, Dr Tom Norton, to join the Group. At that time he was working for me at HAUC, but later on moved to a university research post based in Leuven, Belgium and is still involved in the Group.



Similar contacts were maintained although with less coverage in America, Canada, South Africa and Australia; Seaton Baxter having made lecture tours as a guest in the last three countries, while Alan Robertson had presented a paper to the American Society of Agricultural Engineers. The Unit's quarterly 'Farm Building Progress' formed a most useful information exchange document with the principal centres and was issued to many more overseas on a subscription basis.

Published work on environmental requirements for cattle housing led to the Czechoslovakian Farm Building Research Institute re-appraising the design of these structures with every success and considerable capital savings. The Unit's pioneering work on piggery waste treatment was such as to encourage a Kansas farmer to make a one week visit to the UK to examine the work.

### **Concerning the staffing of the Unit**

Farm building design requires a sound knowledge of building science and construction and at least an understanding of aesthetic design; it requires an understanding of the principles of planning, production engineering, work study, linear management programming etc; it requires a fair knowledge of heating, lighting and engineering and at least a basic knowledge of agriculture and the related physiological and biological implications. The farm building designer will be expected to advise on a very wide range of subjects – functional, financial, structural and aesthetic, and to understand and translate into structural form the requirements dictated by management practices. It is therefore not surprising to hear claims that the supporting research and development in these spheres calls for a multi-disciplinary approach. That can be readily agreed but with such a wide range of specialisms and a very restricted staffing how could the best solution be attained?

The development of any form of building design calls for architecturally based disciplines. Unfortunately experience in the advisory sector had shown the reluctance of professionals in architecture/building science to transfer from 'mainstream' activities into an area where their services were not properly recognised and wherein the salary scales were considerably below those offered in other spheres involving the building industry.

Under the prevailing circumstances, and bearing in mind the range of skills required, the staff of the Unit were selected on professional, technical and personal qualities to provide the multi-disciplinary specialisms required to further the objectives of the Unit. The range of work undertaken and the results achieved vindicated the policy adopted although for an ideally balanced team greater expertise in building science aspects was desirable.

Bearing in mind the limited career prospects offered, the Unit had been fortunate to retain the services of some outstanding people. However, such dedication alone is hardly a sound foundation on which to base the support services for an industry expending £35-£40

million per annum in the 1970's. Agricultural buildings surely deserved as high a standard of design service as that available to any other sector of the community and this would require the same standard of remuneration as other sectors offered.

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### **The Cruden Scholarship**

A successful building contractor, Mr Cruden, left funds to form a Foundation for educational purposes.

When the Foundation was deliberating on how to commemorate Mr Cruden's interests in both building and agriculture, Mr George Gray of East Linton, a prominent Lothian farmer, who was a Trustee suggested that their intentions might be fulfilled by promoting a scholarship for a student to undertake further studies at the Scottish Farm Buildings Investigation Unit.

I well recall going to Edinburgh at the Trustees' invitation to advance our interests, where I was asked to explain how such a scholarship could benefit either building construction or agriculture. Frankly, I stated that I did not know but I assured the Foundation that any student granted funds to further his education at the Scottish Farm Buildings Investigation Unit would most certainly gain a specialised knowledge of farm building design.

My assurances were accepted and soon to be amply justified. The first student appointed achieved his PhD degree and after experience in farm buildings advisory work in Aberdeen and Auchencruive, has the responsible position of Head of Farm Buildings Design for the Scottish Agricultural Colleges. I refer to Dr Mike Kelly. Since then, Cruden scholars achieved five PhD degrees and one MSc.

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### **The David Soutar Farm Building Trust**

During my years in service I found the restrictions placed on the use of my Department's funds were most frustrating and any movement by staff outside the College area had to receive prior permission from the College Secretary. Likewise, expenditure which had not been forecast, even within the overall budget was frowned upon.

Eventually and perhaps rather stupidly I used my personal funds on special occasions, even when I discovered such did not gain income tax exemption.

Thinking ahead I did not like the idea of my successor being similarly burdened and I was determined to form a Trust whose income would be at the sole discretion of the Head of the Scottish Farm Buildings Investigation Unit. Through the Farm Buildings Association I had become friendly with Wilfred Cave, a large-scale Wiltshire farmer who I knew to give the entire income of one of his farms to charity. Wilfred Cave gave £3,000 to form the Trust on the condition that the farming community at least doubled that sum, and also that I should have executive authority over the income.

In writing to Sir Maitland Mackie, chairman of the Joint Advisory Committee who had 'fathered' my appeal, he suggested that the Trust be named the 'David Soutar Farm Building Trust'. This I strongly disagreed with but Sir Maitland insisted we honour the funding founder's wishes.

When in office the Trust was administered efficiently and simply. At its AGM each October I reported on my expenditure for the past year and also forecast probable expenditure in the coming year. Never once was my expenditure queried.

The Trust funded the local Farm Building Award Scheme which did much to further the cause of improving the appearance of farm buildings. It did much to encourage technical staff by ensuring they got a wider objective of their tasks by attending local meetings, etc.

I recall we used its funds to provide a party from Schleswig Holstein with a useful programme made up mainly from standard information sheets for which they insisted on paying £100.

Times change, however, and I no longer believe The Trust is administered in the manner originally intended.

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### **Finis**

When I retired at the statutory age limit in 1977 I was happy to hand over my responsibilities to Seaton Baxter who had served the Unit valiantly since its inception. Furthermore he had achieved

national and international recognition as a leading authority on farm buildings. That he should later choose to move on to a further challenge was not unexpected.

Not so welcome was the letter I received in January 1996 from the Unit, now rather extravagantly titled 'The Centre for Rural Building' to the effect that "it has been decided to cease publication of *Farm Building Progress*" – no reason being given. On hastening to the Unit to find the reason for this regrettable announcement I was informed that The Scottish Agricultural College had wound up the Unit and that the staff had been allocated to the Farm Buildings and other College departments. The purpose-designed office and workshop accommodation were allocated to other College departments.

This move, which followed the restructuring of the Farm Buildings Department of NIAE, Silsoe into the Animal Science and Engineering Division of Silsoe Research Institute, means there is no centre in the UK undertaking the applied type of research and design on farm buildings which the Farm Buildings Association called for shortly after its formation.

One may well ask whether British agriculture now warrants such a low priority as not to deserve the assistance provided by efficient structures and also whether, in the eyes of agriculturists, well-designed farm buildings are no longer an essential element in agricultural production.

However, the services of SFBIU were widely appreciated, and with a change to a more progressive and liberal political leadership there is no reason why the benefits of the aforesaid services could not once again be established for the benefit of our hard-pressed Agriculture.

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## Seaton Baxter writes . . .

This is a background narrative of the changing landscape and innovation written by Seaton Baxter (2024) as a result of his involvement with the SFBIU. It is abridged from a paper by Seaton entitled *Changing Structures in Changing Landscapes. An Environmentalist Perspective from Countryside Buildings.*

## Background

To a casual observant traveller driving through Scotland some 50 years ago the following mix of slow and more rapid changes would have been noticeable.

- Seasonal changes look much as they always have done. Rich, brown ploughed land giving way to green crops which eventually mature into more colourful fields harvested and returned in winter to starting state. This sequence goes on, year after year with crops changing place in some rotational way. Barley, potatoes, swedes, temporary and permanent grasses forming the usual backdrop to countryside viewing. Dairy, beef cattle and sheep, at times, emphasise the greenness of the scene; pigs and poultry have already gone inside, and working horses have disappeared altogether.
- Slower changes are reflected in the increasing number of empty, mined or redundant cottages and small farm buildings and the growth of larger farm complexes. Large areas of grey asbestos replace the smaller patches of grey/blue slate or red pantile roofs, concrete and steel replace timber and stone.
- Small villages though seemingly active show signs of decline. Empty churches look forlorn amidst ancient graveyards, small schools with few pupils and fewer small shops.

Behind these obvious signs, major changes are occurring:

- People are rapidly leaving the land. There are fewer farm workers and fewer farmers. Some rural areas are again becoming depopulated.
- Small farms are disappearing as they are amalgamated into bigger systems, bigger fields, bigger buildings, bigger numbers of animals and less diversity.
- New buildings and equipment become noticeable as they get bigger and substitute for labour.

In the following 20 years or so (1960-80), prompted by private and public sources of investment these major changes accelerate so emphasising the differences noticeable to an observant traveller. The countryside is vibrant with activity but not people. At the end of this

period (1980's) and into the twenty years till now the villages seem to be growing again. Each village has its crop of residential housing areas; the village school has become a big house, some of the small churches retain even smaller congregations and none of the small shops have returned although small supermarkets hog the edge of some villages. Cars however predominate and proliferate clogging the roads and villages, 80% of their lives static and the remainder apparently making up for this by travelling at high speed. There are fewer casual observers of country-life and more mobile strangers to the land. The slow has given way to the fast. The signs in agriculture seem more static generally – somehow bigger but less vibrant. The countryside seems more extreme. There are large areas where no farm animals are seen, only vast areas of crops. In other areas animals dominate the landscape in large numbers and even pigs and poultry are returning to the light. There are also areas where nature seems to have taken over again, intentionally in new agri-environment enhancing schemes and also what appears as unintentional dereliction in areas set aside. In addition, new types of structure are showing up on the farm in the form of tall slender wind energy turbines. Much later, wind farms are to develop.

The countryside seems more vibrant again but different. There seems to be more people, but they are not of the land. They migrate daily from the countryside to the city and back again taking their children with them to school, buying their cheap food in the city supermarkets and leaving their rubbish at home in the village. Farming too is on the land but not in the land, and agriculture, though changing, is still of the land but not for the land. Now for a closer look at farm buildings during these periods.

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## **Innovation and change**

(the period from 1960-1980)

### ***General***

This was a period of growth, where large investments were made in buildings and equipment as a substitute for a labour force declining in quantity and ultimately in quality. This was a period when output was increased, and performance was measured as output/man

and not per hectare. Where productivity was measured as litres of milk or kg of liveweight gain per cost of feed input and where feed costs amounted to 60-80% of production. This was a time of intensification, of a return to 'high farming' and, of the application of new technologies and new ideas. It was a period when a buoyant industry challenged old systems and created new ones, when a smaller labour force was expected to look after (manage!) a rapidly expanding animal population. Ultimately the excesses of these changes were to be challenged by animal welfarists and other environmentalists.

### ***Farm Buildings***

At the beginning of this period (1960's) there was little or no research into farm buildings in Scotland. Most of the new innovations were originated by farmers and livestock producers, then refined and hybridised by manufacturers and designers and finally disseminated by the government supported advisory services and the farmers themselves. This was a period of 'learning by voyeuring', by visiting innovative farms and learning what others were doing. By seeing and recording new ideas, copying them, amending and adjusting and then passing the ideas on. This might be described as designing by the "Method of Comparisons". In this way you deal directly with the real world, you avoid "re-inventing the wheel" and you try to learn from the mistakes of others without repeating their errors. So, you try to absorb and extend the good ideas of others but in changing complex systems you can also, unknowingly, propagate bad ideas unless you have an independent means of testing or challenging those ideas. This way of testing ideas from the field is what might be called the "Method of Principles". In practice both methods should be used. There is clearly no point in not going to see a new idea if the opportunity and circumstances are favourable. On the other hand, there is equally no point in taking on a new idea without critically appraising it. The method of comparisons has been used for a long time in agriculture and other industries and, despite increasingly competitive conditions, will continue to be used. However, as research in farm buildings began to grow in Scotland a method of principles was elaborated against which ideas could be tested and new systems created.

### ***The Search for Design Principle***

The search for design principle for farm buildings lay outside the discipline of design itself. In the same way that a problem in farm buildings is a subset of a bigger problem at the farm level. Design principles are established from an interdisciplinary means of inquiry. The initial knowledge required comes from working with physiologists, nutritionists, ethologists, veterinarians and husbandry specialists. The principles are built on the integration of different knowledge bases in order to better understand the integrated nature of reality. In the method of comparisons, integration of knowledge is also possible but there is a tendency to disintegrate the system being studied and to focus only on innovation itself, ie. the sow stall, the cow cubicle or the weighing crate. On the other hand, even the method of principles may be undermined if too narrow a system's view is taken at the outset. For example, in animal production systems in the 1960's and 70's the principal performance measure was productivity with little or no attention to animal welfare. Inevitably systems were designed and implemented which were eventually found to contravene good welfare practice and, it would seem, sound stockmanship. Through the 70's and 80's animal welfare became a contentious issue, which gave rise to codes of Animal Welfare and new legislation. This led to the idea of zoo-centric design for farm animals where the search for knowledge lay in zoometry, animal mechanics and animal ethology. How big is a Holstein Friesian cow, how does it stand up and lie down, how much space does an animal need to avoid bullying? What influences how and where pigs defecate, why do hens and pigs resort to cannibalistic behaviour? Whilst many of these questions do directly influence productivity in most cases the productivity effect is subtle and long term but the effect on welfare is significant and almost instantaneous. For example, consider the principles behind the design of space and place in animal production buildings.

### ***Spatial Design Principles***

Principles are bound to the following premises:

- All buildings consist of spaces and boundaries, ie. floors, walls, roofs etc.

- All boundaries prescribe the quantity and geometry of spaces and affect the quality of the environment in that space.
- All boundaries interrupt, intentionally or otherwise, the flow of matter, energy and information so influencing the quality of the space they contain.
- Most spaces also contain artefacts, ie. objects other than boundaries but which themselves may sometimes act as boundaries, ie. feeders.
- Boundaries contain space(s) in which activities occur as complex systems.
- Systems in their simplest form consist of inputs, transformations, outputs and feedback loops in all three flows – matter, energy and information.
- Management attempts to control these systems, but there is a limit to how much externally applied management can control complex systems.
- All complex systems give rise to unpredictable emergent properties where, in non-linear systems, small causes can have large effects.
- Artefacts and boundaries turn space into place(s), ie. feeders define the location of 'feeding places'.
- All places are pre-defined behavioural spaces, ie. feeding place, drinking place, resting place

We can also see that buildings are only part of a hierarchy of built spaces. From the smallest to the largest spaces we can have cells, rooms, buildings and farmsteads. So for example a cow cubicle is a cell – it contains one animal and limits its behavioural space. A pen for 20 pigs is a room, a fattening house containing 20 rooms is a building and a farmstead contains several buildings. There is also a zoo-centric hierarchy of animal spatial needs. Again from the smallest to the largest we have body space, ergonomic space, personal space, social space and behavioural space. In a cell for example, a knowledge of body space and ergonomic space are crucial; in a room, personal and social space need to be thoroughly understood. Two other aspects of space are relevant to all confined spaces, i.e. residual space and systems space. Residual space is the space which cannot usually be used for the prescribed activities of the larger functional space, though it

may be used for other purposes. At minimum, it is usually a function of the amount and type of boundaries. Systems space is that space which inevitably occurs as a result of the installation of a particular system of artefacts. It is a function of the system and not the animals and their behaviour. Allometric research with pigs in 1982, showed that adequate space for groups of pigs on partly slatted floors could be expressed as  $0.047 \times W^{2/3}$  (space in m<sup>2</sup> and W is the weight of pig in kg). At temperatures 2-6°C above LCT resting space could be defined as  $0.024 \times W^{2/3}$ . Further research using allometry as its basis showed that pig feeders could be designed which could reduce aggression at the feeder by 60% and reduce feed wastage from 1017g/feed period to 30g/feed period.

So far, space has primarily been defined in quantifiable terms, but the environment contained in volumetric space also has spatial qualities, i.e. temperature, air velocity, light and dark etc. Many, if not most, of these qualities interact with the requirement for quantity of space. For example, where pigs are kept in groups in conditions below their critical temperature, they will taxi to rest by huddling close together thereby occupying less resting space. If the temperature is increased the pigs need to lie apart and use more space in order to remain energetically comfortable. So, the quantity of space becomes a function of its quality. An understanding of these principles allows for a critical method of seeing when visiting a farm, i.e. the method is a complement to the method of comparisons. There can be little doubt that concerns for animal welfare, prompted initially by Ruth Harrison's book, 'Animal Machines' in 1964, became increasingly important in the 1970's and 80's. Non-mandatory Codes of Welfare were introduced and continually revised as more data became available and as the industry became more ready to absorb the consequences. In this period however, animal behavioural data was still not available to provide a basis for newer alternative systems not contained or implied by these Codes.

## **Dr James M Bruce**

Dr James M Bruce was appointed the head of the Scottish Farm Buildings Investigation Unit (SFBIU) in Aberdeen in November 1983. Dr Bruce, Jim to his colleagues, had led the Scientific and Technical section of SFBIU for the previous six years under Seaton Baxter, having joined the group in 1972. His early work on the theory of natural ventilation produced a design method based on thermal dynamics and the stack effect and was accepted and acknowledged across the UK and internationally. He was responsible for building a water table and wind tunnel at SFBIU which enabled the critical analysis and study of wind driven ventilation and the movement of air within buildings. His broad area of work was in bio-energetic systems – the interaction of animals with complex thermal environments. He melded the knowledge produced at the Rowett Institute on the partitioning of energy in farm animals with the thermal properties of building materials. Energy in; energy out. Physical models of buildings were placed in and around SFBIU and used to inform and support the development of computer models. Developments in pig housing also benefited from his work and promoted the understanding of upper and lower critical temperatures (UCT/LCT) and their impact on animal health, stress and productivity. Dr Bruce pioneered the introduction of automatically controlled natural ventilation (ACNV) to the UK, linking pig heat loss and the thermal dynamics of insulated buildings to produce controlled ventilation that used less than 5% of the energy required for an equivalent fan ventilated buildings. Dr Bruce was the UK representative on the CIGR working group on Climatization of Animal Houses from 1977 to 1987, and retired when the buildings unit, by then renamed the Centre for Rural Building (CRB) was closed in 1996.

# Lack of research

## Farm Buildings "Scandal"

BLIND LEADING THE BLIND WITHOUT  
RESEARCH, SAYS MR. P. BUCKLER

IT was "absolutely scandalous" that no attempt was being made to solve the problems connected with farm buildings in a proper manner, declared Mr. Peter Buckler in his paper at the Farmers' Club meeting in London on Wednesday. Emphasising the need for a Farm Buildings Research Institute, he pointed out that millions of pounds were being spent on buildings every year and mistakes were costly and permanent.

"The position is most unsatisfactory," he added. "How long are we to go on relying on the blind to lead the blind, while we invest in expensive mistakes that might well be monuments of misconception to the next generation?"

Mr. Buckler's subject was slatted floors and other bedding. He thought that in the next 10 years there would be a great revolution in live stock husbandry; in the material and methods of bedding stock; in the handling of bedding; and in the

but in the winter of 1959-60, with 163 cattle on slats, he considered that he had saved half a man's time, say £250 per annum. The appointment of another man had been avoided.

Saving in building costs would vary, but increased output of the available accommodation was certain, and there was a saving in the cost of buildings for storing straw.

Properly managed the animals were



Mr. Peter Buckler, Farmers' Club speaker.

clean, quiet and thrifty. Young stores gained perhaps an extra 0.1 to 0.2lb per day live weight on slats as against those on straw.

Mr. Buckler emphasized the importance of training cows for the system.

On the debit side he pointed out that the first capital cost might be fairly high; cows appeared to suffer more damage to teats and legs on slats than in a strawed yard. The system called for more observation and management.

Young stock should not be left on slats indefinitely, to avoid big hocks and "splay" legs. A narrow gap and fairly wide slat might reduce this risk.

### For Young Stock

He suggested that a small farmer with a good cowhouse would be unwise to put his cows on slats but might be wise to consider the system for his young stock.

Mr. Trevor Cave, who has tried the slatted floor system for cows and abandoned it, suggested that much of the "anti-slat" feeling in his area of Wilts. and Hants. was due to propaganda about how "tight" cows could be kept on the system.

Some people had been allowing only 30 sq ft per cow, whereas to avoid damaged teats between 40 and 45 sq ft was necessary.

Mr. L. Purser, Farnham, told the meeting that he was not impressed by the slatted floor system of housing any kind of stock. Not enough attention was being paid to making use of available litter.



A strong contingent from Sussex attended the Farmers' Club meeting. From left to right Messrs. J. Burgess, P. Armitage, and H. R. Roberts, all from Bodiam and Mr. S. J. Kingston from Battle.

mechanization of the handling of bulky foods such as silage and hay.

Discussing methods of saving straw in cow-houses Mr. Buckler, who is the agricultural development officer of Silcocks, said that on one of his organization's farms the cost of bedding the cows had been halved by using a mixture of about 3 to 1 sawdust and shavings and very little straw.

In a semi-covered yard the strawing of the lying area only could greatly reduce straw consumption, but the exercise yard must be of concrete and must be kept clean.

Alternatively deep litter could be used, and to him this seemed the best solution to the straw problem for dairy cows in a fully-covered yard.

Listing the advantages of slatted floors, Mr. Buckler said there was a definite saving in straw. One smallholder had saved £5 a week by putting his followers on slats.

Saving in labour was difficult to assess,

## NO STATE AID FOR SLATS

Scottish Department Not Yet Fully Satisfied on Materials

NO immediate prospect of State aid for building slatted floors could be promised, Mr. W. Craib, chief inspector of the Dept. of Agriculture for Scotland, told the annual meeting of the Scottish branch of the Institution of Agricultural Engineers in Edinburgh. The official view was that slatted floors were still in the experimental stage. The progressive landlord would not as yet be prepared to install them.

"Nor are we yet fully satisfied as to the kind of materials required for the construction of slats which will have a sure life of 15 years," he continued.

"Our attitude for the time being at least must be to refuse grant aid for the installation of slatted floors, even though we recognize their great possibilities."

Mr. E. Booth, Downmills, Peterhead,

complained that slats had been introduced about two years ago. "Will we have to wait another 15 years before the Department are satisfied that they will last for 15 years?" he asked.

Slats would either be long forgotten or very popular in three years' time, said Mr. Craib. He did not think farmers would have to wait anything like that period before a decision was taken.

## Chapter 8

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# The Farm Buildings Centre

by Clive Mander

### Formation

Thus far I have found no real documentation or records pertaining to the formation of the Farm Buildings Centre. I now think it may have started simply as an idea of drawing people and opinions together by Peter Buckler, supported no doubt by Francis Pemberton.

As noted there was frustration within the FBA that the government saw no need to involve itself with an additional commitment concerning farm buildings and the housing of livestock. It is noted that Wilfred Cave was certain that government would do nothing directly even though the Ministry of Agriculture Chief Architect, Bill Magson was already an FBA member in a private capacity. He wrote a paper on the planning of farm buildings in relation to mechanisation included in the first FBA Journal.

Following the great success of the demonstration areas at the Cambridge Royal Show and establishment of a permanent demonstration area at the Stoneleigh site, Peter Buckler's personal credit would have been very high. He was also chairman of the FBA.

In December 1962 it was reported that the RASE had extended an invitation to the CLA, ALS and NFU to assist in establishing a "Farm Buildings Centre" at the showground.

For the 1963 show there was a farm buildings centre operating from a tent within the demonstration area. It was staffed by members of the above and the FBA lead was then taken by Tony Rosen.

The development of the centre seems to have occurred very quickly from this time with the appointment of Peter Broad as Director starting in January 1964. The rationale of starting an information service together with the formation

### THE FUTURE

The main function of the Centre is to act as a catalyst. It will not become a research organisation since this is a condition of it receiving a government grant.

In the future one can expect that the farm buildings department of the NIAE will be expanded and its research facilities greatly increased. Whether or not this department will ever blossom forth into an independent research institute remains to be seen. In any case there are important functions to be performed by the FBC which could not easily be carried out either by a research institute or by a department of an institute.

The Centre has three primary functions which may be summarised as follows:

- (a) To collect and disseminate technical information.
- (b) To identify problems needing research or investigation and to pass on such information to the appropriate bodies.
- (c) To demonstrate in its own exhibition buildings and in co-operation with the RASE in its demonstration areas the latest developments concerning materials, constructional matters, and production techniques.

With regard to the collection of information the establishment of a regional network by the FBA and the appointment of Area Liaison Officers may be regarded as a valuable step in strengthening the Centre's intelligence system.

With all these developments in hand and we hope the cash position safeguarded, the Centre will now be able to take its full part in shaping the farm buildings of the future.

#### *Editor's Note*

FBC Members, Foundation Subscribers and subscribers can have copies of the above reports on application free. Non contributors can obtain copies, but have to pay. FBA Members who ask for technical advice or copies of these reports should consider seriously becoming subscribers to the centre if they are not already.



*David Allott and Peter Broad standing outside the Farm Buildings Centre*

of a library almost seems to have grown rather than being pre-planned but I think these early people knew exactly what they wanted.

The FBA and RASE were joint sponsors of the Farm Buildings Centre and the FBA contribution was underwritten by Wilfred Cave.

Initially the centre was housed in two rooms of a wooden hut that had been vacated by the GPO on the showground, and the RASE seconded Miss Anne Durham as secretary.

During the 1964 show the new Farm Buildings Centre again had a tent to take enquiries within the Demonstration area, fronted by Peter Girdlestone, but during the year showcased the permanent livestock demonstration (mostly pigs initially) to visitors. The agricultural colleges were enthusiastic visitors. It was a revolution to house livestock on a showground throughout the year.

It is of note that the ALS and the ARC were assisting within the "tent".

I think it is necessary to acknowledge the speed, effort and contribution that was made to establish the Farm Buildings Centre by the RASE and FBA.

## **New Offices**

By the Spring of 1965, Douglas McFarlane had been appointed Technical Assistant and the new two storey office built and ready for the 1966 show. The construction of the new exhibition building was announced with completion for the 1967 show. Funding of the FBC by the FBA of

£2,500/year was a strain on resources but it was hoped the venture would become self financing with its own subscribers.

HM Queen Elizabeth II was among the first subscribers paying £250/year, plus there were 15 others at that rate.

74 foundation members subscribed £25/year and ordinary members at £5/year, just to receive the publications.

After much effort, government support was finally given for 10s per £1 of other income raised, up to a maximum of £5,000. I think the initial agreement was for a period of three years.

By the end of 1966 government assistance to the FBC had been assured.

By the 1967 Royal Show the three exhibition buildings had been opened. One was made of timber construction, one of steel and one of concrete. This provided about 3,000sqft of exhibition space and a semi permanent display of building materials and products was established. As an ancillary, a space heating display was included. 12,000 visitors were recorded during the show.

In 1967 the establishment of the FBC became significant with the new facilities. A Mrs I C Bateman was librarian (an increasingly important job). Ron Hewson was recruited as Recorder/ Demonstrator (ex-farmer, ex-Bishop Burton College and ex-Silcock farms from Cheshire)

Andrew Cooley was information officer and editor of the Farm Buildings Digest: the new quarterly magazine from the Centre. The broad structure and rationale of the Centre was fixed at this time.

The magazine Farmbuildings had now been forced to merge with Farm Mechanisation as noted and collapsed soon after.

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### **Information extracted from *Farm Buildings* No 2 Spring 1964**

The principal aims of the centre may be summarized as follows: to collect technical information on farm buildings and the machinery and equipment associated with them and to establish a technical library; to maintain a demonstration area where the latest developments on farm buildings can be shown as realistically as possible to visitors both at the Royal Show and throughout the year; to provide a technical information service; to publish appropriate literature, eg. periodical digests, newsletters and detailed drawings; to act as a clearing house for new ideas.

