



Future Farmers of Wales

The Winter Visit and Annual General Meeting
Royal Welsh Showground in Llanelwedd
7th November 2015.



The visit was kindly organised by the society and our guides were Mr Aled Jones, Assistant Chief Executive and Mr Andrew Crockett, Estate Manager.

The Royal Welsh owns over 300 acres, majority is used during the show events for caravans and parking.



The main site extends to approximately 150 acres and provides a permanent base for about 22 office staff and 8 estate staff responsible for organising the various shows and events throughout the year. About 400 events are held on the showground each year.

Other permanent offices on site include the NFU, Wales YFC, FUU and Lantra.



During the Royal Welsh Show in July, the showground opens its gates to approximately 240,000 visitors annually and showcases over 8,000 livestock.

Our tour began with an insight into the proposed new Equine Project. This will involve extending the ground surface known as the Display Area to accommodate more horse stables and an enlarged Horse Marquee at the Winter Fair. It also includes a significant earthworks programme to and re-landscaping a piece of land called North 3 to provide additional vehicle parking during the Show. This project is being supported by Society funds and the 2015 feature county of Gwent, who have raised over £230,000. The feature county of 2017, Carmarthenshire, has also earmarked this project to support.



During the Royal Welsh Show in July, about 3,400 horses are entered during the 4 day event. Therefore, there is an increasing demand for stables, accommodation and parking for the events. It was discussed that with the addition of more facilities the Society could offer more events for equine throughout the year.

Aled then proceeded to show the group what works the estate team were planning and carrying out to be lower car park areas and machinery isles, before continuing towards the main ring.

Over recent years, the main ring has had much work done, to include drainage systems and re-surfacing. Although during dry periods the ring does require irrigation especially with the fine weather we have had during the main show over recent years, (may the good weather continue).

During our visit we took shelter from some heavy rain in the grandstand, here Aled informed us what possible projects may take place over the next coming years, the management and recycling of rain/surface water and securing a private water supply which will be supported by the Meirionnydd feature county of 2016. Recent expenditure in renewable energy such as the installation of solar panels on the food hall had been a worthwhile investment.



The tour proceeded up to the sheep and cattle buildings. Further behind these buildings we saw the newly built isolation pens to house any injured or sick animals during the various events, hopefully these units won't be used regularly, but they are available if ever an incident occurred.

Directly opposite to the isolation pens, there has been an addition bay to the livestock building. The bay is used when unloading cattle to control stock. This will be used in the Winter Fair to inspect cattle as they are unloaded to ensure they are safe and quiet enough to enter the main building. Any wild stock can be held until they have calmed down. Often after a long journey, stock can be irritated from their travels. This also allows a safe place to catch any livestock that gets loose when unloading. The society intends on building further handling gates to securely manage stock for future events to ensure the safety of all stewards, exhibitors and the public.

Following the tour, the group were welcomed to the newly renovated hotel premises; Neuadd Henllan, for a short tea break before having presentations by Aled Jones and Greg Thomas.

Aled began proceedings by informing the group about his recent Nuffield Scholarship travels looking at the role of agricultural societies and shows in promoting, developing and innovating the agricultural industry.

Aled has been fortunate to visit many different shows and state fairs in many countries, looking at more commercial showing for both livestock and function of shows, learning how the RWAS can be adapted or driven with the 21st century technology, demand, interest and education.



American fairs are geared towards informing a largely urban audience, maintaining young interest and promoting education through a carnival appeal.

His Nuffield report is now looking towards the RWAS and the future of the show, what does it offer and what is its role. Education has the potential to be driven and can attract more people. The international opportunity is also open for expansion, there are facilities present for international visitors which is popular. Very little marketing is done internationally and media offers an opportunity for more for this section.



After travelling to America and China, Aled is now in the process of writing up his report and encourages anyone to look at a Nuffield Scholarship and to take the opportunity.

Following Aled's presentation, we heard from Greg Thomas an Aberystwyth student from Builth Wells. Greg has been carrying out research into the Royal Welsh as part of his PhD.

His research looked into a survey of people who attend the show and the development of the Profiles, Humans of the RWAS.

To summarise the surveys and interviews conducted on 1,027 people from the general public, 51% were agricultural based and attended for an average of 2-4 days. The livestock sector showed most popularity and 93% intend on returning for future shows.

A trade survey looked into broad awareness, their attendance to the show over recent years and how the Society can improve their role as a venue for trade stands.

The Humans of the Royal Welsh profiles are based on the Humans of New York stories, these are a picture and a brief detail about each person at the show. These profiles are shared on Twitter and Facebook. During the week of the Royal Welsh Show, 62 profiles were made which achieved 1,455 likes and viewed by nearly 200,000 people.

Greg still has all of his research to write up but keep an eye out for future profiles on Facebook and Twitter.

Our guest speaker for the evening dinner was Mr David Morgan the President of the RWAS elected by feature county Monmouth. Mr David Morgan, the originator of the first robotic milking parlours in Wales and known to many as 'Morgans of Usk' now runs alongside the dairy enterprise, a steel fabrication business for commercial, industrial and agricultural buildings.



We heard a brief history of the show and how his experience over the last two years with all fundraising events and sponsorship events to include tractor runs, frog racing, auctions and ploughing for the Chief Exec's Challenge.

We are very grateful for the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society for allowing us to tour around the show ground. Thank you to Aled, Greg and David Morgan for their talks and to Neuadd Henllan for their hospitality.

