



**Institution of Agricultural Engineers**

**South East Midlands Branch**

Notice of Branch AGM to be held  
19.00 Monday 06 February 2017  
Maulden Church Hall, Church Road MK45 2AU

**AGENDA**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the AGM held on 08 February 2016
3. Matters arising
4. Chairman's report
5. Treasurer's report
6. Election of Officers for 2017/18
7. Message from the Institution President
8. AOB
9. Date of next meeting.

**Minutes of Annual General Meeting**

**Monday 08 February 2016**  
at 7.00 pm in Maulden Church Hall

**1. Apologies**

No apologies. 21 present

**2. Minutes of the AGM held on 09 February 2015**

The minutes of the AGM were accepted as a true record. (proposer: J Hunt, seconder: R Goodwin)

**3. Matters arising**

None

**4. Chairman's Report**

As usual the year started with the AGM and student presentations. Professor Jane Rickson relayed a message from the president and updated us with the activities of the Institution over the preceding 12 months. The Institution was in a healthy state financially and in relation to the Engineering Council. Farewells were relayed to Sylvia Harris after 7 years at the Institution and Sarah McLeod welcomed as her replacement.

Student representation was stronger than ever this year with five students competing to win the prize of the best overall presentation based on "presentation style, use of visual aids, technical content and clarity of message".

**Benedict Unagwu** (Cranfield) reported on his research to assess the effects of different organic amendments in restoring the health of degraded soils, while **Joseph Martlew** (Harper Adams) spoke to his research on tillage and traffic effects on row crops in Sub Saharan Africa. **Michail Giannitsopoulos** (Cranfield), who was at the outset of his research, described how he was going to investigate various performance parameters of conservation tillage practices and tillage placement on crop growth and yield. **Michele Faralli's** (Harper Adams) research was focussing on the drought tolerance of oilseed rape and how applying an anti-transpirant at the right time might avoid depression in yield and quality. Finally, **Yara Boubou** described her work on reducing in-field variation of lettuce crops and how precision inputs based on soil differences might overcome the problem. Lengthy deliberations by the judges selected Yara Boubou as the winner and Alan Plom had the pleasure of presenting her with a cheque for £75. More information about their presentations can be found in the Summer issue of Landwards 2015.

Six technical meetings followed our AGM plus a summer visit. Starting the year was a presentation by Jon Swain of the Farm Energy Centre, who brought alive what might have seemed the mundane subject of energy efficiency in agriculture and gave a fascinating insight into challenges and innovations. He highlighted simple but highly effective solutions such as lagging tanks to the more sophisticated introduction of solar panels. In particular he dispelled the myths of energy being expensive, that little extra efficiency is possible and that saving energy is difficult.

Charles Nicklin of JCB described the evolution of their Fastrac high speed tractor, a massive leap from the hydraulic tipping trailer which was the first product J C Bamford designed and built back in 1945. Now with a £3 billion annual turnover, the company is well placed to have had the resources to develop this unique and sophisticated machine.

Dave Tinker's write up in Landwards (Summer 2015) provides an in depth summary of Charles's presentation.

A visit to Jordan's Mill in May provided some light relief from technical meetings and signalled a summer recess.

Professor Paul Miller set us off to a flying start to the new technical meeting season with his talk on the engineering challenge of weed control. This topic is very much in the limelight at the moment, with more and more chemicals being withdrawn due to health or environmental concerns while on the other hand, resistance is playing an ever larger part in reducing the efficacy of those chemicals left. So, high time we took a broader approach to weed control and Paul touched on a wide range of methods which we will increasingly need to employ, many of which need a strong engineering component.

Michael Ives of Claas, talking to the subject of Telematics, showed a different type of engineering, now widely employed in agriculture, namely electronics. Primarily driven by a desire to increase output per unit of input, Claas Telematics is all about gathering and responding to data in real time, such that efficiency is improved and machines

protected from predictable breakdowns. Monitoring and recording are also seamlessly integrated, so ensuring that legislation is more easily complied with.

George Sly presented at our December meeting, this time on the subject of strip tillage. George had previously spoken to the subject of rubber tracks but this time he was dealing with one of the machines that might go behind them. Strip tillage is becoming more popular and for the very good reason that the machines are becoming more sophisticated. In the case of Sly Agri's "Stripcat", it fulfils the principles of strip tillage in disturbing only that area where the crop is to be planted (in rows between 45 and 75 cm apart) while being capable of seeding and applying fertiliser in one pass. In engineering terms, most of the pneumatic components on the Stripcat are mass produced for the truck industry, so are readily available and comparatively cheap.

The last presentation in the 2015-16 session was given by Alastair Leake of the Allerton Trust. Alastair whose project is based in Leicestershire, spoke about how highly profitable farming could go hand in hand with an environment that supports a wide diversity of species. Many of these rely on a healthy soil environment, and this is perfectly in tune with getting the best out of crops and reducing the threat of water run-off and pollution of water courses. Getting these positive messages out to farmers can often be a challenge so Alastair's team have learnt to title their events at Loddington in such a way that doesn't mislead, but strikes a chord with potential audiences!

This year's winner of the Shepperson Memorial Prize was Joanna Niziolowski for her thesis on "Optimising soil disturbance and mulch attenuation for erosion and runoff control in asparagus crops". Congratulations to Joanna for an excellent piece of work.

On behalf of Branch members, I would like to thank the Branch committee for their continuing dedication to delivering an interesting and varied technical programme. Also to our speakers who often "enjoy" some quite intense questioning from the other and most important section of the Branch membership, namely those who attend our meetings, regularly or irregularly. They are rarely disappointed by the high quality of the presentations given and the specialist knowledge of our speakers, so many thanks to them.

Average attendance at our meetings in the last 12 months dropped slightly to 16, but they are dedicated and well-rewarded!

Tim Chamen  
February 2015

The meeting accepted the report. (proposer: J Rickson, seconder: C Butler-Ellis)

## 5. Treasurers Report.

### STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31.12.2015

#### SOUTH EAST MIDLANDS – BRANCH 5

	£	£	£
Balance at 01/01/14			
Branch current a/c	560.87		
Central deposit a/c	57.23		618.10
Add: grant		391.00	
Less: meeting expenses	303.51		
prizes	150.00	453.51	

			(62.51)
Balance at 31/12/15			555.59
- made up of			
Branch current a/c	560.87		
Central deposit a/c	(5.28)		555.59

The foregoing is a true statement of the transactions recorded in the Institution's central records for the year ending 31 December 2015.

**Alastair J Taylor**

Secretary and Chief Executive

January 2016

The accounts were accepted. (proposer:C Butler-Ellis, seconder:A Plom)

**6. Election of Officers for 2016/2017**

Chairman: W C T Chamen

Vice Chairman: J Hunter

Secretary/Treasurer: J V Stafford

Ordinary Members: A Mouazen, A Plom, J Rickson, M Stephenson, D Tinker

R Jones was proposed to join the committee by WCT Chamen, seconded by R Godwin.

Q Dawson stood down from the committee and was thanked for his service.

The meeting accepted these officers and committee members.

The meeting expressed gratitude for all the work that our chairman, Tim Chamen, puts in running the branch and also to our secretary, John Stafford.

**7. Message from Institution President** – presented by C Butler-Ellis.

It was emphasised that all members may attend council meetings which are now being held at various locations.

**8. Any Other Business**

D Tinker brought information on EurAgEng to the meeting.

**9. Date of next Annual General Meeting**

06 February 2017

John Stafford

Branch Secretary & Treasurer

08 February 2016