The centre has not been formed to carry out research although it might do so in future if the need should arise. It will carry out investigations when necessary and will promote, encourage and assist research and experimental work in farm buildings. It will not design farm buildings for individuals. This kind of service is provided by the Agricultural Land Service and by private architects or consultants.

Since the 1963 Royal Show there has been a steady trickle of visitors to the Farm Buildings Demonstration Area to see the fully stocked pig and beef units which have been maintained there. These units are to be extended soon and we hope that an increasing number of farmers and others will come and inspect them.

### **David Allott writes . . .**

Fronting one of the internal access roads was built an inexpensive, two storey office for the FBC together with an area of land behind it. The simple aim of the Centre was to provide help to farmers and landowners with building projects. This was to be achieved by having an extensive library and by collecting, assembling and distributing information mostly in the form of publications. Where possible there would be exhibitions too.

As a Chartered Surveyor with a degree in Rural Estate Management, I was recruited as a 'Technical Assistant'. I was soon joined by an appointee of the Ministry of Agriculture's Agricultural Land Service with similar qualifications (John Young).

I joined FBC at the start of 1966 aided by a supportive reference from a respected FBA member, Sam Cray, who was Managing Director of Cow and Gate farms. I had done several building projects for him on their farms around the Davidstow cheese factory in Cornwall. My first task at the FBC was to oversee the erection of three new exhibition buildings on the land behind the office. These linked buildings were sponsored respectively by the timber, steel and concrete sectors of the farm buildings industry.

The buildings were large with over 2,500 square feet of floor space. Sadly they had virtually no insulation and no comprehensive heating system, so they were mostly used in the summer months. Luckily for me sponsors organised most of the building work so I did not have to spend a lot of time supervising.

The aim was to have exhibitors in place by July so my challenge was to charm and cajole commercial firms to contribute money and information for the exhibits. The FBC always had limited funds of its own for exhibitions. Somehow we always balanced the books.

Another job was to cultivate contacts with Farm Buildings advisors and researchers in nearby Europe- from France to Norway in advance of an extended visit there at the start of 1967. This was because after my interview, I was encouraged to apply for a Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship to collect information on

farm buildings and on farm waste management. This would finance up to ten weeks travelling, but in the depth of winter.

The staffing of the Centre grew steadily in the early years. When I joined there was already a Director (Peter Broad) and his secretary plus a librarian and receptionist. The five large clearing banks had been persuaded to sponsor two researchers into micro economics (Nick Noton, at FBC) and macro economics (Berkeley Hill, elsewhere) of Farm Buildings.

Nick Noton was an amazing fellow; such a shame he died so young (stomach cancer). He was a great help to me, and we quickly formed a lifelong friendship. He contributed ideas and hands on work for exhibitions as well as reviews and building drawings for the Digest. All this advice in addition to his work on the economics of investing. His workload was outstanding. He also made time to invent a circular slide-rule-like calculator to help investment choices. Later he worked with Texas instruments to produce software for a special calculator. He was also a skilled painter and house restorer. What a range of talents!

From the start the Director and his team had been producing the Farm Buildings Digest which mostly consisted of brief summaries of articles, reports and books gathered by the library. It was a modest affair produced on a hand operated Roneo duplicator. The team was soon expanded by recruiting from the Farmer's Weekly 'Farm Buildings' team a journalist Agricultural Engineer (Andrew Cooley) and his assistant with a degree in Agriculture (Patience Minister). The staffing was completed with a generalist (Ron Hewson) and another secretary.

The publication team set to work on a new, larger glossy printed quarterly publication still called 'Farm Buildings Digest'. Its contents were greatly expanded to include technical articles, economic assessments and detailed write-ups of individual buildings.

Though much of the Showground consisted of buildings that were empty except in July, the RASE had set up permanent demonstration areas, open all year. These included the Pig Unit, Poultry Unit, Calf Unit, Dairy Unit etc.

Their buildings and the changes made to them provided plenty of raw materials for articles and building reports.

In parallel the FBC had set up advisory panels to help assemble information. The members were known experts in their area and serviced by FBC helped produce publications such as 'Sheep Housing', 'Dairy Housing' etc. Our publications duo organised the printing.

These contacts (and the FBA's annual Spring Conference Tour) helped provide connections to interesting buildings that could be featured in the Digest.

At the end of my first year, I set off in January on my Churchill travels. It was a great trip. The researchers and Farm Buildings advisors were wonderfully friendly and generous with their time explaining their work and showing me their publications and taking me on appropriate farm visits.

It coincided with a Foot and Mouth outbreak in the UK. My French hosts understandably asked me to swop from visiting them first to visiting them last on my travels. My German hosts seemed unconcerned so I began in Bonn. An average day consisted of finding an Advisory Centre or a Research Institute and ended with finding a modest hotel. Meanwhile I spent the day mostly in one-to-one conversations learning about their ways of working, the publications they produced, the advice they gave and the experiments they had conducted. This was supplemented with visits to farms. I was extremely fortunate that almost all of my hosts spoke a lot of English. I did not often use all of my phrase books and dictionaries. However we were all greatly helped by a thick German book containing illustrations of everything agricultural along with their local names in six Northern European languages. This enabled me to learn all the technical names and to understand the publications and my hosts to check the English terms. Some days involved travel from one area to another, and at weekends there were options to be a tourist. But it was mid-winter and with temperatures often below -10°C

My route took me from Germany through Denmark to Sweden and then Norway. Next were Holland, Belgium and France. At the end it was the beginning of April with warmer weather and the first signs of Spring.

The Churchill Memorial Trust is as active as ever today. Once a year they interview hundreds of applicants before approving about 150 Travelling Fellowships. Previous Fellows remain in contact, so this has resulted in a super network of many experts always ready to help one another.

If you have ambition, do apply! There are normally about ten categories, and these mostly change each year.

After my return there was a report to write up and publications to go into the library. More significant was preparing for a special exhibit and demonstrations at the next Royal Show. We were allocated a big area next to the Pig Unit that overlooked a large field about 30 metres below. At the top we had a display of equipment for handling and spreading solid and liquid farm waste. This was supplemented by an information centre with a specially produced free newspaper. At the bottom were frequent live demonstrations of working spreaders and tankers supplemented by a running commentary by members of the Ministry's Mechanisation specialists. It all went very well and proved to be the forerunner of several similar focussed events at Stoneleigh and around the country. I was privileged that the Director of the Churchill trust came for the day and we were allocated a white Landrover so we could drive around the showground amongst the crowds.

Back at the Centre life returned to the usual and this continued for several years but then Peter Broad left and moved back to Sweden in 1969. Peter Buckler covered as Acting Director until the appointment of David Long who came from *Farmers Weekly* and *Farming Press*.

The Centre then became more ambitious, took on two more staff, and in particular arranged some special events. These were one-day events at several locations, such as Agricultural Colleges, around the country. They

comprised of several talks and questions about various farm buildings topics. They were also supplemented with lots of publications.

David Long then left in 1974 and was replaced by Bruce Brockway as Director. Nick Noton had left to rejoin the family firm, John Young left to take a post in Dorchester. Andrew Cooley left to establish his own newspaper "Agrifind" and was replaced by Ken Court. Then finally I left in 1974 to join the ADAS Farm Buildings Group.

The Ministry's Farm Buildings Group (FBG) was a specialist team within the Agricultural Land Service (ALS). It was staffed predominately by Chartered Surveyors plus a sprinkling of Architects and Engineers. (Mostly Structural rather than Agricultural). In Reading we had a Quantity Surveyor too. We were based in the five Regional Offices: Reading, Bristol, Cambridge, Wolverhampton and Leeds plus Aberystwyth in Wales.

They initially offered a free comprehensive service to anyone involved with farm buildings whether farmer, landowner, builder or equipment supplier. They collected information from the Ministry's Experimental farms as well as other researchers and designers. They produced some publications and helped with Ministry exhibits at agricultural shows. This was at a time when there were substantial Government grants for farm buildings.

Later when obliged to be 'commercial' and charge for much of their time, they offered Design and Supervision services for fees. Customers included farm businesses as well as Agricultural Research premises and prison farms.



The newspaper style information leaflet produced by David Allott for the 1970 Royal Show. It remains remarkably good advice and topical 55 years later.

**Clive Mander writes . . .**

I joined the staff at the FBC early in September of 1970. Previously I had served an engineering apprenticeship with Massey Ferguson in Coventry. My last year had been spent at the West of Scotland College at Auchincruive. I had enjoyed it very much there; it was very formative in my subsequent career and I left with three credits in different subjects and a distinction in Field Engineering. Although at this time I had no intention of leaving Massey Ferguson I had increasingly become interested in the mechanical feeding of livestock and it had been suggested by my tutor, Andy Viech that I might approach a company in Holland called Big Dutchman.

As mentioned I had no thought of leaving MF initially but many push/pull factors developed in what became a quite turbulent time for me in personal terms. Nevertheless by chance I discovered that a position was available at the Farm Buildings Centre since it had always been intended to have an agricultural engineer on the staff. Prior to my appointment I had travelled

to London for an interview by an FBC sponsor (CONSTRADO) which entailed some tough questioning but I had developed some thoughts and strong ideas of my own.

At the same time a redundancy programme at MF was in mid flow. My old job as a service instructor on harvesting machinery was no longer available. Many of the older people in their 50s who had helped me so much technically, were being made redundant which upset me, and also the knowledge that MF were always going to build a bigger tractor and a bigger combine. So what? I just instinctively knew and was convinced that everything around a farm-steading involving livestock had yet to change and modernise in some way. Livestock husbandry was a massive materials handling exercise with little machinery. It was nearly all physical work by hand. The husbandry issues were something you were expected to notice whilst you mauled at the former. Livestock farming was hard graft until the animals could be turned out to grass in the spring.

It didn't take long to settle and enjoy the Farm Building Centre. The staff were good to be with and the whole showground buzzed with excitement and interest. I guess at that time 120-150 people worked permanently there.

The advertisement features a red and white color scheme. At the top, it says '„HYDROP“ Big Dutchman' in a stylized font. Below this is a photograph of a long line of white pigs in a trough. To the right of the photo, the text reads 'A unique, fully automatic wet-feeding system'. At the bottom left, there is a small image of the 'HYDROP' machine itself. To the right of this image, three bullet points list the benefits: 'More profit for the pig farmer', 'Low investment per pig', and 'Enormous labour saving'.

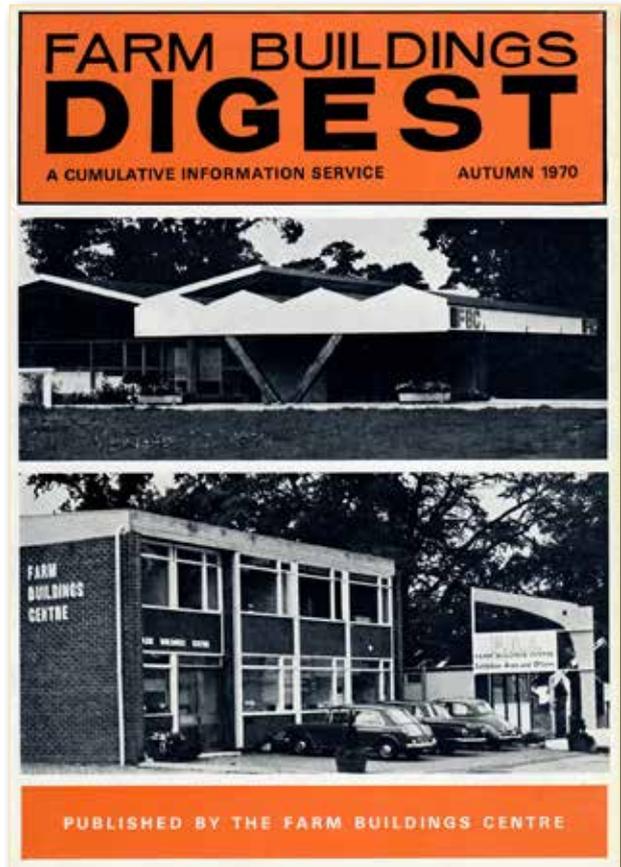
What I soon appreciated was that being a showground and everything highly visible, it demanded the highest standards of animal husbandry and management of the various organisation and enterprises. These were the top people at the top of their game, and I was privileged to know and work with them.

I don't ever remember a routine day at the FBC because so much was going on. John Young was Office Manager with David Allott as Technical Officer and in charge of the exhibition unit. Myra Southorn was Receptionist and greeted everybody with a big smile, and that was important as we had many casual visitors. Ron Hewson was Caretaker and kind of gap filler. The library was an important function of the centre operated by Renee and later Katerina Hough. At the time of my appointment Peter Buckler acted as part time director, since Peter Broad had recently left and it took time to install David Long as new director. At this time there was no editor for the FBC *Farm Buildings Digest*. The publication was contracted out to a London outfit. This was disastrous and Patience Minister soon returned as Editor of the *Digest*.

No two working days were ever the same. One of the continuous tasks was to review incoming periodicals, magazines and technical papers and write an abstract for inclusion in the *Digest*.

Another was to write Building Reports, which were simple descriptions of buildings of merit we had seen for others to appraise or copy. A dimensional drawing was also included. It was easy for me to begin to produce these drawings albeit with a few changes. For buildings on the showground, a set of meteorological data was included. The various instruments to continually record temperature and humidity were on loan from the Met office. Thus I got to know the staff on the livestock units extremely well as I visited weekly to collect data. It wasn't long before I began to fabricate and weld small items such as sluice gates for the units and make repairs during my evenings and weekends.

It had been envisaged by Peter Buckler that the beef cattle sector would soon change and develop. Prices were rising. Some large fattening units did exist and in addition to traditional grass beef systems, was a system known as Barley



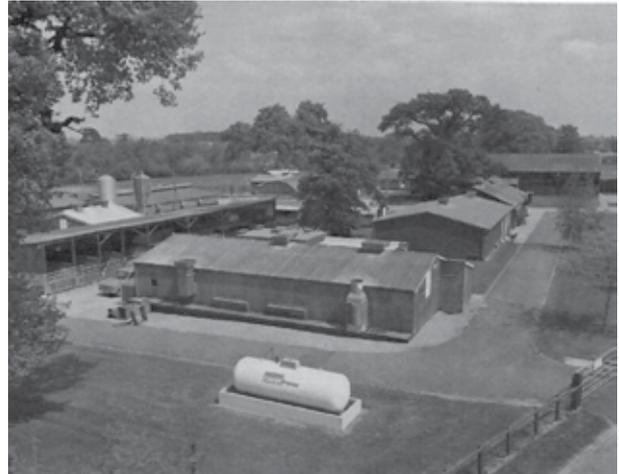
Beef. Since the market price of barley was very low, it was possible to feed cattle intensively on rolled barley and finish them fat in about 10 months. This was a high cost but high return venture. Moreover with capital investment the barley could be stored in a sealed tower (anaerobic) without the cost of drying and then more easily rolled or crushed before being fed to the animals. Another technique was to treat the barley with propionic acid which prevented any moulds developing. As ever Peter Buckler had insights into the industry, possibly assisted by his family background as butchers. He had decided that the FBC should produce a report on Beef Cattle Housing to provide guidance. It was to be my task to produce this report and I hadn't got a clue where to start. There were endless variables and each farm seemed to have its own individual system. I ducked it all for a short while and concentrated on the other things I could do. It was one of those loose but well understood relationships that in return for RASE support for the FBC, the centre provided technical assistance to the various livestock units. This also kept the centre up to date with livestock husbandry and helped us always understand the reason "why".

These were terrific and enjoyable times as John Young and I travelled the country and I was often back seat passenger to Keith Thornton and John as they sought out what might be the next development for the pig unit. Their joint National Service background was also a catalyst between them.

Once decisions had been made, it became my task to organise and get new buildings up and working ready for the next Royal Show. Effectively I became Clerk of Works for all the showground units. This work I enjoyed immensely and ultimately led to another big change for me.

Eventually the beef housing report couldn't be delayed any longer. Partly it was politics because the Centre always needed to be seen to be producing 'something' by the sponsors and supporters.

Previously the published works of Nick Noton had been highly regarded but his commitments now lay increasingly elsewhere and his work for the Centre almost stopped by this time. PB needed something to shout about. I was to produce it, but was lost. The Ministry of Agriculture were also very supportive of the Centre at this time



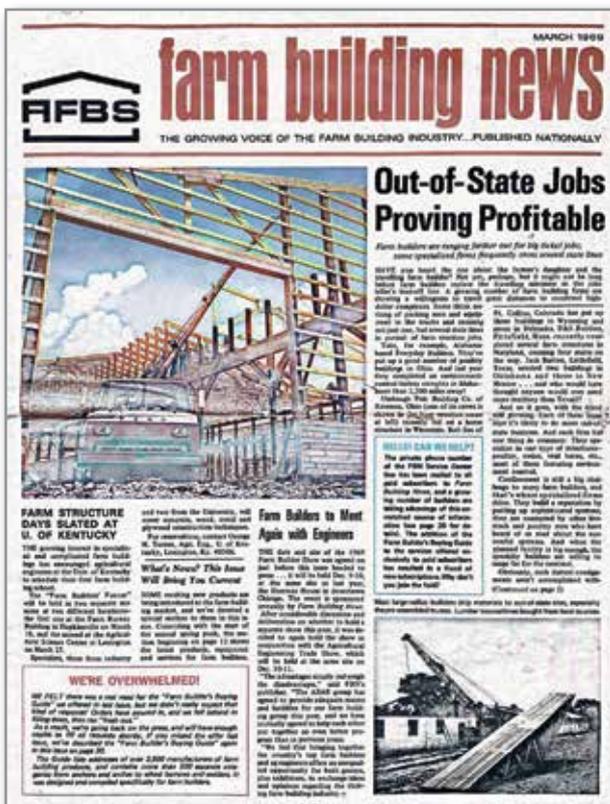
The Pig Demonstration Unit

and they also looked for value for money. PB then played one of his aces!

He organised what he called a Beef Seminar around a formal dinner at the Clarendon Hotel in Leamington Spa on the 25<sup>th</sup> November. As a newcomer I don't remember all the attendees but mostly it involved senior NAAS and ALS personnel who seemed keen to meet and express their views and keep up to date.

The discussion around the table was very wide ranging and although I had been introduced and my task of producing a beef housing report mentioned and thought a good idea by all concerned, I was near despair. The discussion was going round in circles. I was finding no guidance in the slightest. It was then that a senior advisor by the name of Bill Dempsey spoke up. He said in certain parts of the country straw is abundant and cheap. In other parts it is minimal and has to be transported large distances and is expensive. Taken then with the economic availability of various animal feeds varying throughout the country and preferred method of feeding, these factors all combine to dictate what design of building is appropriate for each farm.

In just a few clear words Bill gave me the framework I needed. I was away: I had a plan. It became a very enjoyable informative time as I toured all parts of the country looking at cattle housing and systems. I visited Wilfred Cave both in Hampshire and Cornwall, David Soutar at the SFBIU and David McGill in Northern Ireland amongst many many others. The regional Ministry offices were extremely helpful in providing lists of



suggested farms to visit in their area. The Ministry also operated their own experimental husbandry farms in those days (EHF) and each tended to have its own speciality within its locality.

My biggest difficulty was making cold telephone calls to all the farms I visited to ask permission. Long before mobile telephones, it was invariably the farmer's wife who answered and I needed to make a request for a particular time and date. Although initially weary of my call, no-one ever refused me permission to visit.

The first section of my report was produced in the *Farm Buildings Digest* of Spring 1972. To relate what I had seen on my travels into an acceptable written form was a great failure for me initially and my work was handed back two or three times until I could learn to express what I knew in a meaningful form. The new editor of the *Digest*, Patience Minister, helped me most with guidance I have valued ever after.

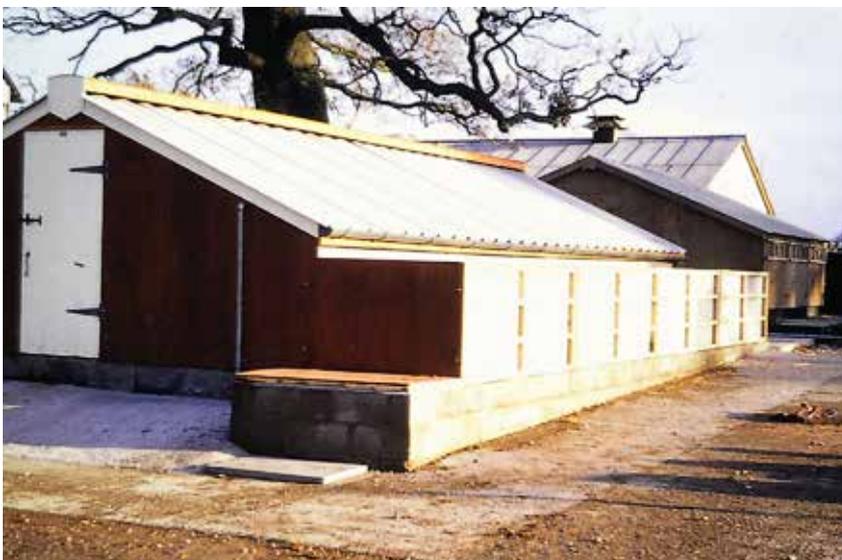
After nearly 55 years may I be forgiven for being proud of what I wrote. It is still topical and valid and contains many insights into what subsequently happened. I never did actually write the concluding part of the Beef Cattle Housing Report due to other changes in circumstances.

As mentioned the RASE rationale for support for the FBC in turn supporting the development of the showground livestock units worked extremely well. This was Peter Buckler's vision and modus operandi absolutely. He had a foot in each camp and it worked with no written agreement or protocols. Again this was very formative to me

because mostly I was involved with Keith Thornton and the pig unit which was industry leading and the first point of contact for any media interest including TV. The other units included beef, dairy, sheep and poultry. They were mostly staffed by employees of the various feed companies, who were the main sponsors. They were all profitable and first class examples of their type.

Following David Allott's success with the 'Muck Events' a farm waste unit was also established with the intention being that a degree of experimentation might be possible with each specific manure rather than it all heaped together as farmyard manure (FYM). Separating middens were coming into vogue because the polluting liquid factor could be collected and treated separately. The waste unit was not a great success for many practical reasons exacerbated by a child drowning.

Another idea from David Allott developed from a wish to facilitate better access to the exhibition buildings, was to construct a concrete road as a practical demonstration of laying concrete during the 1971 Royal Show. I was tasked with getting the site prepared and given countless smaller jobs. The demonstration was run with the enthusiastic cooperation of Maurice Barnes of the Cement & Concrete Association (CCA). Maurice was a great FBA and FBC supporter. Maurice would organise the supply of concrete in turn from all the big ready mix concrete suppliers. Because of the distance sometimes competitors' trucks would fill at the local Smiths Concrete quarry.



*The Brian Thomas Weaner House described which changed CMs career path*



#### *FARM ROAD DEMONSTRATION*

*Over the years with Maurice Barnes of the CCA, we concreted many of the showground roads as a demonstration during the Royal Show*

Martin Dykes of the C&CA gave a running commentary on the proceedings as we laid a small bay of concrete four times a day. I had recruited a gang of lads for the project. It was all a resounding success with possibly 500 people watching each demonstration. So many were unused to the concept of a slump test, the advisability of a polythene membrane and the necessity for construction joints. The effect of a vibrating beam to compact the concrete was magic many had never seen.

This live demonstration was repeated in similar style in 1972. Thereafter Maurice arranged with the RASE to concrete many of the hardcore side roads around the showground. I contracted to prepare the site and carry out these demonstrations alongside the CCA for many years after. I also learnt a great deal about concrete.

In so many ways these were exciting times and through our contacts and members, we at the FBC soon got to hear of any new systems or innovation, with an invitation to visit. On occasion I would travel with Ray Dalton, the RASE Farm Manager.

I particularly remember seeing a mobile grass drying outfit called Hayflake Systems. The fuel crises of this period soon killed off all the grass drying plants around the country although the product was of excellent quality compared to hay or silage. Another innovation pioneered by Hubert Witton from near Newark was the ensiloader imported from America. It was in effect the first complete diet feeder rather than "forage box" which we were used to. Part of the system

used a specialist cutter at the silage face which left the face true and vertical thereby greatly reducing any secondary fermentation and waste. The advent of block silage cutters had the same desired effect but was a year or two away and needed fair hydraulic power and loader reach.

In 1972 as effectively Clerk of Works I was responsible for organising the base works and erection of a Brian Thomas veranda house for weaner piglets as pictured above. The outside slatted runs are situated over two separate slurry channels. The whole building was only about 15m long. From a standing start Pat and Mick worked very hard over a weekend to build the channels of concrete blocks.

It was a grand job except that the two channels were 18 inches out of parallel. It would not do. After strong suggestion from them that I could wriggle the superstructure of the building over their channels a little and all would be well, I had to insist that they demolished and started again. This they did with surprising good humour although I felt terrible insisting – but it really wouldn't do.

When I asked about how they managed the mistake it turned out that Pat had put his line on the wrong side of the block – being 9 inches out and Mick had put his line on the other making 18 inches. At some point through the weekend they must have realised their mistake and rather than seek guidance, they had continued until completion.

Many of the contractors we were using from Coventry were more attuned to domestic work where everything is rendered, plastered or painted. They thought farm buildings would be easy and nothing much mattered. This attitude, the block work problem, obvious inefficiencies, lack of appropriate machinery and equipment made me think "Surely someone can do better?" This was the moment I decided there could be a market for a specialist farm building contractor. Farmstead Engineering was formed in Aug/Sept 1972.

David Long, as Centre Director, started in January 1972 and, once in post, David, ex-editor of *Farmbuildings* soon began to reorganise us. None of us were sure it made much difference, the

changes all sounded good but did involve a lot of treacle. For instance he demanded a carbon copy of every letter or piece of correspondence. No problem to me if he wanted to cover his backside in paper but the secretaries found it difficult. David Long couldn't keep a secretary himself for very long. Because he lodged away from home he would often work until 7.30 or 8.00 in the evenings. It was deadly to be called to his office at 4.45pm because it was impossible to escape for two hours or more. Nothing transpired that couldn't have been sorted in 10 minutes. On the other hand I always got on well with him once I had developed a stock list of reasons why I needed to be away soon after 5.00pm!

When David Long became Director, I began writing appraisals of automatic cluster removal equipment and buyers guides to liquid feeding systems for pigs. All work I greatly enjoyed and perhaps peripheral to farm buildings but I always thought members needed to be aware of developments because it might affect the layout of the buildings they were involved with.

In the August of 1972, I gave my notice to the FBC because for the reasons noted I had made the decision to begin contracting specifically for farm buildings. It was not too difficult a decision since I had few commitments although my salary was £1,500.00pa – good for the times. The building trades were pushing for £1/hour and I thought if I could make 75p I could survive and see what happened. I had the idea, but didn't know if I had a market. A number of factors helped. There was a lot of market activity with buoyancy in the dairy sector and many cow kennels and the like being erected together with undue optimism of high Common Market prices. There was also a 40 % farm buildings grant available. I never had difficulty with bad debts because the farmer needed a written receipt before claiming the grant. I also resolved never to subcontract to others because I was sure I could find my own work and industrial history is littered with stories of sub contractors who never got paid. Fortunately I was quick enough and lucky enough to register the name of "Farmstead Engineering" and I did what the label said I did.

