The Institution of

Agricultural Engineers

Founded 1938 – Incorporated 1960

## Special IAgrE Branch Award for an Inspirational Lecturer

## John Kilgour

**CEng F**IAgrE

John was responsible for motivating a generation of agricultural engineering students at Silsoe College. He had boundless enthusiasm for his subject and had a real gift for opening the eyes of the young to the world of engineering for agriculture.

His clear satisfaction at overcoming engineering challenges was matched by his zeal for communicating to youngsters about the world around us. Single-handedly organising student visits, John drove his students literally thousands of miles (at considerable speed), taking groups to tractor manufacturers, tyre manufacturers, abattoirs, truck manufacturers, civil engineering projects, vehicle testing facilities, ball bearing factories, machinery manufacturers,   
electronics companies and international

shows. He was ensuring that we got a well-rounded grasp of how the world around us worked, ensuring that we had a practical understanding of the various facets of our discipline – not simply from video resources, but from real life. Students got to appreciate the realities of the meat processing factory, the brick works, fenland drainage as well as the diesel engine production line at Ford tractors. There was even time to appreciate the craftsmanship in coachbuilding and interior leatherwork at Aston Martin.

Lecturing on the finer points of thermodynamics theory, there was always a steam-engine related example, and his students came to value his honest, practical engineering assessments when it came to project work and simply making things that worked well. His experience in developing countries and with the disabled and disadvantaged was inspirational to many. His good-natured humanity and desire to make a difference was a real example to many, and his spirit of ‘just giving things a go’, has, I know, has been an important influence on many lives.