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IAgrE enjoy stunning award presentation at historic Wrest Park, Silsoe, Bedfordshire

IAgrE, members, friends and family enjoyed a wonderful Awards Presentation in its 80th anniversary year at the home of agricultural engineering – Wrest Park, Silsoe, Beds.

Over 100 members and guests attended the ceremony which followed the handover of the Chain of Office from Dr Rob Merrall, President 2016-18 to our new President Professor Jane Rickson.

Dr Rob Simmons MIAgrE, senior lecturer in sustainable soil erosion systems at Cranfield received the 2018 IAgrE's President's Award. Commenting on the award CEO Alastair Taylor said, "Rob is an excellent field scientist working with farmers, agronomists and government agencies. He continues to inspire students with his brand of enthusiastic and practical 'know-how', underpinned by robust scientific evidence."

The ground-breaking Hands Free Hectare team, run by Harper Adams and Precision Decisions won the IAgrE 2018 Team Achievement Award. The project, which uses automated machines growing the first arable crop remotely, without operators in the driving seats or agronomists on the ground, ran from late 2016 to harvest time in 2017. This new award is presented in recognition of successful team work and demonstrates what can be achieved with collaboration.

A special branch award for an inspirational lecturer was presented posthumously to John Kilgour CEng, FIAgrE of Silsoe College. This award is presented in recognition of the enthusiasm demonstrated by this lecturer which inspired a generation of students passing through his hands at Silsoe. John's family collected the award on his behalf.

Brian Knight MIAgrE of Knight Farm Machinery received an Award of Merit for his outstanding contribution to the landbased industry. "Brian's vast knowledge, practical engineering skills, coupled with boundless enthusiasm has enable Knight Farm Machinery to grow and gain a reputation for producing high quality, high tech and precision built equipment. Brian's achievements and on-going innovations certainly qualify him for this award," said Alastair.

Alastair Tulloch MIAgrE, a member of the Institution for 47 years, who retired from Claas after 45 years in 2017 received an Award of Merit. His contribution to agricultural engineering and in particular the development and recognition of technicians has been exceptional.

Rupert Caplat CEng MIAgrE of the Western Branch received a branch Meritorious Award. Rupert has maintained the enthusiasm of the group through his commitment for engaging visits and speakers.

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These have included both core engineering topics and also industry related topics which have attracted non-member visitors to the meetings.

Landbased contribution awards went to Richard Smalley FIAgrE and Peter Kettlewell CEng FIAgrE. Richard has been a member of the Institution for nearly 20 years and has been a regular attendee at branch presentations and technical meetings for many years. He has served on the Wrekin branch committee since 2014 and has over 50 years' experience and expertise in machinery design, closely allied to agricultural engineering. He has produced many specialist, niche market machines for forestry, agriculture, construction and water supply and his multi-purpose 'Smalley 5' walking excavator is claimed to be the world's first mini excavator.

Peter Kettlewell's first degree from Manchester was in Physiology but this was followed up with a BSc Hon in agricultural engineering from Silsoe College. Last year he and Professor Malcolm Mitchell, a human and animal physiologist based in Scotland, won the prestigious Humane Slaughter Association Award which recognises those that have made major scientific advances in the welfare of livestock as recognition for the developments they have made in improving the welfare of food animals during transportation.

"It is extremely fitting that Peter should receive this IAgRE award for his work in an area where only an agricultural engineer, could have such a major impact throughout Europe and beyond," said Alastair.

This year IAgRE and CNH Industrial announced a new, prestigious student award which is open to students in higher education. The first winner of this award is Michail Giannitsopoulos of Cranfield University for his thesis 'Optimising Conservation Tillage systems for wheat and oilseed rape production.' Michail received a trophy for his university, a cheque for £500 plus the opportunity for future support from CNH.

The Douglas Bomford Paper Award was collected by Clare Butler Ellis CEnv FIAgrE. This award is offered to the author or authors of a paper, which in the previous year has been published in full in one of the IAgRE journals, Landwards or Biosystems Engineering. The paper 'Probabilistic modelling for bystander and resident exposure to pesticides using the Browse software,' was published in Biosystems Engineering by Clare and Marc C Kennedy.

Thomas Mathias of Coleg Sirgar received the IAgRE student project and safety award for his project 'Net lifter for round baler.'

Austra Landy, business development director of Mzuri Ltd was also at the ceremony to pick up the IAgRE Ivel Award which is judged at LAMMA for the best new product or environmental innovation. Muzri won it this year for their innovative Pro-Til Xzact seeder.

The presentations were an opportunity for IAgRE to celebrate the broad diversity and depth of talent that is present in the landbased sector.

After the presentations Professor Dick Godwin and Professor Paul Miller, both long standing members of the Institution, as well as Fellows of the Royal Academy of Engineering entertained the audience with memories of the Silsoe Research Institute and Silsoe College. This was followed by greetings from Professor Vijaya Raghavn, President of the Roayl Society of Canada and Steve Searcy, President of ASABE.

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“It was a wonderful day that drew upon the Institution’s long history but also one that looked to the future,” Alastair concluded.

Notes for editors:

IAgrE is the professional body for scientists, technologists, engineers, academics, managers and students working in the landbased sector and has an international membership base.

As a licensed body of the Engineering Council (EngC) and a founding Constituent Body of The Society for the Environment (SocEnv), IAgrE registers suitably experienced professionals as Chartered Engineers, Chartered Environmentalists, Incorporated Engineers and Engineering Technicians.

IAgrE is a Licensed Body of the Engineering Council and a founding constituent body of the Society for the Environment Company No: 648041 Charity No: 257303

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