David Long then made a very generous offer which suited us both. He wanted me to continue

to work part time: two days a week for the centre and to run the Meetings and Exhibition Department. As suggested this was excellent for me because I didn't have a known market or an accepted place within it.

The Meetings and Exhibitors Department sounded very grand for such a small establishment but with the able assistance of Joyce Brankston we became responsible for the exhibition building, the Royal Show and the Dairy Event plus other meetings and events. Fortunately David Allott kept an involvement with the exhibition buildings because they were really his baby. For the Royal Show in 1973, we staged an exhibit of various cow kennel and cubicle division together with a demonstration of concrete block laying, milking parlour painting and surfacing for walls and cement rendering by CCA demonstration. We also liaised closely with the RASE as they ran "clinics" on aspects of pig, beef and dairy management for example.

One of David Long's other big ideas was that we should organise regional meetings or Expos as he chose to call them, to engage with a local audience. The theory was very sound but there was never a big enough local interest to make a profit, but again I roamed the country seeking venues for our events.

It was all interesting to me to take a van full of ridge ventilation models to the Royal Welsh Show and I staged a fairly major stand at the Dairy Event at the Great Yorkshire Showground at Harrogate in 1973 demonstrating new products and ideas. UPVC drainage systems were just coming into vogue and I excavated, by hand, a series of trenches for a demonstration.

David Long was thrilled to bits if I wrote a simple report after such events together with five or six copies.

On one significant occasion early in 1974, I had a call from one of our manufacturing members from Poole in Dorset: Ted Everett of Lo-Cost Buildings. Ted explained that he had an inventor type of brother-in-law who had developed a machine that could automatically detect mastitis in milk. Was I interested to see? David Long instantly gave me permission to go so I made a very early start and was at Teds' office by 9.00am. I transferred to Ted's car along with his brother as we travelled



to a small factory unit at Swanage on the coast. What I so clearly remember was the discussion in the car that morning. It was the three day week. Due to the Miners' strike and the awful time of Ted Heath's government, electrical power was only available to manufacturing companies for three days each week. The ramifications were awful and the brothers were commenting on how every single item used in their buildings from steel, the aluminium cladding they used, timber, bolts and roof fixings had all risen in price over the last ten days by about 10%. There was every expectation of further rises within a few months. Power was so short that TV companies were ordered to close down at 10.30pm each evening and pubs were ordered to close. It was all a very sad and serious time for the country and its politics. The internet can provide more detail.

On meeting Phil Denne of Seldown Electronics I was soon way out of my depth. The language consisted of bits and bytes and of interfacing various things, of terminals, of light currents and heavy currents and transponders. I had come to see something that automatically detected mastitis. What I was looking at was a simulated milking parlour rig with all the control terminals

in place – the hardware (I had just managed to figure out what software might mean). After a long period of me nodding and saying “yes” in what I thought was the right place, I caught on. I called a total stop and said we have to start all over. What you have here is a total computer management system for dairy cows. ‘Yes’ came the answer. Wow I thought because I could immediately see the implications. 80 cows per man was pretty much the industry standard. There were bigger herds but staffed by more men.

The gist of this revolution was that once the computer could recognise the cow it could record her milk yield and any variation, it could feed her, it knew when she calved, it knew when she was likely to come back on heat, it could perhaps weigh her as a routine and it could possibly detect mastitis in her milk by its change in thermal conductivity. This was the very start of the revolution in dairy management that has become universal. It is universal because it relieved the herdsman of the need to recognise and know each cow. If a cow does not produce a calf once a year she does not produce milk. A calving index of 365 days is an important efficiency standard and a computer is an infallible aide memoir. 80 cows/man was no longer the limit, the limit was now how many hours each day he wished to spend actually milking cows for 365 days a year. The advent of robot milking systems is currently revolutionising this factor. Artificial intelligence is likely to move management forward again as it monitors individual animals continuously.

As I landed back on Earth, I was asked now you are the first to see it, what can you do for us? I knew The Dairy Farming Event was due at the Showground in late April followed by the Royal Show in July and I made the suggestion that we might have space in our exhibition buildings if he

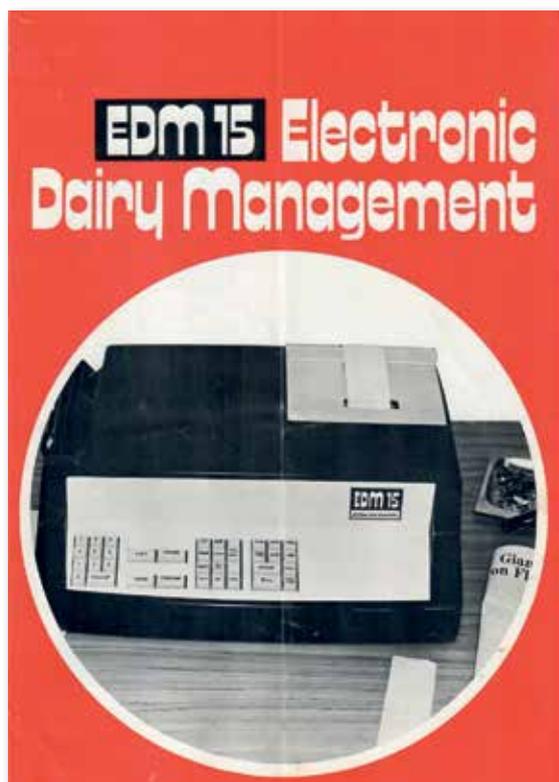
The company Seldown Electronics did receive some investment by a large dairy farmer after the Dairy Event. He had made his own attempt at electronic management using a Japanese programmable calculator. To the best of my knowledge, the venture was ultimately absorbed by Alpha Laval (milking machine manufacturers) and Phil Denne worked with them. I had been offered a directorship if I invested but I was in the process of buying a house so I declined.

were prepared to install the demonstration rig there, because I thought people needed to see it, to appreciate it. David Long at his best again. He readily accepted my judgement and all was installed for the show.

Of significance to me was the enormous buzz on the showground. By midday on the first day of the Dairy Event, there was scarcely a significant dairy farmer in the country who had not been to look at this exhibit.

Today no dairy farm works without a computer management and control system exactly as pioneered by Phil Denne. The snag was it was just a few years ahead of its time so there was no immediate market, the computer and electronics industry was developing and changing so fast and prices were falling, so it paid to wait. All so very tough on someone who didn't get the recognition he deserved. I described it all in the spring edition of *Farm Buildings Digest* in 1974.

In late 1973 Derek Pearce was elected new chairman of the FBC council. By early spring 1975 he had sacked me. The centre was not paying its way and rationalisation was necessary. This was not a surprise. David Long had left already and I had a business that was small but thriving. I could no longer afford to lose two days a week, but I was forever grateful for the opportunity gifted.



## John Young writes about his farm building journey

After graduating from the College of Estate Management I needed two year's practical experience to gain qualification as a Rural Surveyor. I joined the Agricultural Land Service of MAFF in Taunton in 1961 and found myself dealing with applications for grant under the Farm Improvement Scheme. After two weeks accompanying other ALS staff on farm visits I was sent out with a pile of files. The Taunton office covered Somerset and Dorset with a sub-office in Dorchester. It was a very busy time, particularly in West Country dairying areas. I had no training in farm buildings and had to learn from more experienced colleagues and from published information. Starting with simple jobs I gradually took on bigger projects. We provided an advisory service as well as administering the Scheme and encouraged farmers to seek advice prior to submitting an application for grant. We did not provide detailed plans and the quality of plans submitted varied from the occasional very good to a basic sketch from the local builder. The national building manufacturers provided good advice and plans for their products but this was only part of the job. There were few architects or surveyors with the expertise or desire to take on farm building projects which were rarely profitable. However, most jobs were completed satisfactorily and the change from cowsheds to loose housing, parlours, self-feed silage and later cubicles revolutionised the dairy industry. As I had become a farm building adviser I was keen to learn more and was interested in the Farm Building Centre at Stoneleigh. When MAFF decided to support the FBC by seconding an ALS officer I applied and was selected. I joined in 1967 with Peter Broad in charge. He left the next year and Peter Buckler took over as Acting Director. David Allott has described those years at the FBC. Much of my time was taken up with the development of the NAC Livestock Units and showing visitors around. Most work was on the Pig Unit working with Keith Thornton on the redevelopment of the Unit. We travelled the country visiting farms and persuading manufacturers to put up one of their buildings

at the NAC. My liaison work involved visiting the MAFF Regions to promote the work of the FBC. Some were more enthusiastic than others but the links were established.

The FBA spring conferences were the most effective way of making contacts and visiting interesting buildings and the FBA Journal was a source of most useful information. David Allott and I toured Scotland to see how advice and development should be done and sat at the feet of the doyen of farm buildings, David Soutar. The Scottish Farm Building Investigation Unit led the way in taking forward new ideas and good practice was spread through the Colleges. I relied on their publications when I lectured on farm buildings at the Royal Agricultural College and later at the College of Estate Management.

After four years at the FBC I went back to the ALS in Dorset. There I met with Geoffrey Parsons who had a small farm in West Dorset. On his Wiltshire farm he developed the idea of a ventilated roof by fixing the roof sheets upside down so that there was a gap between each sheet instead of an overlap. He was an adviser to the Crown Estates and was concerned that the wide span multi-purpose buildings beloved of large landowners lacked the ventilation required for livestock. He had persuaded the Crown to put up a building with a ventilated roof on their estate at Tomintoul in the Highlands and wanted me to go up there with him. I told him that my patch was Dorset and that North of Scotland College provided advice in the Highlands. However, he is a persuasive man and I went with him to Scotland having told Seaton Baxter what I was doing. The North College developed the ventilated roof concept and it is still adopted as necessary in wide span livestock buildings.

After four years in Dorset I went back to the NAC as Head of the ADAS Unit across the road from the FBC. I kept up my interest in farm buildings and chaired the FBC Council. In 1978 I went to the Royal Agricultural College as Head of the Estate Management Department and lectured on farm buildings, trying to keep up to date by going on FBA spring conferences.

## **Jim Loynes joined the FBIC (Farm Buildings Information Centre) in 1979 and contributed this about the FBC**

The FBC offices were staffed all year round by a manager and a team of technical information officers, which included a librarian and several support staff. It is worth noting here that by the Winter 1973 issue of the *Farm Buildings Digest* (p2), staff numbers had steadily increased and had reached a total of 24!

An Executive Committee and Council, made up of elected members, was established quite early in the life of the Centre, with a Chairman, Honorary Treasurer and other officers appointed to help guide and support the manager and the staff, and to help prepare the annual budgets and oversee the general activities of the Centre, that the Centre would run throughout the year to raise revenue and make it financially secure.

In order to become financially independent, the Centre set up a membership and information subscription scheme in an attempt to provide a regular income. To increase the income, the Centre hired out space in the exhibition halls, throughout the year and in particular during NAC shows and events, to show relevant and topical exhibits to visitors. The Centre also held quantities of manufacturers information sheets and trade literature for the visitors to take away or to be included as part of the technical information service, which for a modest fee was mailed to the subscribers on a regular basis. The staff also produced a quarterly journal, the *Farm Buildings Digest*, which was mailed to subscribers four times a year.

The primary aim of the FBC was to collect, collate and disseminate information to all those that asked for it, but the centre staff were not engaged in research activities, but merely reported on others research and topics of interest through their quarterly journal the *Farm Buildings Digest*.

The Centre's financial position fluctuated year on year, by generating some income from the above activities, but never really produced sufficient surplus to be able to maintain or

expand their business and for many years had to rely on the financial support of other organisations and from the Ministry of Agriculture.

There were many major developments taking place in the UK over this time; as far as farm buildings design, construction and legislation were concerned, and over the next decade the Farm Buildings Industry, and farming in general, entered what turned out to be a time of considerable change! A notable factor influencing change to UK agriculture and national policies – particularly those affecting Government funding – started in the build-up to and after the UK joined the EEC on 1st January 1973.

On 1st January 1971 the Centre was able to appoint a new full time director – David Long. With a substantial increase in the financial support (grant) from MAFF having been negotiated by the then FBC Chairman, Peter Trumper, coming into effect from August 1971 with the block grant of £15,000 for 1972 then being reduced by £3,000 per year over the following 5 years – in which time it was hoped that the Centre would be financially independent. The Centre was also receiving support from MAFF via the ALS with the secondment of John Young.

From around 1971 onwards, the financial situation across the country was seriously affecting the viability of agriculture and the Centre. Nick Noton, reported at the FBA winter conference, on 6th December 1973, that inflationary costs had risen at a rate of 2% per month and over the 1971 to 1973 period, total costs had increased by 118%, putting real pressure on all businesses. Furthermore, over this time, MAFF grants for new buildings had been reduced from 40% to 20%, further increasing pressure on farming.

Among other relevant developments at this time (1974) we saw the formation of the 'Architects in Agriculture' group, with the aim of trying to encourage farmers and farm building manufacturers to use Architects in the design of rural/agricultural buildings and

to put more emphasis on their appearance. Notable FBA and FBC members on the 'steering committee' were Peter Clarke, George Fardon, John Weller, Nick Woodhams and David Soutar.

Sometime in 1974 the FBC received the offer of an anonymous donation of £2,500, provided the Centre could match this amount, to finance the appointment of a 'young farm manager' for at least 2 years, after which it was hoped that the appointment would be self-financing. It was the wish of the donors that the person appointed would be employed to 'garner information from farmers for farmers' and for the general benefit of members of the FBC. The successful applicant was Bruce Brockway, who later contributed to the production of the excellent publications *Sheep Housing* and *Sheep Handling*, among other useful reports and articles featured in *Farm Buildings Digest*.

Back in November 1973, Derek Pearce was appointed as FBC Chairman. Little did we know of the developing challenging times ahead for the Government and the Country as a whole. Over the next two years, rapidly rising costs and the introduction of a 'three-day week' meant that the FBC had to cut costs and unfortunately, at the end of 1974, FBC Director, David Long, resigned and the ambitious programme of development he had started, only a couple of years earlier, had to be drastically cut. From the start of 1975, Peter Buckler was appointed for a short time to oversee the Centre but was not as closely involved as previously.

On a brighter note, in the spring of 1975, in the New Years Honours list, we saw the Secretary and Treasurer of the FBA, Bill Marshall, receive the award of MBE.

*Farm Buildings Digest* (Vol 10, No 2, Summer 1975), under the heading 'AGM Report', on page 1, reported that it was agreed at the FBC AGM, held on the 23 April 1975, that the 'Farm Buildings Centre' was to be renamed the 'Farm Buildings Information Centre' and that the insertion of the word 'information' in the Centres name would more accurately reflect the work of the Centre.

The above changes came about, in part, due to the situation described above, and at the AGM the Chairman, Derek Pearce, described the past year as 'a difficult and financially disappointing year' and that 'steps had been taken to bring the Centre back to its original function of collecting, collating and communicating farm building information, backed up by its library and its permanent exhibition of materials and components suitable for agricultural use. Full support from all sections of the membership has been maintained, the Ministry of Agriculture has confirmed its continuing grant, and the financial base and economy of the Centre has been strengthened.'

From that time on, the **Farm Buildings Centre (FBC)** would be known as the **Farm Buildings Information Centre (FBIC)**.

In the summer of 1975 John Perrott was appointed as the new Manager and Company Secretary of the FBIC.

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## **JOHN PERROTT**

by Clive Mander

John Perrott was a very capable man. He had been in a very senior position with Frank H Dale of Leominster. Dales were very influential early steel building manufacturers of portal frames. Indeed they seemed to conceive a new generation of steel fabricators in Herefordshire together with many contract erection gangs. They became particularly successful in Scotland selling wide span portal frame buildings because there were no local manufacturers in the late 60s and early 70s. John frequently travelled to Scotland, particularly the Black Isle, soon to be followed by building components and erectors all the way from Herefordshire.

Soon after he arrived at the FBC as manager, he was effectively poached by the RASE to become showground director. A big job that John was perfectly qualified for, but he always remained a good friend to the Centre and assisted in any way he could.

At a similar time the new National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham had opened and the

various trade union representatives had arrived alongside the London exhibition contractors vans. I had had experience with them at Earls Court and they were very difficult. What were the National Agricultural Centre and the Royal Show down the road they wondered. Potentially they could make things very awkward and disrupt the established working practices at the Showground. Since I was contracting on the livestock units I was not sure how I might have to respond but fortunately John Perrott had the stature, knowledge and authority to largely hold them off.

1976 was a very hot dry summer and I was aware of an Irish gang laying paving slabs on a bed of sand as a temporary base for many of the trade stands. This was a common routine and did not harm the grass for the few days of the show. Due to the intense heat they were starting work at 4.00am and finishing at midday or soon after. The unions stopped them doing this. Such was their power and control and a lot of courage was needed to stand against them.

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## **Myra Haywood [née Southorn] writes . . .**

When Clive asked me to write about my time at the Farm Buildings Centre, my answer was a definite 'No', but on reflection I now realise that it actually started me on my career journey and to what I am doing now – working with him to produce this valuable document.

I started work at the FBC in 1969, at the age of 19, and travelled there, from Longford in Coventry, and back by two buses, but sometimes getting a lift home from Clive in his crazy hand-built car and occasionally from PB (Peter Buckler).

I was originally employed as Receptionist/audio typist/copy typist/coffee maker/general 'dogs body', but actually I think they called it 'Girl Friday' in those days!

My role was very varied, but what I had to do regularly was type up copy for *Farm Buildings Digest* to be sent to the printer for them to produce galley proofs for Letterpress (hot metal) printing. Once the galleys were returned they were then pasted up on to page layouts for

the printers to follow to produce the finished publications. The whole process was very time consuming and laborious, quite different from the printing process today.

During my time at the FBC I was always fascinated by the very skilled signwriters who produced the information panels in the exhibition building. Watching them either painting by hand or using Letraset to place each letter on to the boards in just the right position and at an amazing speed.

Life at the FBC and the Showground was never dull and I met many people from all walks of life. I was part of Peter Buckler's team which organised the very first Town & Country Festival.

After leaving the Centre I went on to do various things, but the thing I excelled at was typesetting – first using an IBM golf ball machine, moving on to a typesetting machine which used coding for font sizes, styles etc, and then on to the first basic WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) desktop display.

In the late 1980s I used a little Macintosh Plus, one of the first few Apple computers in the Midlands, and have been using Mac for Desktop Publishing ever since.



*Myra with one of the Spring lambs from the Sheep Unit at the RASE (probably 1971)*

## Chapter 9

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# The Farm Buildings Information Centre [1975-1988]

by Jim Loynes

The *Farm Buildings Digest*, (Volume 10, Number 3, Autumn 1975), saw the Centre's name changed with no apparent fuss, fanfare or ceremony. However, regular visitors to the Centre might have noticed that the building had been recently decorated and the word 'Information' had been inserted into the lettering on the façade of the building and on its communications etc. The *Farm Buildings Digest* saw a modest change to the front cover layout, with the addition of the new FBIC logo and the words 'Journal of the Farm Buildings Information Centre' underneath it – replacing the old FBC logo.

Little did the staff at the Centre, the FBA and those in the agricultural buildings industry in general know of the momentous changes that would be levied upon us all over the coming decade!

The manager (John Perrott) and team were still tasked with maintaining relevant and topical exhibitions, in the extensive exhibition halls, and to collect and collate information from around the UK and abroad, to assemble the quarterly information packages for distribution to members and subscribers as part of the Information Service, or for including details in the journal and, more importantly, inclusion in the expanding library.

FBIC staff also continued to produce the Centre's quarterly journal, the *Farm Buildings Digest*, together with a range of new and updated FBIC publications. FBIC also sourced other relevant agricultural, farming and related publications from UK and worldwide publishers to offer them for sale to members and the wider public, or visitors, to the Centre. The publications included numerous general agricultural themed books and leaflets produced by external publishers, such as the Farming Press Books (who ceased trading in the 1990's), MAFF/ADAS, RIBA, CLA and C&CA etc. with the express aim of providing information to all who wanted or needed it!

While the FBIC was settling into the new way of working post its recent troubles, serious things were happening in the UK with regards to Farm Buildings Standards. The old British Standard covering farm buildings, *BS2053:1953 General Purpose Farm Buildings*, was to be revised and replaced. Note: The *BS2053 Code of Practice* was first published in 1953 and clearly needed to be updated to reflect the advances in construction and new farming systems that had been developed and adopted over the last 20+ years.

So, a new draft ***Code of Practice for Farm and Horticultural Buildings*** was produced by the BSI FHB1 committee, chaired by Nick Woodhams, an FBA member who, at that time, was an architect working as an ADAS Regional Farm Buildings Advisor, based at the MAFF/ADAS offices in Wolverhampton, and according to Bill Marshall (as he stated in the FBA 'News' page, of the Winter 1975/76 Farm Buildings Digest), the draft Code was now available for public comment.

The new *Code of Practice* was proposed to be published in three separate parts and was to be the 'first of its kind' to be a 'performance based' standard, which might make it easier for all new farm buildings to meet the requirements of the Building Regulations? However, at this time, only 'Part 1: General Considerations' had been drafted, with 'Part 2: Special Considerations', and 'Part 3: Appendices', expected to be published much later in the year. This meant that it was difficult to comment on the contents of Part 1 in isolation, since data contained in each part was inevitably linked to the other two parts! Wisely, Bill Marshall, went on to say; "This is some 'draft'. It's really hard and tiring work just to read." But he goes on to say: "It should be remembered that Codes of Practice are not mandatory documents. However, their production from the collected wisdom of many professionals, trades, and

*data sources, must be conducive to the general betterment of the matters with which they are concerned."* So, Bill looked forward to receiving any comments FBA members had, so that he could forward these to the BSI committee.

In the spring of 1976, the manager of the Centre, John Perrot, moved to the RASE as Showground Manager. On 1st February that year, Bruce Brockway was appointed FBIC manager. Bruce had joined the FBC staff as an Information Officer in May 1973, in response to an anonymous fund pledged to the Centre to employ a 'young farm manager'.

The financial position of the FBIC was still not that good and members saw a modest increase in charges for membership and the services offered by the Centre. It was hoped that the modest increases would improve the financial position at the FBIC. On top of this, staff at the Centre were now faced with interpreting, understanding and coming to terms with the new draft *Code of Practice for Farm and Horticultural Buildings* and how this might affect the design and construction of farm buildings and what effect this might have on the Centre and the membership and the services it offered them, should the new Code be adopted?

The next issue of the *Farm Buildings Digest* (Page 23, Vol 11, 1, Spring 1976) included the comments made by Bill Marshall and the FBA, as a representative body of people connected with farm buildings, which had been sent to the BSI committee secretary.

In general terms, the comments the FBA made were quite critical of the text and Mr Marshall suggested that the draft needs '*considerable revision and re-editing for the sake of clarity*' and went on to suggest, that the BSI committee should consider reorganising the layout of the document, as a loose-leaf format might be best. The FBA Technical and Development Committee also commented on much of the technical requirements and specific design data included in the draft and how this might have to be thoroughly checked and reorganised when Part 2 and Part 3 are drafted – since the parts were all dependent on each other and so these needed to be cross referenced without causing confusion?

The FBA also recommended that the title for the draft Code should be '*Code of Practice for Agricultural Buildings and Structures*' rather than for 'Farm and Horticultural Buildings.' Finally, Mr Marshall finished by questioning 'how the Code will fit in with the new Building Regulations', which were due to be published in September 1976?

The development of the Code seems to have stalled at that point and appeared to be put on the 'back burner' for some time, as far as activities and the work of the Centre was concerned. (In fact, the whole Code was being revised and would not appear in its new form, *BS5502: Buildings and Structures for Agriculture*, until late in 1979).

At the FBIC AGM of 1976, Maurice Barnes, of the Cement and Concrete Association (C&CA), who had been a member of the FBIC Executive for the last three years, resigned from the Executive, but remained as the C&CA representative on the FBIC Council, and was appointed Chairman of the FBA.

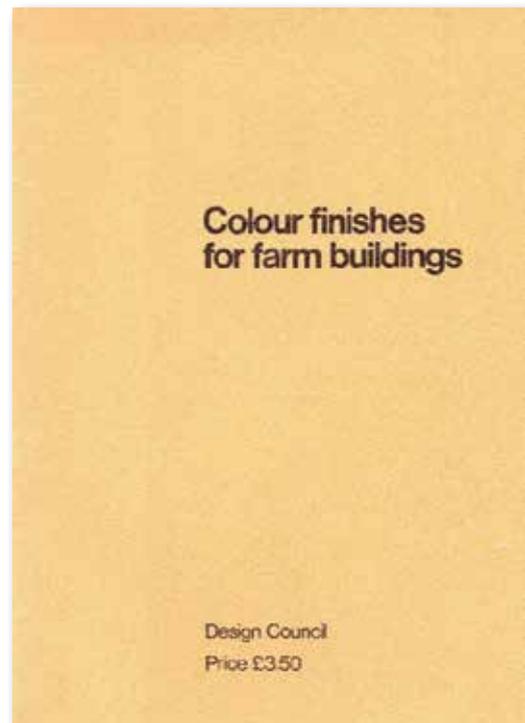
In the Autumn of 1976, it was noted that the then President of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), Mr Eric Lyons, had met with the former Minister of Agriculture, Mr Fred Peart, to discuss ways in which architects could make a bigger contribution to the design of farm buildings. Mr Lyons had said, 'There is increasing public concern about the crudely intrusive character of many farm buildings in the landscape, but I wanted to impress on the Minister that I believe architects can do a great deal to make buildings more convenient, efficient, and maintenance-free for farmers themselves.' It was reported that among the subjects discussed in their meeting, Mr Lyons, impressed on the Minister the role architects in the Ministry's own staff and architects in general could give farmers in choosing, siting and erecting standard 'package' buildings, as well as the help architects could give manufacturers and how they could contribute to research and development of farm buildings. Fortunately, he was not in favour of bringing farm building under more stringent planning control, but wanted to see the industry commission better buildings with the help of the RIBAs Architects in Agriculture Group.

The *Farm Buildings Digest* featured a series of articles from prominent persons involved in the farm buildings sector. These looked, in particular,

at the possibility of some form of 'planning control' on new buildings being introduced? This was partly due to the release of the draft new Code of Practice and the impact it might have on farm building design, as well as the general concern that farm buildings enjoyed favourable planning consideration yet were considered by much of the general public, to be erecting makeshift and shoddy buildings, even though many of these may have been partly financed by generous grants provided by the Government? There is a very interesting article highlighting these concerns, "The Future of Farm Buildings Control", by Mr John Weller ARIBA, in the *Farm Buildings Digest*, Volume 12, Summer 1977, page 12, which debated the 'whys and wherefores' of farm buildings design and standards, and what 'controls' they might be brought under in the future, due to increasing pressures to bring them in line with other 'industrial' type buildings and developments?

While the possible impact of the above was being considered by all those concerned with farm buildings design and construction, the BSI FHB1 committee, together with other sub-committees and associated specialists, were working on updating and revising the new draft '*Code of Practice for Farm and Horticultural Buildings*' in line with the comments received from interested parties, ready for publication of the definitive version in 1978.

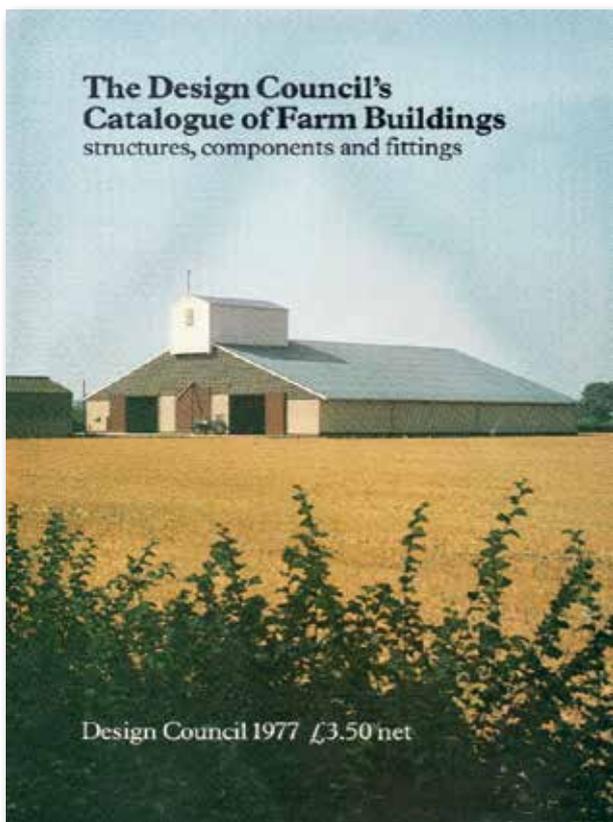
It is worth noting here, from 1961, for a period of nearly 15 years, while the general opinion that farm buildings were considered by many as being 'makeshift and shoddy', The Design Council, set up their 'Farm Building Advisory Committee' and a smaller 'Working Party' of notable specialists and experts in construction and architecture, including FBA member John Weller DipArch, to advise the Council, '*on the improvement of the design of farm buildings, with particular reference to building components for agricultural structures designed for industrial production in factories*'. The work of the working party, in co-operation with the Ministry of Agriculture and other interested bodies, including Professor Hardy of Newcastle University, presented several reports to the Design Council, and in 1975, the Design Council Farm Buildings Advisory Committee published '*Colour finishes for farm buildings*' as a design



guide for landowners, farmers, manufacturers, local authorities and amenity societies.

The Design Council's Farm Buildings Advisory Committee had been concerned for some time how to improve the general standard of buildings available to the farmer, that in November 1977 they published '*The Design Council's Catalogue of Farm Buildings*' (See the *Farm Buildings Digest* Vol 12, Winter 1977/78, page 3). The first catalogue of its kind, it listed all non-mechanical farm equipment, including structures, components and fittings. It was well illustrated throughout and had an editorial section which gave advice on the choosing, siting, appearance and maintenance of buildings. It was forwarded by Sir Henry Plumb, president of the NFU, where he spoke of 'the role of farmers as custodians of the countryside and their subsequent responsibility to choose buildings with care ensuring that they are in harmony with their surroundings'. He went on to say that the catalogue would 'provide farmers with enough information and advice to understand the problem and to make the right decisions.'

It was an invaluable publication, produced at a time when much change was taking place in agriculture and the farm buildings industry. Over 16,000 copies were sent out to landowners and farmers throughout the country, as well as copies



being sent to all MAFF Regional Offices, County Planning Departments, the NFU and the Country Landowners' Association, as well as the FBIC and related organisations.

In the Spring of 1978, the first and third parts of the long awaited, new three-part British Standard: **BS5502: 1978: Code of Practice for the Design of Buildings and Structures for Agriculture**. was finally issued. However, the draft of the second part had not been circulated for public comment with parts one and three in 1976, but the draft of Part 2 was eventually released for comment in 1979, and the revised and updated Part 2 was finally completed and published in 1981!

- ❖ The first part concerned, 'General Considerations', and was made up of eight separate sub-sections. (To more easily allow for amendments to be incorporated into any of the parts at a future date if necessary). The part covered general topics such as materials, design, construction and loading, as well as fire protection, insulation, services and human and animal welfare.
- ❖ The second part concerned, 'Special Considerations', and was made up of five separate sub-sections and covered the requirements for specific crops and livestock.

- ❖ The third part concerned, 'Appendices' and was made up of 12 separate sub-sections, and covered Legislation, technical data, relevant standards and other references applicable to farm buildings.

However, the primary issue now facing the Farm Buildings Industry was how to interpret the new standard and how to incorporate the design data and specifications required to comply with the new standard into their product portfolio? In some respects and more importantly, the industry needed to ensure that their customers would be able to claim any grant funding on their proposed development, and to show how their design and construction would meet the requirements of BS5502.

A new concept for all of us to get used to was that BS5502 introduced four classes of buildings with a design life ranging from:

- 2 years – for a Class 4 building,
- 10 years – for a Class 3 building,
- 20 years – for a Class 2 building, and up to 50 years – for a Class 1 building.

The classification of a building was also dependent on its location, purpose and [human] occupancy, with Class 1 being 'unrestricted' as far as purpose, location and occupancy, whereas a Class 2 building with a 20 year design life (being the classification most likely to be used by manufacturers) should normally have no more than a total of 6 hours human occupancy per day at a density not exceeding two persons per 50m<sup>2</sup> and no part of the building being nearer than 10m to a classified highway, or human habitation not in the same ownership. (See *Farm Buildings Digest* Vol 13, Summer 1978, page 3).

Mr Brockway, Manager of the FBIC said, on page 1 of the Spring 1978 issue of the *Farm Buildings Digest*: "Applications under the MAFF Grant Scheme increased by over 200% in 1977 ... the overall trend is encouraging ... However, any optimism about the future is currently being tempered by concern and uncertainty about the increasing amount of Legislation affecting farm buildings. The concern is over the pressure for more planning control both with regard to appearance and control of pollution. The uncertainty is felt over the likely implications of the Health and Safety at Work Act, and

particularly the new Code of Practice for the Design of Buildings and Structures for Agriculture which has recently been published.”

And he went on to say, on page 2: “With regard to planning, the Centre has been providing information to Planning Authorities to encourage a wider appreciation on their part of all aspects [of farm building design and function]. Many have almost a sole preoccupation with colour to the exclusion of other factors which in some cases are equally important.”

“With the Health and Safety at Work Act we have yet to see a clear account of its influence on the design and use of farm buildings and equipment. As with some legislation it appears that much will be decided on local interpretation.”

“Similarly with the Code of Practice – while not mandatory [yet!], it is not clear to what extent local authorities will regard it as such. The Ministry of Agriculture have said that the Code will be used as a ‘bible’ with regards for approval for grant aid, and for the time being will be used in parallel with BS 2053.”

Clearly the future of the farm building sector, and farmers wishing to erect a new building, were likely to face a difficult time ahead and may need to bear increased costs and possible restrictions as to what they would be able to develop and how they might eventually be able to use the building?

Another problem area in the new Code of Practice, highlighted by Mr Brockway as needing clarification, was “How local authorities and the Ministry would apply the concept of ‘notional life’ of the building, e.g. which Class of building will they require for a particular use? And, what will their approach be at the end of its classified life and/or when a change of use is proposed?”

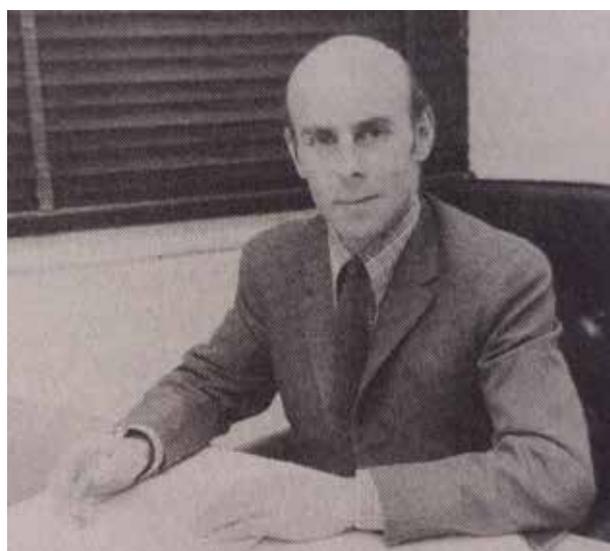
With so much interest in the new Code and the aspects (as illustrated above) that needed to be discussed and clarified, a special conference, sponsored by BSI, ADAS, FBIC, FBA and the RASE, was held at the NAC Conference Centre on the 30th January 1979. The papers presented at the conference were reported in full in the Spring and Summer editions of the Farm Buildings Digest.

It was also reported in the Spring edition of the Farm Buildings Digest, (in anticipation of the

expected difficulties in interpretation of the Code by all those involved with the design, use and construction of farm buildings), that the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food was in the process of setting up the Agricultural Construction Industry Liaison Group (ACILG), embracing all the major interests in farm and horticultural buildings. The terms of reference were to be:

- ❖ To consider problems concerned with the interpretation of British Standards, in particular BS5502 and make recommendations.
- ❖ To advise on the need for promotional material and development work related to British Standards.
- ❖ To advise on the need for information to stimulate the development of home and overseas markets.

In the summer issue of the *Farm Buildings Digest*, 1979, Mr Brockway, having attended the first meeting of the Advisory Committee to the ACILG, noted that the committee were concerned that the views of smaller firms should not be



Bruce Brockway, FBIC Manager 1976 to 1987

overlooked. So, the FBIC was to co-ordinate any problems and/or proposals brought to the attention of the Centre by firms and individuals in any sector of the industry including farmers, professionals and manufacturers, and FBIC would then relay these to the ACILG advisory committee. Similarly, the main organisations representing the timber, steel and concrete manufacturers on the Advisory Committee were prepared to receive

views of their members and non-members, and to take them to the advisory committee.

On the 22 October 1979, I joined the staff at the FBIC as the Assistant Information Officer.

Bruce Brockway was the Manager of the Centre, and the Centre was under the Chairmanship of Mr Derek Pearce. The financial position was reported to be slightly better than it had been in the past, with the outlook for the future looking promising.

This was a very busy time for the staff of the FBIC following the introduction of BS5502 and the recent formation of the ACILG. The need for better communication across all sectors was regularly highlighted by Mr Brockway in the *Farm Buildings Digest*!

The Winter issue of the *Farm Buildings Digest*, Vol 14, No 4, 1979/80, page 10, featured an article entitled 'Interpretation of BS5502 – ACILG Recommendations'. Sir Pat Astley-Cooper, a Chartered Surveyor and member of the FBA, had been persuaded to lead the ACILG Advisory Committee, and a number of expert study groups, made up from members of the advisory committee and the members of the ACILG (now totalling around 60 companies) had been meeting to try and resolve the main issues that had been raised with the interpretation of the parts of BS5502, with the aim of issuing design guides to help all those concerned as soon as possible and hopefully before the 1st January 1980 when BS5502 was due to come fully into operation, after the withdrawal at the end of 1979 of BS2053! It was proposed that the topics under consideration by the Advisory Committee, and the study groups, would expand over time and many hours of discussion and debate would be required before finally being 'put-to-bed' with agreement by all concerned.

The task ahead for the members of the ACILG and the farm buildings industry, the manufacturers/companies, consultants and advisory bodies etc. and the general feeling throughout was summarised very eloquently by John Young, then the Vice Principal of the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, and FBA member, in his 'Quarterly Comment', featured on page 25 of the Winter 1979/80 *Farm Buildings Digest*: "The 80's

could well be a watershed in farm building design if the new opportunities are taken? If they are not, a long, slow decline will set in!"

Fortunately, the formation of the ACILG and its advisory committee brought about renewed interest in 'doing the right thing' and in the spring of 1980, ACILG asked the FBIC to publish a Register of suppliers who had undertaken to ensure that their buildings conform to BS5502 (a requirement of the Code) and also the recommendations issued by the ACILG. FBIC agreed to publish a register acting as agents to the ACILG and set about contacting around 600 firms to see if they were willing to agree to such an undertaking, although FBIC would not be in a position to police those on the Register, it was hoped that this would most likely be done by MAFF and ADAS when they were checking grant aid applications. FBIC promised to publish the first register of steel, concrete and timber framed buildings, specialist buildings and greenhouses, in time for the Royal Show that year, but would not include components, machinery or other materials, which it was hoped may be produced at a later date.

The first Register, covering Framed Buildings, Specialist Buildings and Commercial Glasshouses was published in July 1980, and the second Register, covering Tower Silos, Grain and Bulk Feed Bins, Retaining Walls and Main Ducts and Slurry Containers was published in the Autumn 1980.

On 13th May 1981, at the FBIC AGM, Mr Derek Pearce stepped down as Chairman and handed over the reins to Mr Roger Sayce. The Centre was in a much-improved position financially and was still very much involved in assisting ACILG in all matters relating to the interpretation of BS5502, at the same time as providing its members and others with a useful information service through publishing the *Farm Buildings Digest* and other mailings.

In Vol 16, page 14, Summer 1981, the *Farm Buildings Digest* reported that BS5502, Part 2, Special Considerations, containing five sub-sections, had been published. To mark this 'milestone', BSI had announced special pricing arrangements (a package deal) for anyone who wanted to purchase a complete set of the three



*Staff at the Farm Buildings Information Centre (FBIC) – Farm Buildings Digest – Vol13, No 4, Winter 1978  
 Back row: Arthur Cowin, Bruce Brockway, Janine Hobbins, Heather Palmer, Bob Andrews, Harry Sparkes  
 Front row: Helen Hoggarth, Andrea Jacques, Joyce Brankstone, Patricia Lower, Kay Britton  
 (Peter Allen-Jones based at the NAC ADAS unit was also assigned to the FBIC but is not pictured here)*

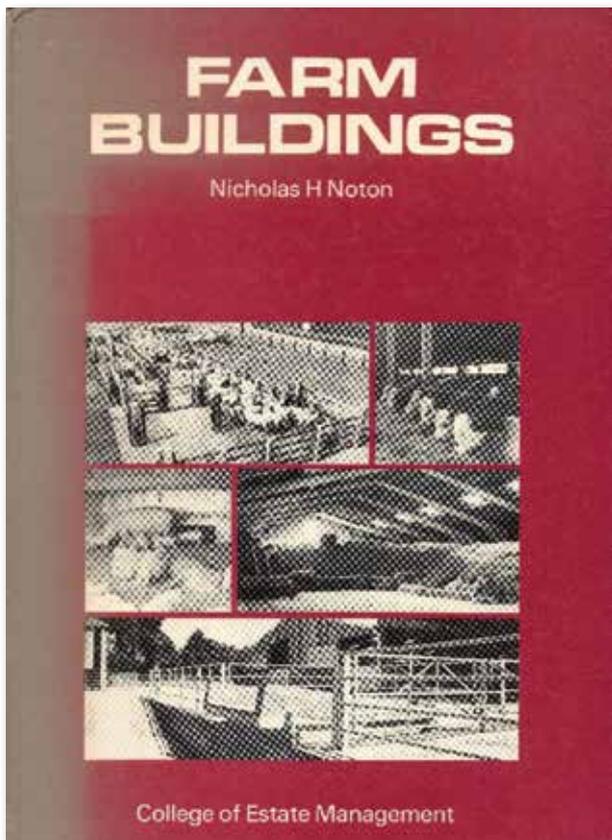
parts and sub-sections. The package deal price totalled £52.50, compared to the total non-discounted price of £109.50 (approximately £533.95 at 2025 values) In addition, BSI subscribers would also receive a 50% discount on the package deal price.

March 1982 saw the demise of the ACILG. However, as the farm buildings industry still saw the need for a 'guiding' and 'policing' body, it was immediately replaced with another organisation with similar aims and objectives to those of the ACILG. The organisation was to be called the Agricultural Construction Industry Federation (ACIF). The primary aim of the ACIF was stated as 'to promote the building of agricultural and horticultural structures to a high standard of design and workmanship using good building practices that completely embrace the requirements of BS 5502 and other related British Standards.' However, it was to be emphasised that the Federation would stand for quality in terms of good engineering and workmanship which need not be synonymous with high cost! Having steered the ACILG through three years of valuable

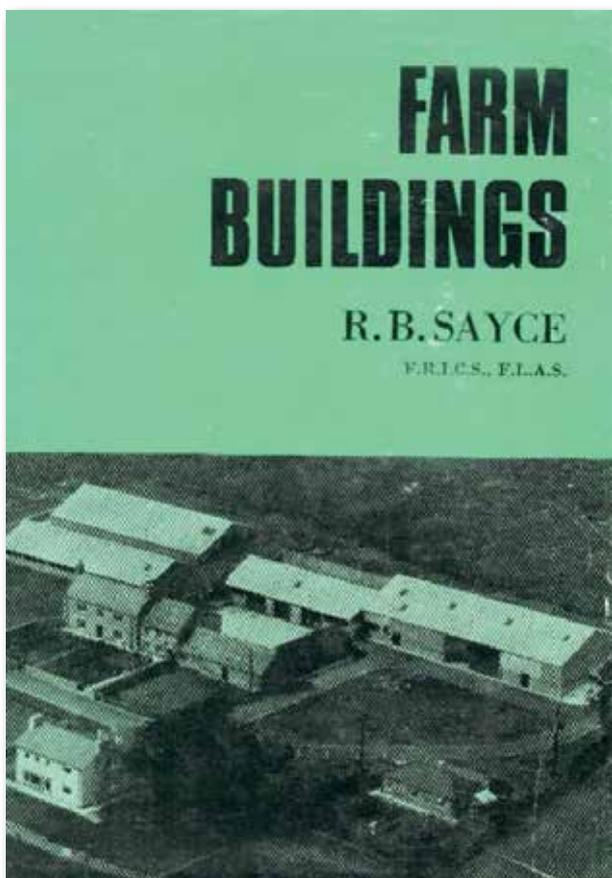
work in interpreting BS 5502, Sir Patrick Astley-Cooper agreed to be Chairman of the ACIF and the FBIC agreed to undertake the administration of the ACIF, with Bruce Brockway taking on the job of Technical Secretary.

The *Farm Buildings Digest* reproduced an extract from the ACIF Prospectus which set out the 'Objectives of the Federation', together with details of the Membership (there are three classes); annual subscriptions, structure of the Governing Body, and the Discipline Procedures all members will sign up to and follow. As with the ACILG, the ACIF would maintain a register of members and publish this so that it can be used by MAFF as a reference document in the same way as with the ACILG registers.

Finally in the Winter edition of the *Farm Buildings Digest*, 1982, it was announced that discussions between FBA and FBIC concerning the possibility of producing a 'joint' journal were ongoing and it was hoped that details would be finalised in the coming year, to the benefit of members of both organisations and others interested in farm buildings.



Nick Noton's 'Farm Buildings'



Roger Sayce's 'Farm Buildings' – First published in 1966

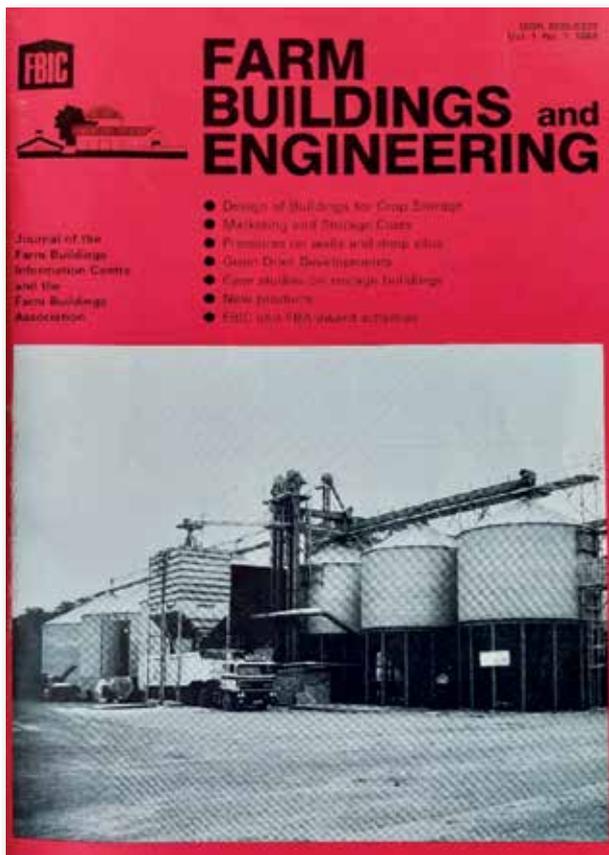
In John Young's 'Quarterly Comment' in the 1982 Winter Digest, it was noted that Nicholas H Noton, through the College of Estate Management, Reading, had published his long-awaited book, *Farm Buildings*. The book comprised 360 pages and covered all types of farm buildings and structures, from dwelling houses to livestock housing, and all aspects of construction, materials, design, siting, wastes, services, roads, crop storage, milking parlours, and ventilation etc. A mammoth undertaking which was the first specialist farm buildings book to be produced in the UK since Roger Sayce's book 'Farm Buildings' which was first published in 1966!

Sadly, the Spring edition of the *Farm Buildings Digest*, Vol 18, No 1, 1983, contained an obituary of William Marshall, who died in the Spring of that year. He had had a long association with the FBC, and then the FBIC, as well as the Farm Buildings Association, where he had been the National Secretary for many years, operating out of his garden shed and garage, and had himself produced and printed the FBA Journal every year.

The new Acting Secretary of the FBA was Mrs Christine Smith, also based in Banbury, Oxfordshire who had been supporting Bill Marshall for some time.

At the end of 1983 it had been decided that the *Farm Buildings Digest*, Vol 18, No 3, would be the last edition of the Digest, and from the start of 1984 the FBIC, together with the Farm Buildings Association, would combine their efforts and produce a 'joint' journal. The 'new' journal would be called 'Farm Buildings and Engineering' (FB&E) and a 'new' technical editor would be appointed, Mr Charles Dobson, a retired MAFF/ADAS Buildings Specialist from the Northern Region. The editor would be supported by an editorial panel of notable farm buildings experts: Bruce Brockway, Brian Armstrong, Charles Dobson, Jim Loynes, John Messer, Jeff Owen, John Randall and John Young. The title of the journal had been chosen to reflect the increasing part an engineer and engineering, as a profession, is playing within the agricultural buildings and equipment industry of the day.

The *Farm Buildings Digest* was first published by the Farm Buildings Centre in October 1964 and the first edition of the joint journal of the



Cover of the first issue of 'Farm Buildings and Engineering', Vol 1, No 1, 1984

Farm Buildings Information Centre and the Farm Buildings Association, Farm Buildings and Engineering Volume 1, Number 1, was published in January 1984.

Once the journal had been established for a year, Charles Dobson stepped aside and the editorial panel took control of the content, and a professional agency were employed to look at the layout of the journal, to achieve a consistency of style that it was hoped would meet the approval of the readership. This, inevitably led to yet another change to the front cover layout.

FBA and FBIC items reported in the Vol 1, No 4, 1984 of *Farm Buildings and Engineering* included the news that I had left the FBIC (at the end of March) to join the ADAS Farm Buildings Group, at the MAFF Regional Offices in Leeds, under the management of Bill Dempsey.

I was replaced as Technical Information Officer at the FBIC by John Leighton-Dyson. Sir Pat Astley-Cooper was now officially (from July) the National Secretary of the FBA and that Christine Smith, who had been looking after the FBA since the passing

of Bill Marshall, had moved on to pastures new and had been granted Honorary Life Membership in recognition of her assistance to the FBA over her time as National Secretary.

The FBA offices had now moved to the FBIC offices at the NAC, where Sir Pat could look after the FBA and also the ACIF (who were about to launch a random inspection scheme of its members buildings and contracts – to check that they were actually using BS5502. Following pressure from the membership, in particular manufacturers and suppliers, Sir Pat had been asked to complete a comprehensive report on the 'future' of the FBA, which would be considered by the FBA Council early in 1985.

In the *FB&E* Vol 2, No 1, 1985, Sir Pat Astley-Cooper was formally recognised as the National Secretary of the FBA and Gena Kearsey as the Assistant Secretary. Other FBA officers were listed as George Heyworth, Chairman, John Winship and Eoin Martyn were the Vice Chairmen and Dick Bennett as the Past Chairman. The ACIF Inspection Scheme had been launched on 1st January and seven inspectors had been appointed. Member firms of ACIF were requested to return information to the ACIF offices at the NAC on all contracts over £2,500. From these returns buildings will be chosen at random and then inspected for quality and good workmanship.

*FB&E* Vol 2, No 2, 1985, page 15, Sir Pat Astley-Cooper, as Chairman and Secretary of the ACIF, wrote an article concerning 'Building standards in agriculture'. Here he mentioned the comprehensive range of performance standards and Codes of Practice, found mainly within BS 5502, that cover the quality of materials used in agricultural buildings and how they affect the design, quality and construction of the buildings. However, not all manufacturers were members of ACIF and didn't use BS5502 to design their agricultural buildings, so purchasers were urged to careful to choose a building supplier of quality.

Unfortunately, farm buildings were coming under a lot of scrutiny from the public, and other bodies, in particular concerns were being raised covering aspects of design, construction and use that might affect visual appearance, animal welfare, the possible effects of pollution and other sensitive areas of public concern. As Bruce

Brockway had written in past editions of the *Farm Buildings Digest*, perhaps Sir Pat was reminding readers of the journal of trouble brewing on the horizon and how these issues would ultimately affect the future of the FBIC, the FBA, the ACIF and all farm building manufacturers as well as farmers.

It was reported in the spring edition of the journal, Vol 3, No 1, Spring/Summer 1986, that Sir Pat stood down as Chairman of the ACIF but he remained as Technical Secretary. Iain Duncan, Technical Director of the Agricultural Engineers Association (AEA), was elected Chairman. The ACIF inspections of members' buildings was continuing apace, with over 80 inspections having been completed. Members of ACIF and their clients seem to be responding well to the inspections, with only a small number of inspections finding fault with the building and the member then undertaking remedial works where required. A joint Technical Working Party of ACIF members and NIAE at Silsoe, had issued a Design Guide for loadings on Silage Walls from tractors and machines of weights of 8, 10 and 12 tonnes (above the 6 tonne loading criteria contained within BS5502) which it was hoped, after being circulated for comment, would be included in BS5502.

The FBA reported that its membership was up to around 620 and that the finances were 'sound'. John Winship, former Superintending Surveyor of the MAFF ADAS Farm Buildings Group, was elected Chairman and Mike Gaisford, a leading Agricultural Journalist, was elected as Vice-Chairman. Finally, John Leighton-Dyson left the FBIC and was replaced by Paul Cull, a Chartered Surveyor, as the Technical Information Officer.

Having reported that the financial position of the FBA was 'sound', earlier in 1986, by the autumn the financial position of the FBA, the FBIC and the ACIF was being adversely affected by countrywide inflation. With virtually no hope of each organisation making significant increases in their subscriptions to maintain a healthy working capital, the Chairmen of the three organisations started discussions that it was hoped would help establish whether common services could be developed, and resources pooled? This might, in due course, lead to closer integration

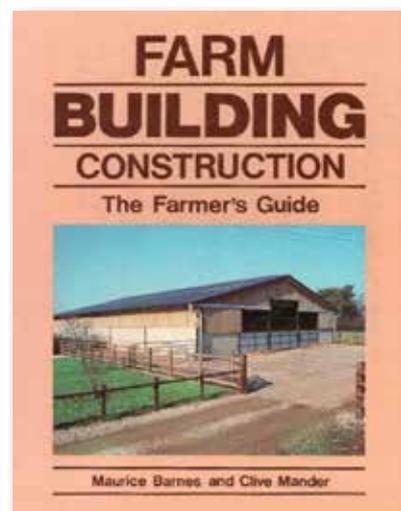
and, perhaps, to some form of amalgamation. (See FB&E Vol 3, No 2, 1986, p 3, Viewpoint – Farm Buildings and the Centre – John Winship, Chairman FBA).

Also, in the above journal (page 9), FBIC reported that, after 5 years of 'sterling' service, Roger Sayce had retired as Chairman and had been succeeded by John Young, Vice Principal of the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester. John had a long association with the FBIC through his initial secondment to the Centre and he later headed the NAC ADAS Unit during his 16 years service with ADAS.

Changes were also underway in Scotland. The three colleges, North, West and East, joined together as a single company named the Scottish Agricultural Colleges (SAC) on 2nd April 1986, with Aberdeen being made 'the lead centre' for farm building R&D work with Dr James Bruce, Head of the Scottish Farm Buildings Investigation Unit (SFBIU), becoming the Head of the SAC Buildings Group.

Another notable event reported in *FB&E* Vol 3, No 2, was the publication by the Farming Press Ltd, in September 1986, of Maurice Barnes' and Clive Mander's book: '*Farm Building Construction – The Farmers Guide*'. An excellent publication and an invaluable source of information for all farmer DIY enthusiasts, or advisors, consultants, designers, students and the like.

The ACIF AGM, held on 9th October 1986, saw Iain J Duncan being re-elected as Chairman and Sir Pat remaining as Secretary. Membership of the ACIF was reported to be around a total of



100 building and component suppliers with the NFU being a Corporate Member supporting the organisation, with publicity in the NFU Magazines highlighting the importance of farmers buying buildings from ACIF members who comply with BS 5502.

The FBA AGM was held on 20th November 1986 when John Winship stood down as Chairman and Eoin Martyn, a Senior Surveyor with MAFF, based in Oxford, was elected Chairman. Bill Dempsey, formerly a Principal Surveyor with the MAFF Farm Buildings Group at Leeds, was elected as Vice Chairman. Under an item headed "Chairman's review of FBIC" in Vol 4, No 1, 1987, page 8, John Young, FBIC Chairman reported that the regular meetings of the Chairmen of the FBIC, FBA and ACIF were continuing, and they had met on a regular basis since the AGM and had made progress on matters of common interest in the administrative field and in joint publicity. However, he went on to say; '... further progress will depend on the individual organisations, but it is hoped that [recent progress] will provide a suitable foundation on which to build further joint ventures. I believe that 'old frictions' have nearly disappeared, and this must be of benefit to the farm buildings industry and its customers.' Unfortunately, he didn't specify what the 'frictions' were and under the present situation of increased expenditure, reduced income, static or falling membership and rising inflation, things did not look good for either the FBIC, the ACIF or the FBA.

A subtle change to the FBIC Council, as reported in *FB&E* Vol 4, No 2, Winter 1987, page 6, under 'News from the FBA' reflected the administrative changes mentioned above. The Council of the FBIC had been reformed with equal representation from the FBIC, FBA and ACIF each appointing six members and a further six persons are elected from other sources. The objective being to further co-operation and to study ways of bringing the three constituent parts of the Centre's incumbents closer together. Other changes at FBIC included the announcement that Bruce Brockway, who started working at the FBIC in 1973 and was appointed as Manager in 1976, had resigned and would be leaving FBIC at the end of the year. Sir Pat Astley-Cooper would be taking over as Manager. However, initially Bruce would

still be working at the FBIC offices, but this would be as Secretary of the Land Drainage Contractors Association at the same time as running his own consultancy business.

At this time, the reader should realise that BS 5502 would be 10 years old in 1988, and it was about to undergo a complete revision and update for a relaunch early in 1988. A detailed article, 'Developments in Agricultural Codes', by Gordon Rose and Geoff Rogers, both structural engineers in the ADAS Farm Buildings Group, was published in *FB&E*, Vol 4, No 2, p29, 1987. The two-page article described the new structure to be adopted and confirmed that the 'revised' BS would consist of 86 Parts, with the original three parts being enlarged and split across different 'new' parts, with many 'new' parts being written.

Also influencing the changes to BS 5502 was the recent harmonisation project, by the European Communities Commission (ECC), that resulted in the introduction of a number of draft 'Eurocodes', which were out for comment, and as these did not [yet] include a specific code for agricultural buildings, it was looking likely that BS 5502 would become 'EURO 5502' in 1988? Tacked on to the article was notice of a forthcoming conference; 'Farm Buildings Standards – 10 years on', to take place on 23rd February 1988, at the NAC, at which speakers would discuss and explain all the revisions to BS 5502 and the 'new' Eurocodes.

After much debate in the FBIC throughout the year, in December 1987, the FBIC Council made the decision to create an 'umbrella' name which would [hopefully] help to clarify the rather muddled image being presented to the outside world of the various organisations [FBIC, FBA, ACIF etc]. This was also seen as an opportunity to generate publicity and to promote the organisations. The new name, to replace FBIC will be the **Farm and Rural Buildings Centre (FRBC)**.

Meanwhile, in Scotland, only a couple of years after the amalgamation of the three agricultural colleges to form the Scottish Agricultural Colleges (SAC), the Scottish Farm Buildings Investigation Unit (SFBIU) and the Farm Buildings and Engineering Divisions of the North of Scotland College of Agriculture, combined to form the **Centre for Rural Building (CRB)**, early in 1988. This effectively meant that the work of the SFBIU,

would now originate from the CRB and the SAC and CRB would continue to publish the journal, *Farm Building Progress*, under the editorship of John MacCormack. Head of the CRB was to be Dr James Bruce. The SAC were quick to point out (in *Progress* No 93, page 1, July 1988), while reminding their readers that they had enjoyed a long and mutually beneficial exchange of information and have cooperated in various ways over the years, that the CRB at Aberdeen was a completely separate organisation from the recently formed, 'Farm and Rural Building Centre (FRBC)' based at the NAC, Stoneleigh, Nr Coventry.

In *FB&E*, Vol 5, No 1, page 6, 1988, the FBA reported that Mike Gaisford had taken over from Eoin Martyn as Chairman, that Bill Dempsey was appointed as Senior Vice Chairman and Clive Mander was appointed as the Junior Vice Chairman. Membership stood at a total of around 550, but with the increased membership fee (to £25) and payments taking time to work through the membership, final figures were not yet available and may reduce slightly.

In the news from around the industry, ACIF reported that it had 'closed down' due to lack of funds and could not survive as a self-financing organisation and could no longer support the inspection scheme. "A number of manufacturers are now turning to the FRBC to look at the possibility of membership and the formation of a new group to maintain good quality of materials and workmanship." Although this thought was not written in a 'tablet of stone', ongoing discussions in the FRBC and FBA may produce a workable solution to satisfy the industry's needs.

## Chapter 10

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# The Farm and Rural Buildings Centre (FRBC) [1988-1993 and beyond]

by Jim Loynes

**Jim Loynes continues his review having joined the ADAS Farm Buildings Group in Leeds in 1984, whilst retaining active involvement with the FBA, leading to his Chairmanship in 1993.**

The FRBC continued to publish the *Farm Buildings and Engineering (FB&E)* as a means of collecting and disseminating the information it had gathered from around the UK and further afield. The FBA remained as joint publishers of the *FB&E* journal and shared office space in the FRBC offices at the NAC.

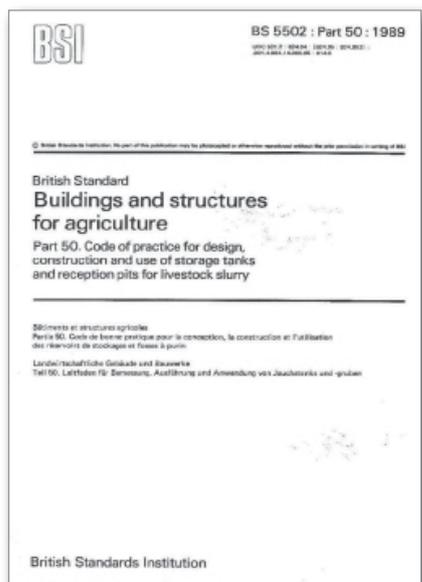
*FB&E* Autumn issue 1988 (Vol 5, No 2) included an update on the effects of the name change to the Centre at the recent Royal Show and presented an 'upbeat' view of the financial state of the Centre and its future plans aimed at increasing membership and links with the FBA. The journal also contained a five-page article detailing the current work of the recently formed 'Centre for Rural Building' (CRB) in Scotland. The article clearly showed the different services that the CRB offered its customers compared to those offered by the FRBC and the FBA. I believe this may have resulted in members of the two UK organisations discussing the type of services they might offer to their membership and hence formulating a possible way forward?

In *FB&E* issue Vol 6, No 1, the FBA reported that Bill Dempsey was appointed Chairman with Clive Mander as Vice Chairman and Alan Hayes as Junior VC. The effects of the United Kingdom being in the EEC, which was introducing tighter controls and management of farm wastes to avoid pollution, was discussed by ADAS specialist, Cedric Neilsen, in his timely article featured on pages 21 and 23. Cedric discussed the likely effects of the new EC 'codes' being introduced, and how these will affect the storage and use

of farm manures and slurries, especially in the areas where the new Nitrate Vulnerable Zones and Phosphate and Ammonia Emissions controls would soon be introduced. Cedric also discussed how areas where the control of odours and prevention of slurry and effluent discharges would affect livestock farmers and the buildings they use and how they might have to provide adequate ventilation systems, use ample bedding and provide leak proof slurry containment. These requirements might also bring about increased Planning Controls etc. from 1991 onwards.

Cedric's article tied in very well with the article by Dr Paul Mason, Head of the ADAS Farm Buildings Group, Reading, discussing the 'Construction of Slurry and Effluent Retaining Structures' where he hinted that future Government policies would soon produce Regulations 'to ensure proper containment of farm silage and slurry to prevent pollution'. Designers and manufacturers of these facilities should be aware that restrictions on use and tight control on the construction of farm storage facilities were likely to be introduced soon! Perhaps a starting point for this came about when the BSI finally published BS 5502: Part 50: 1989 – Buildings and structures for agriculture: Part 50. Code of practice for design, construction and use of storage tanks and reception pits for livestock slurry.

In addition to the above there was also a very relevant article (pages 31 to 33) covering two important pieces of Town and Country Planning Legislation that came into force in 1988 that would have a direct bearing on farm buildings. The article was written by Stephen Cull, a Planning Consultant based in Swindon and covered the new Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) (GPDO) 1988 and the Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988. Here



again, manufacturers, suppliers and designers of livestock buildings would need to be more aware of the requirements of the above legislation and be prepared to submit to greater scrutiny in the planning system?

In the Autumn edition of *FB&E* we learnt that the FRBC (the organisation formed when FBC and FBIC joined forces) was celebrating its creation in 1964 ie. it was 25 years old. To mark the occasion, HRH the Duke of Gloucester attended the Centre during the Royal Show and met exhibitors and staff during his visit. The journal (Vol 6, No 2, 1989) reported over £2000 of sales of books at the show and an upbeat performance throughout the year so far. The journal also reported on the many additions and updates to British Standards, including BS5502 and proposed changes to the Welfare Codes, particularly of Battery Hens, that would affect poultry farmers and building designers/manufacturers alike.

In an attempt to encourage membership of both the FRBC and the FBA, and to reflect the recent changes in Legislation and to the BSI Codes of Practice likely to affect members of both organisations, several 'new' classes of membership were introduced by the FBA and FRBC, but, on reflection, all these failed to have any significant impact. (*FB&E* Vol 7, No 1, Spring/Summer 1990, p6). Oliver Statham was elected as Chairman of FRBC and Eoin Martyn as Vice Chairman. FBA confirmed Clive Mander, Farmstead Engineering, as Chairman and Chris Pearce, Filon, as Vice-Chairman.

In the next issue of *FB&E* (Vol 7, No 2, Autumn 1990) coverage of both FBA and FRBC's activities at the Royal Show, especially the competition and awards presentations were noted, along with the 10th visit to the Centre by HRH the Duke of Gloucester. FRBC announced that the Council had decided to prepare a Development Plan that was aimed at expanding revenue over the next two years up to December 1992. For the FBA, the Scottish Branches had 'instigated a new policy for not only a change of name but a broader penetration into rural buildings and the infrastructure of village development. Rural housing and industry are included in addition to diversification on farms, building conversion and the equestrian world – to quote some of the ideas.' It would be up to the Membership to decide at the AGM, to be held in November 1990, what name and direction FBA would adopt for the future?

News from FRBC (*FB&E* Vol 8, No 1, Spring 1991 p8) reported that the Centre had been seriously affected by the recession and that finances were not as healthy as had been hoped and so the Council had set up a Finance and General Purposes Committee to replace the Executive Committee. The committee had decided to expand the Centre's own technical literature and to offer new titles for sale supported by advertising to generate a surplus. At the same time, it was announced that Eoin Martyn had been appointed as Assistant Manager of the Centre and that he would be able to expand the Centre's services and hopefully generate revenue through running training and CPD courses for surveyors and TPC students, as well as expanding the advisory services on offer.

I continued to be heavily involved in the FBA and from 1990 to 1992, when the Association was experiencing falling membership and the finances were in the doldrums, a proposal to change the FBA name gained momentum. We spent many hours, and meetings, debating the pros and cons of reorganising the FBA membership structure and/or whether a change of name would increase the prospects of the Association surviving and whether it would, or would not, lead to membership numbers increasing and hence produce a more secure future [financially] for the Association throughout the UK? There were

several names suggested and discussion as to which would be most appropriate, or whether we should change the name at all, which continued over several months. Discussions at branch level were of some branches splitting from the 'new FBA' and claiming the 'FBA' name for themselves. However, nothing came of those discussions, mainly because of the lack of funds available in the Branches.

The leaders of the FBA were very concerned about membership, with numbers reported to be down to approximately 400. However, a more pressing consideration was the failure of the AGM to reach a conclusion on a name change, or not? The three possible 'names' being considered were: "**Rural Design Association**" or "**Rural Building Association**" or an amalgam of these two, eg. "**Rural Design and Building Association**". Again, there were still a number saying, 'Why change at all' and hence were in favour of retaining FBA and the original logo! So, it was agreed that the Council should consult the branches, to 'thrash out a final recommended name or "no change" in the name.' After the consultation the membership will be given the opportunity to vote personally, or by proxy, at an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM), which would be held later in the year.

In the Autumn issue of *FB&E* (Vol 8, No 2, Winter 1991) we noted the new front cover strap line – 'Journal of the FRBC and FBA' – had been changed to '**Journal of the FRBC and the Rural Design and Building Association**'. On page 5, the National Secretary, Sir Pat Astley-Cooper, opened the 'News from the RDBA' page with the heading 'Time for Change' and wrote: "*So it's now all over. The membership voted for a change of name at the EGM held on 21st May 1991. The new name is 'Rural Design and Building Association'. The voting was 111 in favour and 82 against.*"

The FRBC, on page 4 reported a bad year for the Centre. The effects of the recession, although now largely over, had seriously hit income and budgets were now in a pretty poor state. The Centre would have to tighten its financial belts and concentrate on producing good quality and much needed publications to raise funds, as well as the very popular APC training and CPD courses. One good sign was that within the FBA/RDBA survey leading up to the EGM, the joint Journal,

*FB&E*, had been voted as most valuable, together with the FBA's own journal. So, it had been decided to produce two *FB&E* journals a year to help satisfy the needs of the RDBA membership and hopefully to expand the circulation of the Journal to increase revenue.

In the Summer issue, Vol 9, No 1, of the 1992 *FB&E* Journal, in the section of 'News from the FRBC', Eoin Martyn was noted as being appointed as Manager, from 1st May, and with Sir Pat Astley-Cooper being retained as a consultant to him, up to the end of 1992. At the FRBC AGM, on 8th April, a considerable loss was reported over the last year and reserves had been depleted by 50%! It was suggested that part of the problem was increased printing costs for the recently produced publications – these had to be paid before sales revenue was received – and increased staff costs and redundancy payments. However, many courses (APC, CPD, Planners etc.) had been scheduled throughout the Autumn and it was hoped that membership fee payments would pick up and publication sales and income from the courses would be sufficient to address the dire financial position the Centre was in?

The RDBA also reported that it had suffered a substantial deficit in 1991, mainly due to the poorly attended Spring Conference and some erosion of membership, which then stood at 440. Consequently, the Council had reviewed and streamlined the structure of both the Spring and Winter Conferences to reduce costs, and production of the RDBA Journal would be reviewed, while the close links with the FRBC would be retained in an effort to continue to provide good value to the membership. Chris Pearce, of Filon, was the Chairman overseeing these changes.

Sadly, the efforts of Eoin Martyn and Sir Pat Astley-Cooper and the remaining staff of FRBC, appear to have failed to save the Centre and no *FB&E* Winter Journal 1992 was produced and the Centre closed in early 1993.

The Scottish Journal, *Farm Building Progress* 113, published in July 1993, reported on page 7 that the FRBC had closed earlier in the year. No exact date was given, but I think it was around January 1993 when Eion Martyn and the Council of FRBC called it a day?

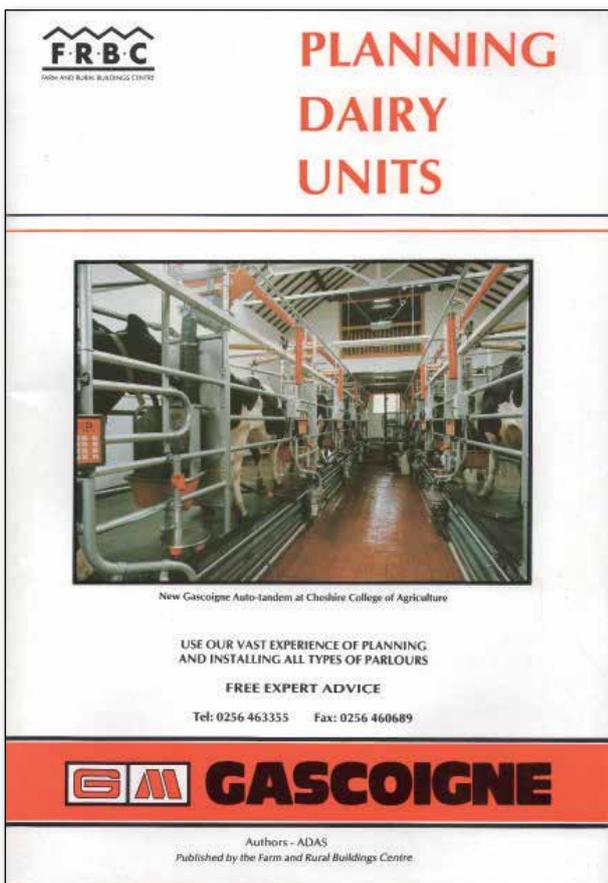
### Farm and Rural Buildings Centre closes

After serving the industry in a unique and valuable role for many years, going back to before the first issue of *Farm Buildings Digest* in October 1964, the Farm and Rural Buildings Centre (FRBC) closed earlier this year. Reflecting the difficult times that have hit some of its customers equally hard, its closure is a loss that will also be felt by many others. *Farm Buildings and Engineering* journal,

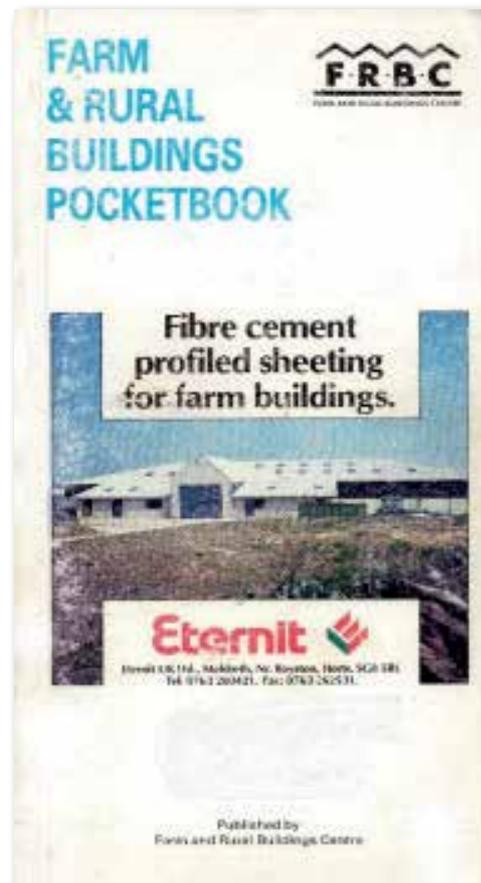
published by FRBC and successor to the *Digest*, contained papers and articles with a wealth of up-to-date information on developments in farm buildings, fixed equipment and related areas, as well as news and details of new products and services. Other notable recent publications included the *Farm Buildings Pocketbook* and *Dairy cow housing*.

JDMW

*Farm Buildings Progress* 113  
July 1993



*The new FRBC Planning Dairy Units book  
Produced by ADAS and written by Jim Loynes*



*The first FRBC Pocketbook  
Produced by Eoin Martyn*

A year later, *Progress* 115, June 1994, in their 'News and Reviews' pages, reported that some important changes to *Farm Buildings Progress* would take place this year. These changes included the addition of a special section devoted to the Rural Design and Building Association (RDBA). 'Following the closure of the FRBC and the subsequent demise of the joint FRBC and RDBA journal, **Farm Buildings and Engineering**, the RDBA have entered into an agreement with the Centre for Rural Building (CRB) to publish

an RDBA Newsletter as part of **Farm Building Progress.**' The Newsletter would be compiled by Sir Pat Astley-Cooper of the RDBA and would be a regular feature in future issues of *Farm Building Progress*. The first RDBA Newsletter, dated Spring 1994, was included as a four-page central section in the *Farm Buildings Progress*, 115, published in June 1994. The editorial front piece, produced by Sir Pat and occupying the first half of page 1 of the Rural Design and Building Association (RDBA) 'news bulletin' is reproduced overleaf:



Spring 1994

## Rural Design and Building Association

### Editorial

We enter a new era with a fresh style and wider objectives. The sad end to the Farm and Rural Buildings Centre of which we were a founder member and partner, has brought us into sharp focus as the national body representing the interests of the farm building industry. It has made us aware of the need to increase our membership and expand our commercial and educational role in providing appropriate services.

As part of those services we had to decide on the best way to communicate information to members and help them to advertise their personal and commercial capabilities as consultants, designers or traders.

As we have insufficient resources to run our own magazine to replace the *Farm Buildings and Engineering Journal* we have opted to join *Farm Building Progress* and provide members with a bi-annual publication which will include our own news bulletin. We shall contribute

case studies and technical articles as well as other material suitable for our readership. The Newsletter replaces the previous House Journal.

The other important innovation is the Members Register which not only contains personal details of members but also identifies those who offer design and advisory services. Corporate Members are described together with the products they manufacture and supply or buildings and equipment offered to farm and rural customers. Educational facilities are included.

The Register will be available outside the membership in an attempt to stimulate business and the public will be told that there is an answering service available to take enquiries which will be transferred to professional and commercial members as appropriate.

The Register was first published in February 1994 and will be supplemented from time to time as more members information is sent in and recorded.

At last our office problem is solved, at least for the time being. We are now a tenant of the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group and look forward to settling down with them and building a friendly relationship within our mutual interests.

Elsewhere you will note our successful Winter Conference at Ayr and the names of our re-elected Council which will be invigorated by a number of new appointments. They should effectively improve the representation of interests within the Association.

We accept our new responsibilities and look forward to a productive year.



Rural Design & Building Association

**MEMBERS REGISTER**

**1994**

*RDBA is the national representative body for design and construction of all farm and rural buildings and fixed equipment*

The National Agricultural Centre, Stoneleigh, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2LG.  
Telephone: 0203 696525 Fax: 0203 696963

Page 2 of the Newsletter included a brief piece on the new Chairman for 1993/1994, Jim Loynes, a Lincolnshire 'yellow belly', but now living in Devon and working in the ADAS Building Design Group, based at the MAFF Offices in Starcross, near Exeter.

Also reported on page 2, it is interesting to note that membership of RDBA stood at 366 members, of which 238 were personal members, 15 were Corporate Trade members and 5 were Colleges. [Presumably the remaining 108 members were company representatives?]

It was also reported that the FRBC library had been taken over by, and transferred to, the Silsoe College library, which was now part of Cranfield University. The Silsoe library would offer RDBA members a similar service to that of the old FRBC library, but no doubt the costs were likely to be higher, depending on what service was to be provided.

Page 3 of the Newsletter included a complete list of the current officers of RDBA and members of Council. There was also a report from the National Secretary, Sir Pat Astley-Cooper, on the organisation of the Branch Network and activities they were undertaking for their local membership.

This piece concluded with a possible plan to maintain and expand the role and activities of the Branches and on page 4 of the Newsletter, a useful A4 size map of Great Britain showing the RDBA Branch Network, including current names and contact details of the branch contact person.

In *Farm Buildings Progress* 116, published in December 1994, the RDBA Newsletter for the Winter of 1994 commenced with the half page note (below) from the National Secretary.



### From the National Secretary

When last I wrote, the Association was facing the uncertainty caused by the collapse of FRBC and the burden of standing alone as the National body representing the Agricultural Construction Industry. We still needed to establish our position and sort out our office.

We can now assess progress in meeting the challenge.

The closure of FRBC was a severe blow to the industry when the library, the Exhibition Halls, Consultancy and Information Service and the first class tuition courses disappeared.

The Design Competition was beginning to flourish and attract many visitors at the Royal Show but this year we lacked any focus for rural buildings with our small office tucked away behind the facade of the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, and the Exhibition Halls are now diverted to the storage of ice cream.

So it is a hard task to follow with a smaller organisation.

How have we performed so far?

We have now signed a three year lease

which solves the office problem. We have published the first Members Register which identifies occupations and qualifications and is widely distributed as an aid to business opportunities and building sales. Enquiries received at the office are passed on to the library at Silsoe or appropriate professional or trade members. This service will expand as RDBA becomes more widely known to the public. Our first Newsletter appeared in *Farm Building Progress* with whom we have now cooperated in providing a magazine service twice a year.

Members are being encouraged to contribute articles and case histories which the editor will be pleased to accept. Eventually it is hoped that 'Progress' will replace the popular *Farm Buildings and Engineering Journal* which was discontinued last year.

We continue to arrange a full programme of tours, conferences and field events. The European tour went to East Germany under Michael Gaisford's guidance in the Spring with 30 delegates. Mike Kelly reports in the Newsletter. Branch field events are also described and in the autumn we shall report

on the Winter Conference on 'Claddings' at Royston.

Branches have concentrated much on new dairy buildings and the new Midland Shires Branch is starting its programme on just such a theme.

Recruitment is most important to RDBA and efforts this year show slow progress. We continue to propound the advantages of membership for a very modest subscription. We are well supported by the RICS and other professional organisations but the problem is the loss of interest due to the recession. A revival is apparent but RDBA must show its usefulness and benefits to its members and become more broadly known and recognised for its services.

In a difficult year we are starting to emerge with a new status and to stamp our identity on the industry. The public must be told of the reservoir of design skills, the quality of products and the excellence of education facilities within the Association.

The efforts of our Council and Branches will ensure our steady growth into our next year.

In the next issue of *Progress*, No 117 dated April 1995, the RDBA Newsletter informed members that Sir Pat Astley-Cooper, National Secretary, had indicated that he would retire at the end of September 1995. The lead editorial, reproduced on the next page, said:

## Editorial

Members have been told that National Secretary Sir Pat Astley-Cooper has offered to retire on 30th September 1995. This decision has thrown open the whole future structure of the Association and members who wish to consider taking on the Secretarial role will have submitted various options for consideration. Whatever happens to the Secretary's job, he himself will continue to take a deep interest in the affairs of the Association and offer his help drawn from a long experience of people and activities over more than 40 years. He does not necessarily agree with one member's comment that he has come to the end of his 'shell life'!

We have now had our AGM and a new Chairman has arrived in the person of Dr Mike Kelly, about whom an appreciation appears elsewhere in this issue. We also have a new Vice

Chairman in David Bussey, a Chartered Surveyor from Coventry.

The Association can be reasonably satisfied with its performance in 1994 when it began to develop its brand name through the Members Register and enquiry service whereby both the Corporate and Individual Members were sent clients needing services. Two successful events were recorded, the tour of Northern Germany and the Winter Conference hosted by our friends Eternit UK Ltd. Two editions of *Farm Building Progress* were published thus keeping faith with promises to our members, who it is considered are now understanding the value of their modest annual subscription. New members are now coming to us and more than compensating for resignations or retirements.

The 1995 programme as arranged so far

starts with the Spring Tour to Brittany which takes place from 4th - 8th April and will be reported in our next edition. The French livestock industry will be studied in depth and the visiting party will be staying in the old city of Rennes.

The Winter Conference is being worked out and a programme presented to the membership in the Spring. Meanwhile the active branches are working on their 1995 events and a diary will be published as soon as available.

Our finances are in good shape and we look forward to our New Year with confidence and expectation of an increased membership and this can be partially achieved by the efforts of yourselves. What a difference to our numbers would be effected if each one of you made sure of recruiting one new member during the year!

Sadly, the arrangement between RDBA and the CRB to publish the RDBA Newsletter ended because the RDBA decided to publish their own journal again. This was announced in the News and Reviews section of the *Farm Buildings Progress* No 118, page 7, which was published in October 1995.

## RDBA News

Regular readers of *Farm Building Progress* may be wondering where the RDBA News centre-page section has gone. Earlier this year, the Rural Design and Building Association decided that they would re-instate publication of their own journal.

Consequently, CRB's agreement with the RDBA to publish the RDBA Newsletter in *Progress* has been terminated. We wish the RDBA well for the future of its new magazine.

The arrangement between Progress/CRB and RDBA had temporarily filled the void left by the closure of the FRBC and the demise of the joint RDBA and FRBC journal, *Farm Buildings and Engineering*. However, the announcement contained in the RDBA Editorial piece printed in *Progress* 117, Spring 1995 meant that the Association needed to quickly find a new National Secretary, who would oversee the running of the Association, as well as producing our own, 'new' journal, at the same time as finding 'new' offices which would become the home of the RDBA and the address for members and others to contact the National Secretary.

So, a tendering process to find the right person, or organisation, to run the RDBA was undertaken, and later in 1995, Peter Bloxham, the Head of the Engineering Department at Harper Adams Agricultural College (HAAC), located near Newport, Shropshire and long-time member of the FBA/RDBA won the contract to run the RDBA. Peter appointed Liza Boulton, as National Secretary, who was also tasked with producing the new journal, which it had been decided would be called *Rural Design and Building* (RD&B). Peter also set up an editorial panel to help Liza produce the journal. The panel comprised: Peter Bloxham, Jeff Owen, Mark Cowing, Jim Loynes, David Bussey and Sir Pat Astley-Cooper. The first issue of the new RD&B journal (Volume 1, Issue 1) was published in Spring 1996.

Over the next 3 years, HAAC changed from an Agricultural College to a University College and was now known as Harper Adams University

College (HAUC). In that time, Peter Bloxham appointed a succession of 'secretaries' to be the RDBA National Secretary, to print the journal and effectively run the RDBA.

Then, in 1999 Peter Bloxham, left HAUC, for a position in Beijing, China, and the secretary at that time, Hayley Owen, moved to Australia! So, the RDBA Chairman, Bob Honey, Livestock Systems Ltd, was faced with a problem that needed fixing fairly quickly and appointed Tony Hutchinson as National Secretary to take over from HAUC, and the RDBA offices and address moved from Shropshire to Stowmarket, Suffolk.

Tony Hutchinson and his team produced the last edition of *Rural Design and Building* as the Spring/Summer issue 1999 and with the agreement of RDBA developed a new look RDBA journal, entitled *Countryside Building*, with Volume 1, Issue 1, being printed in the Autumn of 1999.

While Tony introduced the 'new' journal to all its readers, in the 'Secretary's Column', Bob Honey supported him with a message from the current Chairman and highlighted that the RDBA was about to enter a 'new' chapter in its history as the world was entering a 'new' century! (See extract from p4, *Countryside Building*, V1, Issue 1 below).

## Chairman's Column

It must be significant that this new journal is launched at the beginning of the new century. (Having reached half a century, I can comprehend 100 years - a millennium is beyond my grasp!)

The farm building industry enters the new century in an 'interesting condition', as does the RDBA, our only representative body.

Many farm building projects are now in the 'big league', with several costing many millions. It is up to us as an industry to make sure we are up to the job.

This we cannot do unless we are familiar with current thinking and practices, and keep abreast of innovations and developments in farming and construction. As was so amply demonstrated and discussed during the excellent Spring Conference and tour (and anyone who takes this industry seriously should have been there!), we have to take other factors into consideration, such as animal welfare, compliance with health and safety, aesthetics and environmental impact, the demands of the dairies, supermarkets and other purchasers, and of course public attitude to farming methods.

I see it as our duty to ensure that we do know our subject and can advise our farmer clients correctly. We are, after all, engaged in farm building and design constantly, the client is not.

To help you stay ahead, please use your association. Contribute to it as well, whether on national or regional committees, by recruiting new members, submitting articles for publication, and generally making the RDBA a familiar name in British Farming.

*R. G. Honey Chairman*

## The Construction Group – 1999 to 2004

On page 6 of the Spring/Summer issue 1999, Tony reminded members of the importance of our Association and informed the members that, in 1999, we had created a new group within the Association – **The Construction Group** – formed, chiefly, for ‘farm-building constructors’ and component/material suppliers, but also others in the Association interested in putting quality into all the farm buildings they built.

The extract from page 24 of the journal *Countryside Building*, Vol1 Issue1, gives us a valuable insight into the reasoning why and how the ‘Construction Group’ was formed in the RDBA and how this will help members’ farmer clients to reliably employ competent contractors and suppliers when they are having building work completed and also how they can meet their responsibilities under the CDM Regulations and other Health and Safety Regulations.

RDBA NewsTony Hutchinson  
National Secretary

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### The New Construction Group

The new Construction Group is now up and running and held it's first meeting at the Royal show.

The officers elected were

Chairman	Noel Robinson
Vice Chairman	Chris Wareing
Treasurer	David Tysoe
Secretary	Tony Hutchinson

The new group has already attracted a number of new members to our Association and many more are expected to join in the future.

The main aims of the group are to:

- Promote safe working practices
- Raise the profile of agricultural building manufacture and construction as a skilled industry
- Discuss and exchange views and information within the industry
- Ensure that clients are aware of their liabilities under all the various health and safety regulations
- Promote a safety and quality scheme to acceptable standards in the industry
- Liaise with the Health and Safety Executive and other Government Departments as a trade body

In the next journal, the Chairman of the Construction Group will give details of how the group is progressing

and its plans for the future, but a start has already been made on meeting the group's aims.

Malcolm James, one of our new members, is the Chairman of the BSI committee on safety nets and Phil Robinson will be joining the committee as the RDBA representative to add the Construction Group's views to this very important area of health and safety when working at heights.

A Health and Safety Committee and a Quality Committee have been set up, with their first tasks to formulate a health and safety statement and a quality statement that all the group members will sign up to.

It was also agreed that we would take a stand at the Dairy Event in September, that members of the group with stands at other agricultural shows would promote the RDBA and we would book space at selected agricultural shows in 2000.

We are already in a position that the majority of farm buildings erected in the future will have been supplied by one of our members.

If any members of the RDBA wish to join this new group please contact the National Secretary.

The new Construction Group members, at the time of going to press are listed below:

**New RDBA members**

- M D Anthony Ltd
- A C Bacon Engineering Ltd
- Balsham Buildings Ltd
- Curtis Engineering Ltd
- D & D Construction
- G & T Evans
- Filton Products Ltd
- A J Lowther & Son Ltd
- M J Consultancy
- R E Buildings
- Redwing Structures Ltd
- Redwing Structures (Marlow) Ltd
- Robinson Agricultural and Industrial Buildings Ltd
- Rombull (UK) Ltd
- Mervyn Rose Engineering
- Shufflebottom Ltd
- Scorpien Engineering Construction Ltd
- Simpson and Allinson Ltd
- J Wareing & Son (wree Gree) Ltd

**Existing members who have joined the Group**

- Eternit UK Ltd
- Farmplus Construction Ltd
- Fibre Cement Manufacturers' Association
- Milbury Systems Ltd
- Milbury Systems Ltd
- Red Alice Steelwork
- S Robinson and Sons (Engineers) Ltd

Extract from the last edition of 'Rural Design and Building' Spring/Summer 1999

# The RDBA Construction Group

In early 1999 discussions started between a number of farm building constructors and their suppliers. To explore how the farm building industry could set up a self-help group with the express desire to improve farm building construction safety, to enlighten all Farmer Clients of the risks they take when employing companies that fail to comply with the guidance provided by the HSE (with special reference to the Construction Design & Management Regs.), and to form a Trade Body that has the opportunity to have dialogue with various other trade organisations, government departments, but most importantly the Health & Safety Executive.

As a result it was decided to bring as many companies together as possible at a venue in the Midlands, which was kindly funded and organised by Eternit UK Ltd, some twenty odd companies attended. This represented a high percentage of the industry as a whole.

Founder Committee Members were elected and discussion started on how we could form a trade body, either from a fresh start or by being attached to an organisation already in existence, as a special interest group. Since time was of the essence it was decided that we should become a special interest group within the RDBA, who had already been approached and who had confirmed that they would welcome the new interest group.

It is not our intention to become an Elitist organisation to the exclusion of the smaller companies, to the contrary our desire is to embrace all sizes of companies, only by doing this will we be able to achieve our objectives of safety for all, regardless of size, and by doing this we will protect all our Farmer Clients.

Since then things have moved on a pace. We have 34 Members and associate Members a Management Committee and a Health and safety Committee.

The Group has agreed a Mission Statement and a Health & Safety Statement, which are reproduced after this article that have been signed by all our members and will be signed by all future members.

We have produced an advice note for farmers on their responsibility when a building is erected on their farm, an advice note on how to deal safely with asbestos cement products and we are in the process of writing method statements on the different processes in constructing a building.

The HSE is very supportive and has nominated a representative for our Health and Safety Committee and is also supporting us financially to run seminars around the country advising farmers and non-member building constructors of the health and safety requirements when a building is erected. The first of these was held in the Northwest, with more being planned for the autumn in the Northeast and the West Country.

It should not be thought that we are only interested in Health and Safety, the group is interested in all aspects of good quality farm building design and erection.

Although the majority of farm buildings being built now are being built by one of our members we are still looking to recruit more members, if you are interested either fill in the application form or contact the national Secretary Tony Hutchinson.

## A farmer's responsibility when he has a building erected on his farm

Under the CDM regulations when a farmer has a building erected on his farm he is normally the client and so he has important Health and Safety responsibilities. The RDBA Construction Group has written an advice note, which is available free of charge from the National Secretary.

One of the more important responsibilities is to ensure that the Contractor he uses is Competent, for the average farmer who only has a building erected infrequently it is not easy to assess a prospective contractor's competence. This is where the RDBA Construction Group can help. Each member has signed the following Mission Statement and Health and Safety statement and so the farmer can be confident that they take health and safety seriously and that they are likely to be Competent.

### Mission Statement

- A) To promote good safe working practices within our industry.
- B) To raise the profile of agricultural building manufacture and construction as a skilled industry
- C) To discuss and exchange views and information within our industry
- D) To ensure that our clients realise their responsibilities under the Construction Health & Safety regulations
- E) To promote a Safety & Quality Scheme to the highest standards within our industry
- F) To liaise with the Health & Safety Executive and other bodies, including suppliers.

### Health and safety Statement

As competent contractors the management of health and safety is an essential priority.

We comply with all current legislation and will develop and follow best practice in both safety and quality.

We ensure that all the contracts designed and built by us will be organised efficiently and we will take the necessary steps and allocate adequate resources to control risks to our workers and others.

Over the next few years, the Construction Group would almost split the RDBA in two, but fortunately, it brought about the reorganisation of the Association which established it as an Association of Quality! From the small beginnings of the Construction Group in 1999 a much larger, more powerful and financially secure 'Group' grew that helped the RDBA to survive and change its name to reflect the influence of the 'Group' within the Association membership. At the same time, the Construction Group went a long way to achieving its 'mission statement' and other aims as shown on the previous page."

In *Countryside Building*, Vol 5, Issue 1, pages 24 to 27, dated Autumn 2004, the Construction Group published its first newsletter – *The Construction Group News*, Volume 1, Issue 1. It was hoped this would be a quarterly newsletter, which would be circulated to all Construction Group Members. At that time the register of fully paid-up members of the Construction Group totalled 43 companies and there were 15 Associate Members.

The newsletter showed the wide range and type of topics and Regulations, including EU directives, that the member companies were having to deal with in their day-to-day activities and business transactions to provide a reliable, up-to-date and competent service to their customers.

The newsletter also contained a section devoted to looking at 'the future' (ie. the future of RDBA and the Construction Group?), which contained a list of items under discussion:

1. How do we expand membership?
2. Do we change the Construction Group's name to show that membership is not just open to those involved in rural construction?
3. What extra services should we be offering to members?
4. How do we make Corporate Membership more appealing so that those individual members, who work for large organisations can more easily convince them to join as Corporate?
5. Should we combine the RDBA and the Construction Group together into one organisation and if so, what should the management structure be?
6. How do we ensure the long-term financial viability of the RDBA?

These items would be discussed at future Construction Group and RDBA meetings in an attempt to find a mutually beneficial solution to the pressing issue of how to finance the Secretariat and fund the future Association – whatever form it might take. I am not 100% certain when and where the EGM took place, but at that meeting (held in June 2004?), Tony announced, in the 'Secretary's Column, page 2 of *Countryside Building*, Vol 5 Issue 1, Autumn 2004 – '*The EGM resolved the Secretary issue, but there are a number other issues that need resolved, which are listed in the Construction Group Newsletter - Vol 1 Issue 1*'. Most likely these were discussed and decisions made at the AGM held in 2004.

Then, in the Vol 5 Issue 2, Winter 2004 edition of *Countryside Building*, in the Secretary's Column on page 2, Tony declared – "*This will be the last time that Countryside Building will be printed in its present format. Now that the RDBA has changed its name to the **Rural & Industrial Design & Building Association (RIDBA)**, we will need to agree a new logo and with the strategic sub-committee consider changing our Journals name from Countryside Building to something that includes the industrial interests of so many of our members. No doubt this will also change some of the content although we do not want to move away from our rural routes.*"

Then, on page 30 of this edition, our new Chairman – Hazel Ronson – in a piece headed 'Chairman's Message', she explained that: "*Several options were considered and following great debate **The Rural & Industrial Design & Building Association (RIDBA)** was born from the merger of the RDBA and its Construction Group. What does this mean? A wider audience of potential members, whilst continuing to support and progress our rural tradition. We have to move into the future with our heads held high and be able to say "We came from the FBA and have developed further into a major organisation listened to and respected by both government departments and customers."*

However, the front cover of Vol 5 Issue 3 Spring 2005, *Countryside Building*, showed that it was produced in Association with RIDBA for the first time and the only minor change to the front cover, with the addition of the words – '*The Ridba Journal*' – printed in a big font across the top of

the page, but it was still '*Countryside Building*'. In fact, the journal didn't change its title and front cover until the September 2016 issue, Volume 17 Issue 1, when the Secretariat moved to London with the support of Build UK. Debbie Simcock took over as the Trade Association Manager to look after the interests of RIDBA.

**So, the FBA was born at the Royal Show in 1956 and became the RDBA at an EGM held on 21st May 1991 and, finally the RDBA became the Rural and Industrial Design and Building Association (RIDBA) in 2005. Just in time to celebrate the Association's 'Golden Jubilee' at the Patshull Park Hotel.**

## Chapter 11

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# The Brambell Report 1965

by Clive Mander

I suggest that until the advent of this report there had been little regularity control of British Agriculture since the introduction of the milk and dairy regulations of the 1930s. Indeed milk was probably produced in some dire facilities up to this time. Prior to reliable railway services, milk was usually produced in the larger towns and cities near the consumers. The new regulations meant that all milking sheds were required to have ventilation and concrete floors with standings similar to the picture in *Chapter 4 p28*.

In 1964 a book entitled “Animal Machines” had created public concern about the welfare of farm animals and parliament was forced to set up a committee to investigate. This was the cause of considerable angst among the farming community, not because they thought they were doing much wrong because animals that are not well looked after do not thrive and do not produce, but by the worry and concern that they would be forced to make great change by people who knew little of agriculture. The emotive media concept of “factory farming” was being promoted by others.

There was great mistrust of this committee because it was thought they had little background or experience of agriculture. This was exemplified by the appointment of Lady Isobel Barnett to the enquiry. Whilst she was a medical doctor, she had worked for 20 years as a radio and television personality. This did not impress farmers.

Having noted all the above the committee seems to have worked very hard and produced its report in under a year. (A record?) Of note was the inclusion on the committee of Alec Hobson of the RASE and F J Winship (John) an FBA member. John was a tremendous character, ex Spitfire pilot with handlebar moustache who later became the Ministry of Agriculture Chief Architect. He was a

terrific FBA supporter and upon his retirement moved to South Wales, needed action, so set up his own surveying practise mostly involved with dairying. Dr David Sainsbury also submitted a considerable amount of evidence so the FBA was well represented at high level.

The resultant enquiry results were not very well received because they were subjectively commenting on issues they did not understand and did not seem to recognise that more intensive systems relieved many of the animals of heat stress, bullying, predators and many diseases and infections. There was also the criticism that they visited too few units to inspect.

Animal Welfare is still a very emotive and contentious subject and I record it as a watershed moment because thereafter has come a whole avalanche of controls and regulations affecting livestock production. There is now full traceability of products following horse meat and BSE difficulties and supermarkets are demanding full access and control as they try to develop their standards. Since 1990 producer led Farm Assured schemes have had a major effect and most farms comply or marketing their product becomes increasingly difficult. This is all good but the continual cry that imported food should be produced to the same standards is sometimes forgotten, if it is cheap.

The main recommendation of the Report insisted that animals must be able to stand up, lie down, turn around, groom themselves and stretch their limbs. In addition there should be five freedoms:

- Free from hunger and thirst
- Free from discomfort
- Free of pain, injury or disease

- Free to express normal behaviour
- Free of fear and distress

This was codified by 1979.

Then, as now, no one could object to these requirements and in general the farming community found it had little to fear because broadly their ambitions and systems aligned.

I understand that the Brambell Report was the first of its kind in the world. Many other countries, particularly the EU, USA and Canada adopted the tenets almost word for word. It is also now the basis of welfare codes for domestic animals and pets and is noted by the RSPCA.

The 85 page report was delivered in December 1965. In his wisdom the Minister of Agriculture, Fred Peat, did nothing in a rush except consult others and stall for a time. This was wise because this was unique work and everyone needed time to evaluate their position and none could really argue against. (The internet has masses of information) It was finally debated in Parliament on 5th August 1966.

The more immediate response was to develop Codes of Practice for livestock production. Another was to set up another committee to monitor changes and developments: the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Committee. This ultimately became the Farm Animal Welfare Council in 1979. The FAWC produced a major report to the Minister with an open letter by the chairman Professor Chris Wathes (an acquaintance of mine) in 2009 which was a tremendous piece of work. The FAWC continues to hold a watching brief and is well respected.

In only three areas was there real concern. The first and most awkward was the dry sow stall where a pregnant sow was confined, so she rested. She was not bullied for food, she was well fed and watered, she was warm but not too hot (pigs cannot sweat) and was not subject to intestinal worms or parasites. Sow stalls were banned in the UK in 1999. Whilst supposedly banned by the EU in 2013 they continue in limited use for the production of Parma ham. In the alternative dry sow strawed yards it was a serious management difficulty to introduce a sow to an established group because bullying by 'The Boss Pig' could be extreme.

Outdoor pig enterprises on light land did re-establish somewhat with probably the advent of the telehandler being able to deliver food regardless of the weather helping.

Egg production with hens in battery cages was also criticised but no one had a better idea of how to produce eggs so cheaply. All that has really happened since is that space and cage sizes have increased with legislation over the years.

Free range eggs units did establish for a spell but the public is often reluctant to pay a premium price for their eggs. They have morphed into "range" units on occasion where hens are given the choice to venture outside. Often they can't be bothered.

Calves reared for veal in crates to reduce cross infection was also controversial but the UK market for the product was very small although many calves were exported. When legislation stopped this many male calves were killed at birth, because there was no market. It distresses farmers doing this.

In conclusion, I look forward to the possibility of scientists armed with electronic devices being able to tell us whether an individual animal is hot, cold, hungry or thirsty.

### **Extracts from FBA Journal No 10 December 1966**

Representations were submitted on behalf of the FBA on 27th January 1966.

Briefly we commended the Report in that it did not accept some of the sweeping criticisms but we felt that:

1. It would be impossible to compete with cheaply housed foreign products if our standard was set unduly high
2. That it should cover stockmanship, animals in transit and in the market
3. That animals may die on the hills in bad weather and that this is probably more cruel than keeping them intensively
4. That it is not economical to house animals in any degree of discomfort
5. With poultry the floor area should be related to body weight

**6. On pigs:**

- a) At 8 sq ft per pig, the pigs would not keep warm
- b) 6 sq ft gives the cleanest pen
- c) On the sweat-house – we quoted in full Dr Gordon’s comments as he has done so much work on this house  
Mr Cave’s experience was also described
- d) Pregnant sows – all our evidence shows that sow stalls are more humane than group housing

**7. On cattle:**

- a) 3/6 week calves are best housed in individual crates; 5ft x 3ft enables a 200/300lb calf to turn round  
12 sq ft per calf is alright for 2 calves/pen  
8/9 sq ft per calf for 8 or 10 calves/pen
- b) High solid sides to the crates are very satisfactory  
Open fronts enable them to see each other across passageways
- c) The temperature should be reduced gradually from 55°/69°F to 45°/50°F after 3 weeks
- d) Short-tethering should be permitted provided the animal can groom itself
- e) Beasts up to 10/11cwt can be housed at 20 sq ft satisfactorily
- f) Slats – Where straw is short slats are better than a bed of wet straw

**8. On turkeys:**

Any scale should be expressed on a live weight basis

**9. On large-scale farms:**

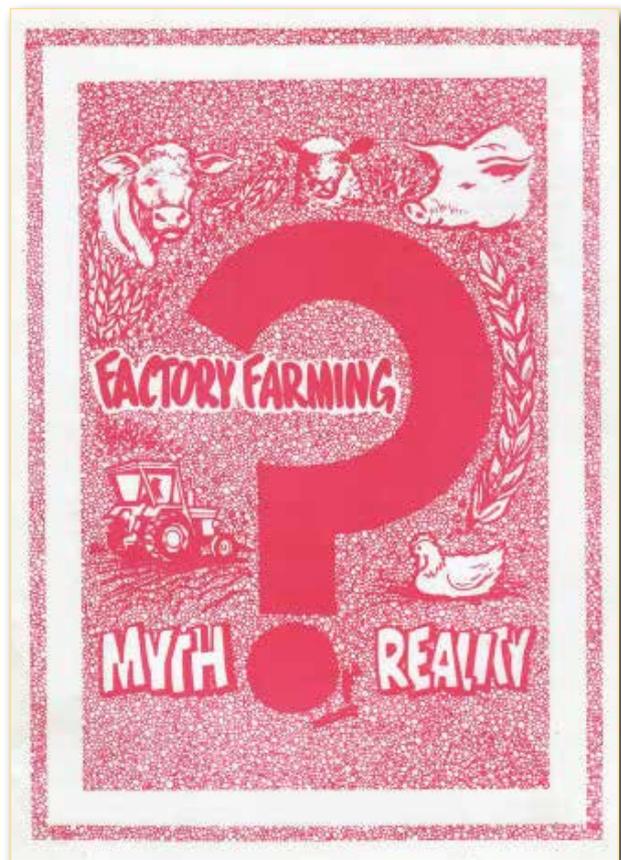
Permission should be made for isolation and nursing of sick animals, also for the slaughter and disposal of carcasses

Looking back at the representations made by the FBA almost 60 years ago, it is of considerable note that most (but not all) of the points made came to be considered best practice.

## Factory Farming

Factory Farming was an unfortunate description by the media when the public’s concern about current farming methods commenced. Whilst no-one suggested improvements couldn’t be made, and were, it nevertheless became a very emotive issue, but the public didn’t seem to perceive that they were receiving very cheap food produced by these methods.

Peter Buckler was more than happy to meet these concerns head on and produced this booklet via the Arthur Rank Centre in 1980.



## Chapter 12

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# The FBA through the decades

by Clive Mander

Throughout my involvement with the industry there has been little innovation or development that was not foreseen or forecast within the FBA journals. In 1966 there was talk of storage feeding, wilting silage, zero grazing and larger dairy units of 250 cows plus. As background I include the following:

**It is perhaps not well known but a new set of Building Regulations were produced in 1965 to come into force in February 1966. These were produced by the Ministry of Public Works and were very comprehensive and included farm buildings. There had been no consultation with the FBA. As a result all steel columns and walls would need full fire protection and a glass house could not pass with a glass roof. After an outcry from the agricultural lobby and others the whole set of regulations were binned. My dad cheered because he had a new dairy project that fell foul but as chairman at the time, he received early warning that the proposed regulations would be rejected.**

The pace of change to agriculture seemed to accelerate during the 1960s and the association was actively involved.

The first herringbone milking parlours were developed from about 1956 following experience in New Zealand where cows are not usually housed at all and so were always milked in batches. As noted the first cow cubicle was described by the *Farmers Weekly* in September 1962. By autumn 1964 there was mention of timber cow kennels constructed by the Duchy of Cornwall with advice from the NAAS. Timber cow kennels became very popular right through the 1970s being very cheap and having appeal due to Common Market uncertainties, but

ultimately became manufactured down to a price rather than up to a standard with the Farmplus buildings being the exception.

In 1965 there was a very successful overseas tour to Holland which my father attended. He and others had also seen the massive Zuiderzee project.

This was the first occasion when ladies were invited on tour. In future years a separate ladies programme in the Spring Conference and overseas tours was always included. Many members, perhaps in retirement, used to consider the tours as part of their annual holidays. Many friendships developed, it helped the finances and was the FBA at its very best.

Behind the scenes 25% of the beef consumed here came from Argentina. This was the cause of some serious dissatisfaction here. Foot and mouth disease was also well known to be epidemic there, and sure enough we imported the disease and suffered a serious outbreak in October 1967. Amongst the serious upheaval the FBA Winter Conference was cancelled and there was no livestock at the Smithfield Show.

Throughout these years and thereafter the pig and poultry industries increasingly specialised and intensified. Capital investment grants for both sectors ceased in 1974.

A continuing revolution from the early 1960s was the development of silage making equipment and techniques. Although the vast majority of grass was conserved as hay initially, steadily the situation reversed as silage-making improved and opportunities developed because it could be mechanically handled in large volumes from field to feed trough. The FBA Journals are full of papers relating to the changes.

Initially silage tended to be wet and smelly, of lower food value and produced lots of effluent.

In the 1960s American style tower silos became relatively popular here together with a conveyor in the centre of the cattle yard to deliver the silage to the trough. The conveyor at about 4ft wide saved the expense of a central tractor pass and troughs at about 15ft wide in total. On a new building the costs were about equal. The towers themselves were 20-30m high. This introduced the topic of buildings in the landscape to the FBA and planners were beginning to get interested.

The real snag with the towers was the fact that they were developed for American Maize silage and their mechanical unloading systems were not best suited for British grass silage.

As time passed it was realised that the internal pressures within these silos was far greater than anyone had understood because a number had collapsed. Again the FBA was involved and it was a topic at the Winter Conference in about 1971. I am sure that a tower silo once existed on the logo of the FBA, but I cannot reference.

Bunker silos were not immune from collapse either and the Journals hold reports and description of experimental results. Self feed silage was another big topic which once was popular although the stock did not eat as much as they might. It took time for tractors and equipment to evolve with sufficient hydraulic muscle to lift compacted silage out of a bunker to enable it to be fed. Furthermore the advent of high powered precision chop forage harvesters enabled much better high quality silage with a dry matter up to 40% to be produced. At this figure there is little effluent and cows eat more.

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## Post 1974

I no longer had any direct involvement with the FBC since I was busy doing other things but I would always endeavour to attend the three day FBA Spring Conference. This enabled me to benchmark our work against others and to observe new innovations. I was not quite so diligent with the Winter Conference in London.

The formula of Winter and Spring Conferences continued for many years and is a credit to the founders who initiated these events from the earliest times. Membership stabilised as about one thousand at this time.

In July 1972, Bill Marshall ex-BOCM, had become the Associations' first paid secretary and treasurer. The appointment was very successful and resulted in many developments. The job had become much too big to expect someone to operate on a voluntary basis.

Again in 1972 following accession into the EEC, the winter conference topic was Farm Buildings in Europe organised by Sir Patrick Astley-Cooper. There was a bit of optimism about export possibilities to Europe but I think this was talk rather than action. Conversely Europe didn't export much to the UK market.

There was also talk of improving liaison or affiliation with the Institute of Agricultural Engineers because they had a close involvement with CIGR. In their terms the subject of farm buildings was a branch of agricultural engineering and a full amalgamation of the FBA and IAgRE was a distinct proposal. On a private note I could never envisage our architect members submitting to, or affiliating with, mere engineers and fortunately the idea did not gain traction.

The adoption of the metric system was causing some difficulty and expense and it is noted that progress was very slow. Nevertheless converting imperial measurement of feet and inches into cubic yards was painful and metric steadily gained acceptance.

In the spring of 1973 grants for farm buildings were cut from 30% down to 20%. They had previously been 40%. VAT was introduced at this time; I have always considered it to be a ridiculous dilution of economic effort and inefficient

With Bill Marshall settled in post and Sir Pat Astley-Cooper as chairman, the association was somewhat reformed. The reformation resulted in four main committees being established:

- The Finance and General Purposes Committee – soon renamed the Council
- The Education, Meetings and Publications Committee – Chairman: Oulton Wade
- The Investigation and Development Committee – Chairman: David Soutar
- The Buildings and Equipment Manufacturers Committee (B and EM) – Chairman: Dick Prentice (Atcost Buildings)

The Education Meetings and Publication Committee became significant to me in that apart from the obvious, they ran weekend courses at the NCAE (National College of Agricultural Engineering) at Silsoe under senior lecturer Paul Douglas, himself a very active member. I attended several of these courses which included natural ventilation, structural design loads and pollution control. They were excellent and enjoyable. I was not going to be turned into a structural engineer in just a few hours seminar but it did give me a wider understanding which was valuable. The BEM Group were also busy with their meetings and conferences. Topics included Thrust Walls and Insulation for example.

I had less direct involvement with the BEM Committee but can see the start of the changes which led to the successful RIDBA as the manufacturers found they had many problems in common.

The reformation under Sir Pat and Bill Marshall at this time established an FBA branch network throughout the country. The idea was to involve more people at a local level which would hopefully produce more members and greater revenue. It would also provide people on the ground that could assist with the Spring Conferences which were becoming very sophisticated and demanding to organise.

Following my experiences with the FBC regional meetings I was a little sceptical about the venture but could see the merits of the idea. The North Midland branch, as we were, centred on the NAC but Nick Woodhams, a Ministry Architect from Wolverhampton was our first chairman. There was considerable enthusiasm at first but I am not sure how or why I was elected to chairman within two years. With help I did organise some useful events visiting local farms, the TAC factory in Tamworth, the Hallam timber building factory in Nottinghamshire and arranged talks by Messrs Fullwood and Health and Safety officers for example. Despite a great deal of effort, I could only attract six, eight or ten members to a meeting, especially on a working day. It was insufficient return on the effort involved. In theory we should have had twenty members at the NAC attending, but being specialist in their field, they had perhaps already spent two evenings a week giving talks to

farmers' discussion groups and domestic pressures took precedence for the remains of the week.

I think Jim Loynes took over the branch chairmanship after me. I was then appointed to the Council as branch representative.

The branches continually needed lots of support from the secretariat but most ultimately failed. Nevertheless three were extremely successful and were active for many years. These were Wessex, Yorkshire and the Scottish branches.

As a council member I attended just as many branch meetings as I possibly could anywhere in the country. The other ongoing snag was that a Spring Conference in a given area nearly always killed the branch, because the local people became over committed.

Whilst there is no evidence that the branch system increased membership, it did perhaps reduce loss as those exiting full time professional employment found a continuing enjoyable and social dimension through the FBA.

In April 1975, the 1974 Health & Safety at Work Act came into force. This has been an increasing and ongoing piece of legislation affecting many members as additional legislation is bolted on. This has continued to be a factor drawing the manufacturing element into the association.

By 1977 a Technical Journal No 20 was produced in addition to the Annual Journal. It contained papers on milking efficiency, sow housing, repairs to concrete floors and two papers on solar energy. The Technical Journal was to be produced whenever appropriate.

The ALS and NAAS had been reorganised and combined into ADAS (The Agricultural Development and Advisory Service) As noted elsewhere an ADAS multi discipline liaison unit had been established at the NAC and there was close cooperation with the FBC mostly via Eric Paterson. John Young returned at a later stage and was in charge following Guy Haines.

At this time Paul Douglas of the NCAE produced the following figures which have always interested me.

## In 1976

- The total coal supply was 126 million tons
- The total iron & steel supply was 26 million tons
- The total sand & gravel supply was 102 million tons
- Agricultural materials use was 130 million tons, 75% of which was attributed to livestock production and I would suggest a very large portion of that was moved by hand

By the end of 1977 the FBA finances were not so healthy and the branches were draining support after the initial enthusiasm. With high inflation and grant cuts, farm building costs had risen  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times over two years. EEC rules were also capping grants. Steel was in very short supply and effectively rationed with some sections totally unavailable. Reinforcing mesh was similarly scarce. The nonsense of VAT had been introduced, albeit buildings were initially zero rated so we had to claim the tax back.

In 1977 with Maurice Barnes, as Chairman, had to report that although the finances were sticky, we were producing two Journals a year. The branches had too few members to produce a continuous programme of events. The 1978 Technical Journal

had papers on Alternative Energy, Methane Production and Aero Generators. All nearly 50 years ago and topical now.

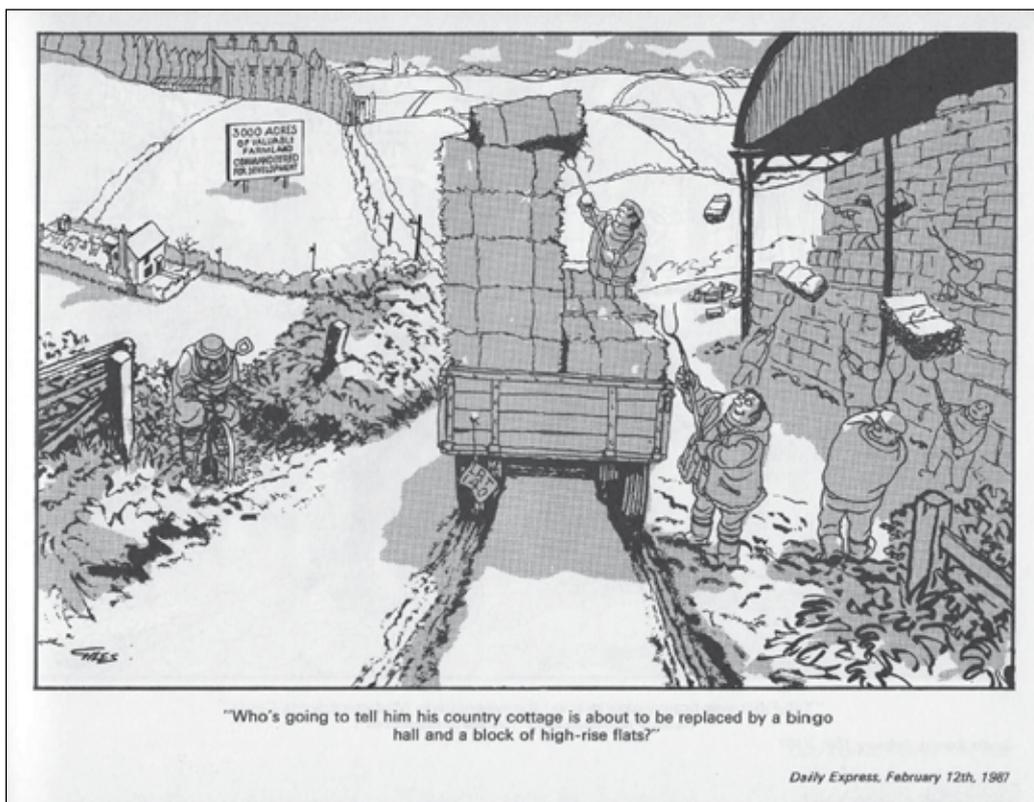
## BS 5502

By 1979 BS5502 for farm buildings had replaced BS2053 first published in 1953. The main tenant of BS2053 was that it allowed for a lesser calculated snow loading for a farm building compared to its industrial cousin.

BS5502 caused some confusion initially in that it introduced the concept of design life, wind loadings relative to situation and altitude, and the extent of human occupation. It was produced in various sections and gained acceptance until Euro codes were introduced.

BS5502 enabled the construction of cheaper buildings in some areas and perhaps safer ones in others.

Up until the mid seventies both Atcost and Crendon Concrete had dominated the agricultural market with their concrete portal frame designs. The buildings were of standardised design, robust and durable, competitively priced nationwide and the high clearance portal design increasingly



*Giles was one of the greatest cartoonists. He never demeaned agricultural workers. This cartoon illustrates the amount of hard physical work involved daily.*

valued. The steel portal frame seemed to take time to evolve pioneered mostly by FBA supporters Frank H Dale of Leominster, Hereford.

Within a few years of BS5502 both businesses had failed. Sir Pat Astley-Cooper had been a senior manager at Crendon Concrete and in a private discussion years later, he said that their existing concrete frames could not comply with BS5502. They had to redesign the reinforcing and replace all their casting moulds. I guess they also changed to metric dimensions as regards span and bay length. It was all very expensive and disruptive and suddenly they could not put an extension on an existing building of theirs. Steel buildings companies were proliferating. What rather galled Sir Pat was that he believed if they had engaged alternative structural engineers, their original design might have passed for BS5502 with little alteration.

Because of the new approach of BS5502 and some confusion, the Agricultural Construction Industry Liaison Group (ACILG) was set up as a quango by the Ministry to smooth over the difficulties. It operated for about two years only.

As often happened, Government was unhelpful when the Minister of Agriculture announced that compliance with BS5502 was not a pre-requisite for grant aid. Confusion continued as the grant structure and rates were reduced, prior approval of any scheme was not now needed and although ADAS officers were still advising, it was moving to a commercial operation involving charges to the farmer.

Following the cessation of ACILG, the ACIF (Agricultural Construction Industry Federation) formed because of the need for manufacturers to cooperate and associate. FBA was involved.

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## 1980s

By 1982 the Winter Conference routine continued but the venue had moved to the Conference Hall at the NAC. Fees for planning applications commenced near this time.

A paper by Paul Mason described work on the loadings of tower silos which were still collapsing after perhaps 25 years use. Some had been fitted with bottom unloading machinery but this meant

that 85% of the contents were in motion at any one moment.

In 1983 Bill Marshall unexpectedly died. He had always worked from home in Deddington, Oxfordshire assisted by his secretary Christine Smith. He was sorely missed by all. He was the association. Sometimes the chairmen of our association have to plough a sticky furrow as developed in this instance. John Addison was our chairman and had travelled from Harrogate to Deddington to retrieve the FBA records but the widow would not admit him into the house. John returned empty handed and the situation was distressing for all and took time to resolve. The solution was that Christine would become FBA secretary on a temporary basis and she began to operate from her home in Banbury.

Sir Pat Astley-Cooper ex Crendon Concrete had previously agreed to take the position of Secretary and stepped into post a little earlier. The FBA technical Journal under Sir Pat was now produced jointly with the FBIC and was entitled Farm Buildings and Engineering. Sir Pat was a very able secretary and was popular with everyone. He set up office within the FBIC for 2 days a week or so and soon recruited a very able secretary Gena Kearsey. Between them everything worked extremely well although agricultural and economic background difficulties evolved, they coped with it all.

In general there was a depressive atmosphere pervading agriculture with surplus production and increasing environmental issues. Rules established by the ACIF required building to be inspected for compliance with BS5502 in an attempt to develop and maintain high standards to assure customers. About 80 inspections were carried out in 1985.

Membership had about halved to 560 and where on occasion the attendance at a Winter Conference had maxed at about 300 previously, in November 1985 it was only 75. Numbers at the Spring Conference were also reducing. Nevertheless the quality of our speakers and conferences plus active members was not declining, it was just market conditions.

In an attempt to produce more publicity and interest, a Bill Marshall Memorial Award was established. Initially this was gifted to a student with the hope that they might develop into

members. I don't think this ever happened and eventually the Bill Marshall Award was given to the winner of a competition entitled 'Re-used but not Abused' to encourage innovation and recycling.

In 1987 I was elected Junior Vice Chairman of the Association and as I became Vice Chairman a year later, it was then my task, by tradition to organise the Winter Conference for November 1988. This I had found difficult and disruptive because I was operating on an awkward site, lots of rainfall and with no mobile telephones in those days. At least I had my subject agreed by Council in that I chose 'Slurry and Dirty Water Disposal'. This was obviously increasingly to be topical and important. Gena Kearsey and Sir Pat were very supportive but I will always be grateful to Brian Armstrong effectively the Ministry's Chief Architect. (No one had told them that he was an agricultural engineer) I frequently had to leave my site, travel to the nearby village telephone box and try to engage speakers and find a chairman. Brian was always available, as I pressed money into the coin box I was immediately put through to him in Whitehall. My chairman was George Lillingston, a local landowner, FBA member and a great supporter of the Young Farmers movement locally. He accepted with alacrity and the event seemed successful. I even think it made a profit!

On a more enjoyable note but also time consuming was travelling to vet the farms and visits for the forthcoming Spring Conferences and to support the local planning committees. I remember driving Bill Dempsey and Sir Pat to Dorset and then Sir Pat and Mike Gaisford to South Wales because I served two terms as Chairman.

My first real task on being elected chairman after the 1989 Winter Conference was to attend the 1990 Spring Conference at Peebles in Scotland. It had been very well organised by James Reed a stalwart member from near Perth. Alongside excellent visits was a memorable after dinner speech by Maitland Mackie, one of our founders. At this event the Scottish Branch put forward a resolution that FBA must consider changing its name in order to diversify and reflect the wider rural building conversion and alteration developments.

There had been pressure developing for a period, particularly in Scotland, to make changes to the work of the FBA. It transpired that a survey of

members was held at about this time of which 401 responded. This is a synopsis of the results whereby the following percentages of importance were recorded as follows:

House Journal	:	77
Technical Journal	:	83
Winter Conference	:	33
Spring Conference	:	42
Branch Meeting	:	80

The topic of conferences was expanded and 60 members indicated a continuous interest in overseas tours.

After much discussion it was proposed that the Association should change its name to the Rural Design and Building Association. There were about 400 members at this time and continuance with the FBA name received 82 votes but was out voted as 107 votes were cast to change to RDBA; Rural Design and Building Association. (The Farm Buildings Information Centre had already become the Farm and Rural Buildings Centre.)

On a personal level I became quite worried at this time because membership was dwindling along with the Balance Sheet slowly reducing. I have always regretted the name change because as I foresaw it had no effect on membership, other than negative as members were required to alter bank standing orders and the whole operation was complicated and expensive. It was all falling apart on my watch and I worried although I still had the most wonderful support from Sir Pat and Gena Kearsey.

I then had the bright idea to talk to Peter Buckler one evening. His response was immediate once I had explained about falling memberships and finances. He said "kill it" -finish it if it had done its job- Kill it!

As I considered his suggestion I came to an opposite view. The Association had some very able, enthusiastic and knowledgeable members. There was still a job to do and it was still enjoyable to meet and associate with others. I figured that the Association could still exist by reducing its scale and reverting to administration on a voluntary basis if a few people so wished. I couldn't see it mattered how few members existed because each would get out whatever value they put in. At about the same time I was called for a discussion

with Sir Pat wearing his hat as director of the FRBC, because he was also in difficulty and he was suggesting a merger with RDBA. I had to turn him down because I considered the Centre had much greater overheads and had the much larger problem. Certainly the RDBA did not have the financial muscle to support the FRBC and I wasn't sure we would survive either.

There was great turbulence at this time; politically, economically and within farming. I think farmers had got very accustomed to free excellent advice always available from ADAS. Farmers were not used to spending money on advisors and consultants. I remember in the early 1970s a farming chum explaining that he employed an agronomist to advise on crop husbandry. This surprised me because I always thought farmers knew how to grow crops. He was in the forefront and now farmers employ consultants on all aspects of farming enterprises and in my experience these consultants are excellent and always fully up to date with current thinking and techniques.

Despite the FRBC having some excellent publications, in my time, we only sold £80 worth at the 1971 Royal Show. The audience thought it should be free.

Increasingly both ADAS and the Scottish Colleges were now expected to work for fees charged to the customer. This was not a success because I guess these institutions had to cope with high overhead which the market could not stand. Nevertheless, in spite of the above and its difficulties, the RDBA continued to be relevant. There was a new set of regulations to ponder: COSHH (Control of Substance Hazardous to Health 1988). Chris Pearce, my able Vice Chairman and Managing Director of Filon Products was very actively engaged with the fragile roofing conundrum and conducting experiments. Approaching legislation was a concern to RDBA members but the Association also gave political power to Chris in helping frame the standards. He also steered our attention towards manufacturing in general.

Another stalwart at this time was Mike Kelly who headed the Farm Building section at the West of Scotland College. He was a very knowledgeable and able speaker and made many many long journeys from Ayr to attend almost every meeting. Mike arranged an extra conference on dairy buildings

which was very successful and helped balance the books.

In 1991 the Slurry, Silage and Fuel Regulations were published. In 1992 Dr Paul Mason of ADAS took the lead in producing a 250 page booklet bringing together all the information and construction elements of the regulations. At the behest of Maurice Barnes of CCA I joined the steering group to make contribution on behalf of RDBA. This task I enjoyed very much as I glimpsed the serious effort and thought that went into producing this document by very clever people. It is still extremely relevant 30 years later.

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### **Tony Hutchinson writes . . .**

In 1998 I was the Technical Services Manager for Eternit UK, but for personal reasons I was taking early retirement to work from home and taking on the management of the Fibre Cement Manufacturers Association and the Asbestos Information Centre Ltd.

Eternit had been long term supporters of the Farm Buildings Association (FBA) and then the Rural Design and Building Association (RDBA). One of the major users of their corrugated sheets were the agricultural frame manufacturers, most of whom were not members of a Trade Association and so unable to put their views to authority.

It was suggested that as some of the larger frame manufacturers were corporate members of RDBA that they could start a construction group within the RDBA to act as their Trade Association.

At the same time Harper Adams University who had been providing the secretariat services to RDBA wished to resign this position. It was therefor suggested that as my company Ghyllhouse Consultancy Ltd had experience of providing services to Trade Associations that we put ourselves forward to act as RDBA's National Secretary.

At the same time a corporate Member of RDBA, Robinsons of Derby, called a meeting at their premises of the other Corporate Member Frame Manufacturers and non-member frame manufacturers from a list provided by Eternit, to discuss the issue of forming a construction Group

within RDBA. It was agreed that this would be a good idea and Noel Robinson was elected as the first chairman of the group.

Subsequently RDBA offered me the position of National Secretary and RDBA Council agreed to the formation of the Construction Group with its own bank account.

The RDBA Treasurer was Jim Loynes, the head of engineering at Harper Adams and he agreed to carry on as the Treasurer. He gave me invaluable support as I took over as the National Secretary.

I soon learnt that RDBA membership was declining.

After the war and the drive to increase agricultural production in the UK, much of the innovation came from forward thinking farmers. The great strength of the FBA was attracting farmers to conferences and meetings where these innovations could be discussed and taken on board by other farmers. By the late 90s most innovation came from research institutions and private companies who were not keen on their ideas being promoted free of charge. So the strength of the FBA began to wane.

At this time my position meant that my main task was administration. RIDBA was made up of a number of regions although the only regions that were thriving were Yorkshire, Scotland and Wessex. The other regions were either moribund or having very few meetings, which few members attended.

Traditionally RDBA had held two conferences a year one in the Spring and another in the Autumn, by now there was not the support for two and so they had reduced to one three day conference in the Spring.

These were organised by the regions and in my early years marvellous conferences were organised by Wessex, Scotland, Yorkshire and the newly resurrected North West Branch. They were all very successful but it became obvious that the membership was finding it difficult to find time to spend 3 days at a conference and so they were changed to one day visits to either a members premises or an interesting farm. With a meet and informal dinner the night before, it was also arranged that a council meeting would be part of the day, with all members invited to attend. This worked well as all members who wished to could be involved in decision making at Council

level, with the Minutes sent to all members. I felt this was a way to ensure that members felt fully involved in the association.

In 2000 we set up the RDBA website. The Journal that had been published 4 times a year since the start of the FBA in 1956 was only sent to members, this was changed to a full colour magazine called Countryside Building and was widely distributed to those involved in Rural construction. This we believe helped to increase the visibility of RIDBA and to attract new members.

Despite these changes and the great conferences organised by the regions the number of individual members continued to decline, but the number of corporate members in particular frame manufacturers continued to increase although not as fast as we would have liked.

The Construction Group now had 30 members of mostly large frame manufacturers so we could be confident that the majority of working farm buildings erected in the future would be built by one of our members. In July The Group agreed their Constitution and they had finalised a health and safety statement and a mission statement, which they all had to sign up to and they were working on a quality statement.

Work continued to attract new members and publicise RDBA, with Health and Safety changes taking up more of my time.

In 2002 we became involved with Fusion Events at the Agricultural Building shows, which for a number of years were a great success attracting many important exhibitors and a large attendance from farmers and clients.

More and more quality issues were being reported in particular a number of non-members were claiming compliance with BS 5502 the British Standard for farm buildings but as there was no Building Control requirement for Farm buildings, no one was checking their claims and many were not complying. There was much discussion about what we could do about this.

It was obvious that my administrative role was changing and was become more of a technical nature. A typical example of this is the vast number of changes to regulation happening at this time, which were discussed at a Council meeting in 2002.

This is an illustrative list of the developing pressures on the industry.

### BSI – CEN

- o It is looking more likely that the UK will lose the argument and CE marking will become mandatory
- o It looked likely that if there is a CE mark for a product, then only products with a CE mark will be allowed on the market.
- ❖ A final draft of prEN 12951 *'Prefabricated Accessories for Roofing – Permanently Fixed Roof Ladders – Product Specification and Test Methods'* was out for approval.
- ❖ A new BS EN 1263-2:2002 Safety Nets *'Part 2: Safety Requirements for the Positioning Limits'* has been published.
- ❖ BS 5250 – *Code of Practice for the Control of Condensation in Buildings* was expected to be published in November
- ❖ PrEN 490 – *Concrete Tiles & Fittings – Product Specification* was out for comment
- ❖ PrEN 491 – *Concrete Tiles & Fittings – Test Methods* was out for comment

### Building Regulations

- ❖ Part B & E was expected in November
- ❖ Part A was expected in September 2003 because of Euro Code problems

### Health and safety

- ❖ *General Product Safety Directive* out for comment at end of year
- ❖ Proposed EU proposal on Safety of Services – Consultation now closed
- ❖ The HSE was going to have a blitz on occupational health in 2003, with the main areas of concern listed below:
  - o All Sites to have welfare facilities that comply with Reg. 22 CHSW regs
  - o Management arrangements to control exposure to wet cement include health surveillance where workers are exposed to cement
  - o Eliminate unnecessary use of handheld vibrating tools
  - o Where not practicable risk reduction measures in place incl. health surveillance
  - o Introduce practical measures to avoid

manual handling e.g. use mechanical handling aids in HSG 149 – 'Backs for the Future'

- o Eliminate noise risk by design
- o Management controls where noise not eliminated
- o Asbestos Survey before starting all demolition and refurb jobs
- o HSG61 lists all the occupational health advice
- ❖ The Construction Design and Management regulations (CDM) were going to be amended in 2003
  - o Expected consultation papers in the middle of 2002
- ❖ Revitalising Health and Safety in Construction
  - o Incidence of fatal injury in construction was 6X the 'all industry average'
  - o Construction 1/3 of GB's workplace fatalities
  - o 900 workers and 50 members of the public killed in 10 years
  - o 10,000 reported 'over 3-day' injuries per year
  - o In the Building industry 56% maintenance/refurbishment, 14% new build
  - o The Ten point strategy
    - Promote better working environments
    - Complement a competitive knowledge driven economy
    - Have occupational health as a priority
    - Engage and help small firms
    - Motivate employers
    - Engrain a culture of self regulation
    - Build effective partnerships
    - Include the government leading by example
    - Recognise the importance of education
- ❖ Ensure that health and safety is 'designed in'
- ❖ A new HSE document was published 'Inspecting fall Arrest Equipment'
- ❖ A new HSE document 'Use of Contractors a joint responsibility'
  - o it clarified the general H&S responsibilities of clients and contractors to protect each other, their workforce and anyone else

- ❖ There was a new 'Working at Heights Regulations SI 2003 Draft' out for comment
  - o It covered all industries not just construction
- ❖ 'ACR[CP]001:2001 – Code of Practice for working on Roofs' This was recommended practice for working on large element profiled sheeted roofs and was to be published in 2002
- ❖ 'Managing Asbestos in Premises – INDG223 (rev2)' was available
  - o The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 was debated in parliament on 24/10/2002
  - o There were two revised Code of Practices, one to cover products that normally require a licensed contractor to work on them the other to cover products where a licensed contractor is not normally required. They went out for consultation late 2001; the final draft is expected to go forward for approval in November of 2002
- ❖ Proposals for amending the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002. HSE, 2002 (CD184)
  - o Set out HSC's proposals for regulations to amend the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)
- ❖ Review of existing supporting scientific knowledge to underpin standards of good practice for key work – related stressors: phase 1. ISBN 0717625680
  - o Undertaken to identify the best available evidence on the ways in which stress affect individuals at work
- ❖ Noise at work – advice for employers – HSE, 2002 (INDG362)
  - o Replaced four existing noise leaflets, ringing all the generic information on noise together

## Environment

- ❖ DEFRA provided an update on the subjects listed below
  - o Spending review 2002 and what it means for DEFRA
  - o DEFRA's aim and objectives (revised)
  - o Ministerial responsibilities (revised)
  - o DEFRA's new corporate identity

- o Secretary of State's statement to WSSD in Johannesburg
- ❖ DEFRA put out a consultation on Legislative Proposals: Habitats Directive and Land-use Planning Regime
  - o Response was required by 24th January 2003
- ❖ ODPM put out a consultation paper 'The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC): Draft Guidance'
  - o Response required by 24th January 2003

## General

- ❖ The NFRC issued a draft 'Check List to Establish Non-fragile Roof Assembly Facts for HSE'
  - o They required comments as soon as possible
- ❖ The NFRC issued advice on 'Performance standard for butyl strip sealants in metal clad buildings'

A massive list and most items relevant to our members. It was up to the Secretary to keep a watching brief on it all and to pass comment when it was felt necessary.

So, by this time RDBA's original main aim of innovation in farm buildings had changed to keeping up and complying with Regulation changes. Many blamed this on the Common Market, but I am not convinced this was the case, as many of the regulation changes were instigated by the UK and would have happened even if we were not in the European Union.

It did mean that innovation and researching on how to make farm buildings more productive was not given the time that it had in the past.

This work on Regulation Changes continued to increase during my time as secretary.

By January 2003 there were 31 full Construction Group Members and 15 small construction Group Members, which in total payed £7570.00 per annum in subscriptions to the RDBA. Based on the expected income from subscriptions this was 37% of the RDBA's subscription income.

It was agreed that the separate bank accounts for the construction Group RDBA would be combined into one and the management committee of the Construction Group would combine with Council.

At this time despite some great conferences and visits to some very interesting projects we were finding it very difficult to recruit new farmers and individual members but the number of corporate members of the Construction Group continued to increase. By 2004 the Construction Group had 60 members and their percentage of total subscriptions was 60%.

2004 saw much debate about safety of telehandlers and their control. A new regulation came out which banned the use of telehandlers where the control was at ground level. It stated that the control had to be by a man in the basket. This was written by a group led by the HSE but predominantly made up of equipment manufacturers rather than the users of the equipment. RDBA Members had been using telehandlers with control at ground level for many years safely. We carried out a survey of members and found that after nearly 500,000 man hours using baskets with non-integrated controls i.e. control from ground level there had been no accident. Man baskets with integrated controls had been used by members for only some 45,000 man hours with one accident. We therefore advised the Group, but our concerns were not taken on board.

I believe we were proved correct because soon there were a number of accidents with the operative being crushed over their controls because they had taken the basket up and not seen the steel work above them. The regulation was changed to ensure crash bars were incorporated going over the top of the baskets. There are still accidents because the operative in the basket steers the ground vehicle over an obstruction which causes the basket at height to swing violently.

We did gain approval from the HSE that our members could continue to use the non-integrated man baskets as we had proved that we could do so safely.

A couple of years later the HSE inspector who had given us approval moved and their replacement went by the book and was not interested in our safety record and advised that if we did not advise our members to stop using non-integrated man baskets, The HSE would withdraw all support from RDBA.

By 2005 the Construction Group was becoming a lot more powerful within RDBA and as many frame manufacturer members were involved in industrial construction the AGM in March agreed to a change of name to Rural and Industrial Design and Build Association with a new constitution agreed.

2006 was RIDBA's Golden Jubilee so a great dinner was organised attended by a number of Founder Members such as David Sainsbury a leading Vet who was a key player in the early days of the Farm Building Association. We found a full set of the old Journals and they were put out for attendees to read.

In 2009 an agreement was made with FASET for training of RIDBA members to fit nets and be accredited as net riggers on their own buildings. The card would be used to show the HSE the competence of the riggers. This was required because in many instances employing specialist net rigger companies was not practical. As many RIDBA Corporate Members are erecting relatively small agricultural and industrial portal framed buildings. Many of the buildings only take a few days from start of erection to completion.

More and more of my time was spent on technical issues and so the administration side was difficult to fit in, with most of my time being spent on Health and Safety, CDM, National Specialist Contractors Council (NSCC), Small Business Trade Association Forum (SBTAF) of the HSE, Advisory Committee for Roof Safety (ACR), CE marking, Welding accreditation RWC, Net rigging training, Generic Factory Quality Control Manual (FQCM, Load Tables BM TRADA agreement to CE Marking and accreditation.

One of our long-term Members, Architect Nick Woodhams had chaired the BSI committee B549 which was responsible for BS 5502 and all its parts covering Farm Buildings for 50 years and was now retiring. When he started work on the committee there was no British Standard for farm buildings and by the time of his retirement there were 31 British Standards and Codes of Practice covering all types of Farm buildings. A fantastic job. Someone needed to take over his role as Chairman and so I took over from him.

Corporate Membership continued to increase but individual membership was still decreasing.

It became obvious that most of the individual members were very interested in the results of a good quality building but had little interest in the buildings construction. So, they were keen to see how the animals using the buildings were being looked after, what and how they were being fed, how much time they spent in the building, the latest ideas in milking or lambing, etc, etc. but little if any interest in the construction. Which was surprising considering when most joined the Association was called the Farm Buildings Association.

Corporate Membership now contributed 86% of the Association's Membership income.

At this stage we realised that we needed help not only to fully understand the requirements of the CE Mark but also to find ways to help members obtain a CE Mark for their frames, in the most cost efficient way. We therefore contacted the structural steel side of CORUS now TATA, The Steel Construction Institute (SCI) and the British Constructional Steelwork Association (BCSA). TATA initially offered to help after we showed that agriculture used approximately 15% of the structural steel used in single story construction but this help was later vetoed by the BCSA, who were not prepared to offer any help and in fact provided us with incorrect information, saying that CE Marking was not required for agricultural buildings. We pointed out that they were wrong, in Scotland farm buildings were covered by their Building Regulations and most frame manufacturers making farm buildings also made frames for industrial buildings. They then refused to speak to us for some years and TATA advised that they could not provide the grant direct. So, we ended up with the big boys i.e. the BCSA getting a lot of support from TATA to cover the cost of CE Marking, but RIDBA getting nothing. Very frustrating and annoying.

The SCI were extremely helpful. They could not provide grants but they did lead us through the design issues and introduced us to BM TRADA Certification who are accredited to act as a Notified Body for CE Marking of steel frames.

At the same time FASET had withdrawn our ability to use their GSA1 assessment to assess the competence of riggers. We decided to work with Rob Harris to develop our own assessment.

At the same time we are also looking to develop our own Edge protection competence scheme.

The decision was taken to employ a consultant to help us with the technical issues associated with CE Marking of steel structures and so Martin Heywood ex the Steel Construction Institute was taken on as an expert structural engineer in 2012.

Another issue causing us problems was the requirement under CE Marking for all welders to be certificated. We had received some very high prices from welding trainers to train and certificate our Members Welders. We then found NDT Services Ltd and in particular their senior welding trainer John Turner who set out a training package for members and a cost for their testing and certification which was much more reasonable. We reached an agreement and John then provided invaluable support to RIDBA and its members.

2013 – We held our first Farm and Agricultural Buildings (FAB) Awards with the Wessex Conference on Farm buildings and design

The revised Construction Products Regulation was quoted in the Official Journal and so come into force in July 2013.

We spent a lot of time working with Martin Heywood and BM Trada to develop a Design Protocol, a Quality Control Manual and an Internal Auditors course with Certification for those that past, for Members to use as part of the CE Marking of their structural steel.

I had now advised Council that I wished to retire and so suggested that work started on looking for how I would be replaced.

2015 I advised all that following discussions with a solicitor regarding Corporation Tax, it had been advised that if the association was incorporated to become a company limited by Guarantee, this would substantially lower corporation tax, as surplus on services provided to members would not be taxable. More importantly it would also limit members risk; in the unlikely event that RIDBA was sued, as we are presently set up, once RIDBA's funds are used up the members become responsible for any costs or judgements. If we were Ltd by a guarantee of £1.00 from each member then that reduces the Member's financial risk to £1.00. It was agreed in principle that this was the favoured route.

Steps were taken to change to a limited company with Council Members being the new Boards of Directors. The name to be RIDBA Limited.

At the same time a Job Description was written and agreed for the secretary's replacement.

After contact with a number of Associations the decision was taken that Build UK would be contracted to provide Secretarial Services to RIDBA from March 2016, and I retired.

What I at first thought would be an administrative job turned into a technical role in supporting the members to comply with the massive number of regulations now in place for construction and the placing of materials on the market.

As I have said before this did mean that innovation and progress in making farm buildings more efficient was put on the back burner. I am also not convinced that the massive effort required to CE Mark all steel frames was justified or what benefits it gained.

I thoroughly enjoyed my 17 years as Secretary of RDBA and the RIDBA, helping it change from a small Association of farmers and surveyors with a few frame manufacturers into what ended up as the trade Association for the frame manufacturers involved in Farm Buildings but who more and more were involved in Industrial construction. Following my retirement, I was delighted to be invited to be an Honorary Member, which I gladly accepted. I had made a number of close friends from my time as Secretary and looked forward to attending some of the future functions and to watch how RIDBA developed and expanded.

## Chapter 13

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# RDBA to RIDBA

by Anthony Lowther

My first knowledge of the FBA came when I was invited to attend a meeting at Stoneleigh during the annual agricultural show that was held on the site. I was rather flattered to be invited as it seemed to me that the great and the good of the steel framed building suppliers were invited and it was something of an honour to be on the list. My recollection was that John Dominy of Eternit and Noel Robinson of Robinsons of Derby were taking the initiative to recreate the FBA in a new format. Tony Hutchinson was to be Secretary, and it all seemed to me to be a very good idea.

I had no preconceptions as to what would happen at meetings, never having experienced the FBA, but they were informative and the attendees welcoming and friendly. As always when the day of a meeting arrived you would be busy at work and wishing you hadn't said you would attend but, without fail, by the end of the day there was always something you had picked up that made the time out from the office to be a good investment. If nothing else it was always reassuring to hear that other people had the same problems as you even if the problems remained unsolved.

Often the meetings had evening dinners which were invariably good fun. Some of the most inspirational ideas and plans were made at about 1.00am in the bar; if only we could have remembered them in the morning. On occasions we had too much fun and I would have to admit to not getting the full benefit of some meetings when nursing a hangover.

RDBA got off to a good start and with Tony Hutchinson effectively running the show it did well for a number of years but then membership plateaued and after a few more years started to slip. The organisation was two groups in one: the more FBA and agriculturally orientated members and the Construction Group made up of the businesses

mostly revolving around the supply and erection of buildings who were providing the majority of the funding. There were also several remaining regional groups who were run by some very enthusiastic people who put on some excellent farm based events. However, whilst there was overlap, the interests of the various parties were different. To the credit of the Construction Group there was never any griping about the cross subsidy even as money became tight.

Now recollections may vary, but as it came to my turn to take the Chair RDBA's decline was accelerating. Membership continued to fall despite Tony Hutchinson's best efforts. Finances were also becoming parlous, to the extent that we were nearly down to £10,000 in the bank. Discussions were had and hands were rung but it was felt the only way forward was for the Construction group to take the lead and for RDBA to become a full trade association. If we could reverse the loss of the companies and bring in new members we could get the finances back to a sustainable footing. With money in the bank the trade association could continue to support the activities of the non-company members.

As part of the relaunch, we added the "I" for Industrial and RDBA became RIDBA. Some companies who had left RDBA, and some who we approached to join, claimed that their business carried out work in both industrial as well as the agricultural markets and being part of an agricultural association was not always recognised as a good thing in the industrial sector.

An extraordinary meeting was held at Harper Adams. I was incredibly nervous as I felt I was pushing a proposal that A) might not make any difference and B) might alienate half of the membership. Tony Hutchinson was very supportive being adamant that to do nothing would mean

we would lose the organisation entirely. The meeting was to my surprise well attended, short and the proposal passed, if not unanimously, with a substantial majority. Clive Mander made a key speech supporting the changes which was a huge relief to me. As we all know Clive has FBA in his blood and to have him give his support helped give people confidence .

Following the changes the company membership did start to grow and the finances of RIDBA have moved onto the sound footing where they remain today.

Tony and successive chairs had pushed to get RIDBA recognised by government and industry. Tony redoubled his efforts and RIDBA joined several other industry committees doing some really good work fighting larger companies and bureaucratic organisations in construction by time and time again demonstrating that RIDBA members actually knew how things really worked on site. Working with Chris Pearce of NARM Tony had already done great work on setting the standard for testing fragility of roofing products on the joint HSE/Industry body the Advisory Committee for Roofsafety. This alone has probably saved more lives in the construction industry than any other regulation this century. We took on one of the major UK contractors in the Construction Plant Hire Association who, further to a fatality on one of their sites, was trying to persuade the HSE that suspended loads on telehandlers should be banned. This would have been a disaster for RIDBA members, and we successfully demonstrated that it was the company's systems that were at fault not the principle of suspended loads. We also joined forces with the BCSA to stop FASET persuading the HSE to ban cherry pickers as means of access to roofs. It was exciting stuff, and Tony led the way putting in far more hours than those for which he was being paid. RIDBA was also very fortunate that Tony's wife Jeannie put in a lot of time organising events as well as supporting Tony. As Sir Pat commented with Tony we got two for the price of one.

In amongst the serious stuff some excellent farm visits were organised with the local associations as well as memorable trips with partners to Europe, including trips to the Merlo Telehandler factory where Jeannie's fluency in Italian was of great help.

Merlo always organised a visit to a local winery and purchases were transported back to the UK in the cabs of new Telehandlers and personally delivered by the Merlo sales team to the oenophiles of RIDBA. On one of the Italian trips, we went to a cheese factory. Resplendent in our hygiene hairnets and gowns Hazel Ronson looked at the assembled company and got the giggles. Laughter being contagious the entire party cracked up and by the time a modicum of calm had been restored we were late for the start of the tour – but we still got our cheese.

Sadly, over the years, the traditional members and the regional organisations have slipped away which is sad but perhaps inevitable as the focus of RIDBA has changed. That said, if we had the time again I would advocate taking the same decisions. Whilst we clearly didn't get everything right, RIDBA is still going strong, is doing good work for its members and is an organisation of which we can all be proud.

# Conclusion

by Clive Mander

Over the years this Association has made and witnessed many changes as I have tried to illustrate.

Our host industry, agriculture, has also made vast changes. In my early days in the 1950s on the family farm of 200 acres we grew wheat, barley, oats, potatoes, cow cabbage, kale, mangolds and swedes. We also made both hay and silage. We milked 36 cows and reared their offspring. We also kept 40 sows and reared pigs to bacon weight plus kept 50 ewes over winter and lambed them. My mother also kept 500 laying hens. The rationale was that some of these ventures would produce a profit some of the years. Besides my mother and father, three men and a girl were employed. Today it is just history! It is all gone! In cereal production the whole 200 acres requires only 6-8 man days a year. Most farms now revolve around one major enterprise with perhaps peripheral enterprise not connected directly to agriculture.

The Association has continued to adapt and prosper as all these small to medium businesses have co-operated and associated to cope with the

mass of legislation and regulation government has brought forward over the years. I often struggle to see the benefits of such interference and absence of common sense. My real concern is the profusion of barriers to younger ambitious people to our sector. I know many such people who are skilled and motivated, who have the potential to grow a business, but utterly refute the idea that they should directly employ others. I feel this background is not healthy or am I too old?

I sign off with a quotation from my hero, Isambard Kingdom Brunel

***'I am opposed to the laying down of rules or conditions to be observed in the construction of bridges lest the progress of improvement tomorrow might be embarrassed or shackled by the recording as law the prejudices or errors of today.'***

# Appendix 1

## Chairmen

### Farm Buildings Association

1956	John Mackie MP ( <i>Founder Chairman</i> )
1957	John Mackie MP
1958	Wilfrid E Cave
1959	David Soutar
1960	Travers Legge
1961	Dr David Sainsbury
1962	Rev Peter Buckler
1963	Rev Peter Buckler
1964	Peter C Girdlestone
1965	Anthony Rosen
1966	Lt Col John H Tritton MBE
1967	Guy J Caren
1968	Richard Stratton
1969	Richard W Trumper CBE
1970	Edward H Mander
1971	Richard S Hollins
1972	William Marshall MBE
1973	Sir Pat Astley-Cooper
1974	Sidney J Hull
1975	Sidney J Hull
1976	Maurice M Barnes
1977	Maurice M Barnes
1978	Seaton H Baxter
1979	Peter Oakley Clarke
1980	Paul Douglass
1981	Gilmour Payne
1982	John H Messer
1983	John N Addison
1984	Richard A Bennett
1985	Stuart G Heyworth
1986	Frederick John Warrington Winship
1987	Eoin Bernard Hiscutt Martyn
1988	Michael John Gaisford
1989	William H Dempsey
1990	Clive E Mander

### Rural Design and Building Association

1991	Clive Mander
1992	Chris Pearce
1993	David Wood
1994	Jim Loynes
1995	Dr Mike Kelly
1996	Keith Musson
1997	David Bussey
1998	Graeme Lockhead
1999	Bob Honey
2000	Dick Coates
2001	Jim Rogerson
2002	Jim Rogerson
2003	Hazel Ronson
2004	Hazel Ronson

### Rural and Industrial Design and Building Association

2005	Antony Lowther
2006	Antony Lowther
2007	Jonathan Lace
2008	Jonathan Lace
2009	Geoff Simpson
2010	Geoff Simpson
2011	Adam Minshall
2012	Adam Minshall
2013	Alex Shufflebottom
2014	Alex Shufflebottom
2015	James Anthony
2016	James Anthony
2017	James Anthony
2018	Mike Hammond
2019	Mike Hammond
2020	Neil Fox
2021	Neil Fox
2022	Neil Fox / Mike Hammond
2023	Neil Fox / Mike Hammond
2024	Simon Pelly
2025	Simon Pelly

# Appendix 2

## Curriculum Vitae

### David Allott

<b>Education</b>	1955	A-Levels in Biology and Chemistry
<b>Qualifications</b>	BSc	Estate Management (Rural), College of Estate Management (London University) / 'sandwich year' at Wye College
<b>Employment</b>	1958-61	Middlesex County Council, Smallholdings Department
	1961	Elected ARICS (Associate of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors)
	1961-63	Farming and Building in North Cornwall Various agricultural buildings and three bungalows
	1963-64	Oxford City Council, Estates Department
	1964-65	Basildon New Town, Estates Department
	1965-74	Farm Buildings Centre, NAC, Stoneleigh Winston Churchill Trust travelling Scholarship
	1974-93	MAFF (later ADAS) Farm Buildings Group, Reading
	1993	Officially 'Retired' – working on building projects in Berkshire, Hampshire and Gloucestershire including: Visitor Centre for UK's first Wind Farm Upgrading/extending twelve residential properties

### Seaton Hall Baxter

<b>Education</b>	1951-55	Robert Gordon's College, Aberdeen
	1955-62	College of Estate Management, London (Correspondence Course – Building Surveyor)
	1955-60	Apprenticeship: E L Williamson, Aberdeen
<b>Qualifications</b>	ARICS	Associate of Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (Building Surveying) elected Associate 1962
	FRICS	Fellow of Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (1983)
	Dip Phil	1988 – University of Aberdeen
<b>National Prize Winner</b>		Driver Prize, John Gilchrist Prize, Building Construction III Prize, College of Estate Management Prize
<b>Employment</b>	1960-62	<i>Assistant Building Surveyor</i> – E L Williamson, Aberdeen
	1962-62	<i>Building Surveyor</i> – P J Ashton & Co, Oakham
	1963-66	<i>Assistant Advisory Officer (Farm Buildings)</i> – Craibstone
	1966-77	<i>Senior Investigator</i> – North of Scotland College of Agriculture Scottish Farm Buildings Investigation Unit, Aberdeen
	1977-83	<i>Head of Unit</i> – North of Scotland College of Agriculture Scottish Farm Buildings Investigation Unit, Aberdeen
	1983-88	<i>Head of School</i> – School of Surveying, Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology, Aberdeen
	1987-88	<i>Dean</i> – Faculty of Technology, Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology, Aberdeen
	1987	<i>Professor</i> – Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology, Aberdeen

1988-91	<i>Assistant Principal and Dean, Faculty of Design Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology, Aberdeen</i>
1991-97	<i>Reader/Research Manager – Faculty of Design Head of Centre for Environmental Studies, The Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen</i>
1997	<i>Emeritus Professor – Faculty of Design, The Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen</i>
1999	<i>Honorary Professor – School of Design, University of Dundee</i>
1999-2002	<i>Visiting Professor – Department of Land Use for Rural Management Scale Hayne, University of Plymouth</i>

## Tony Hutchinson

<b>Employment</b>	1964	After leaving school I took a job in a firm of Stockbrokers in Cannon Street, London
	1965	Started work at Turners Asbestos Cement Ltd in Sutton
	1967	Moved to their Nottingham office as a clerk
	1971	Promoted to technical representative covering the West Midlands
	1976	Accepted as a Fellow of the Institute of Roofing

I stayed with TAC as it was now known moving to a number of positions – Area Manager in the Southeast, Area Manager in the West Country and West Midlands and finally Technical Services Manager. I was responsible for the introduction of new non asbestos products, writing the company's technical literature, handling complaints and developing new products. Due to a serious illness of my son Michael, I took early retirement in 1999 so I could work from home.

Following my retirement, I took over the Secretary General position with The Fibre Cement Manufacturers Association (FCMA) and as the Director General of the Asbestos Information Centre.

I set up my consultancy company Ghyll House Consultancy Ltd to handle my consultancy work for Eternit UK as the company was now named. This consultancy, in combination with my position as the Secretary General of the FCMA, involved working with others in Europe to write the European Norms (ENs) for fibre cement products in Europe and around the world. As such I was the Convenor of a CEN committee and a member of others, I was also Chairman of the BS committees – 542 Fibre Cement and 549 Agricultural Buildings. I also sat on several other BS committees to represent the fibre cement industry. I retired from these positions in 2014. In 2000 I took over as the Secretary of the Rural Design and Building Association, as it was then known.

## Jim Loynes

<b>Education</b>		The King's School, Grantham
	1971	Mining Engineering, Nottingham University
<b>Employment</b>	1972	Student Apprentice, National Coal Board
	1973	National College of Agricultural Engineering, Silsoe
	1977	Charles Sharp & Co, sugar beet growers
	1979	Farm Buildings Information Centre
	1984	MAFF ADAS Farm Building Group, Leeds
	1987	ADAS Regional Office, Exeter
	1991	ADAS Regional Office, Reading
	1992	ADAS Starcross, Exeter
	1997	Harper Adams Agricultural College, ultimately Head of Engineering (until retirement)

## Clive Mander

<b>Education</b>	1960-64	Park Hall High School, Castle Bromwich
	1964-65	Rycotewood College, Thame – City & Guilds 260 Agricultural Engineering
	1965-70	Apprentice – Massey Ferguson Manufacturing, Coventry
		Mid Warwickshire College – City & Guilds 261 Agricultural Engineering Technician
		Sutton Coldfield Technical College – Institute of Marketing Part 1
		West of Scotland College – NDAgrE
		3 credit passes, 1 distinction – Field Engineering
<b>Employment</b>	1970-72	<i>Agricultural Engineer</i> – Farm Buildings Centre (FBC), Stoneleigh
	1971	Became a member of the Farm Buildings Association
	1972-74	Part time at the Farm Buildings Centre
	1972	Formed Farmstead Engineering Co – Specialist Farm Buildings Contractor (until retirement)

## Jamie Robertson

<b>Qualifications</b>	BSc Agr	1977
	MSc	Animal Science – 1984 from University of Aberdeen
<b>Employment</b>	Joined the Scottish Farm Buildings Investigation Unit (later the Centre for Rural Building, CRB) under Dr Jim Bruce in 1984	
	Took scientific instruments into commercial livestock environments to study environment/health interactions and published work on the significant interactions between air quality and respiratory health in calves, pigs, poultry and agricultural workers. Applied knowledge of building design and animal physiology to improve health and productivity in food animal production, working with government departments, trade bodies and commercial companies. The collapse in funding for applied research and closure of facilities in Aberdeen instigated a closer relationship with industry, with training, consultancy and collaboration on guidance materials on livestock housing becoming the major sources of output.	

## John Young BSc FRICS

National Service Royal Marines and Green Howards

<b>Education</b>	College of Estate Management, London University	
<b>Employment</b>	1961-78	Agricultural Land Service (later ADAS) MAFF 1961-1978
	1967-71	Seconded as Deputy Director, Farm Buildings Centre
	1976-78	Head of ADAS Unit, NAC, Stoneleigh
	1978-92	Head of Estate Management and Vice-Principal Royal Agricultural College
	1992-98	Agricultural Adviser and Head of Land Agency and Agriculture, National Trust
	1986-2000	Consultant Land Agent, Wyndham Estate
<b>Other Positions</b>	1991	President LAA Division, RICS
		Chair Working Group on 'Contractual Relationships in Farming'
	1982-92	Delegate to European Confederation of Agriculture
	1992-2000	Chairman – Gloucester Diocesan Board of Finance
	2000-2006	Chairman – Gloucester Diocese Glebe Committee
		Honorary Lay Canon Gloucester Cathedral

