Chairman’s Update

Our seven 2015 Irish scholars performed very well at the 2015 International Contemporary Scholars Conference in France back in March. They had prepared well, and each of them got a huge benefit from the week with fellow scholars from other countries. They have developed a strong network of friendships which will endure for many years.

During the CSC, the Board of Nuffield International (NI) used the opportunity to review its strategic goals. These include (1) expand the reach of NI through a development plan and the provision of NI scholarships, (2) develop and ensure implementation of ethos, (3) develop the NI story and brand, (4) ensure that governance standards are in line with best practice and (5) ensure financial independence of NI.

Up to now, Nuffield Australia has carried out the role of co-ordinator of the activities of NI. As this is a growing role, NI will take on these activities directly for the future and Jim Geltch will take on the full time role with NI. Part of this role will be to source funding for NI scholarships.

Sally Thompson, who has organised the GFP visits to Brazil, and has promoted Nuffield in that country, has been appointed Honorary Ambassador for Brazil at Nuffield International.

Nuffield Ireland is delighted to host the 2016 CSC, which will take place from March 5th-12th in Cavan and is co-ordinated by Alo Mohan. In 2017 the CSC will take place in Brazil and will likely be followed by New Zealand in 2018.

Nuffield Australia organised a successful study tour to China for all the Nuffield Alumni in March from 13th to 27th. There will be further opportunities to participate this type of study tour to Brazil in 2016 and Africa in 2017.

This July we will again be seeking application for 2016 scholarships. If you know of suitable candidates, who have real potential to be future agricultural leaders, please encourage them to apply.

Bill O’Keeffe,
Chairman,
Nuffield Ireland.
Contemporary Scholars Conference 2015

This year’s Contemporary Scholars Conference (CSC) was held in Reims, France. Reims is over 1 hour by road NE of Paris. It is one of the main centres of Champagne growing, and is a mainly arable crop area with cereals, oilseed, sugarbeet, and of course vineyards for champagne. Reims is a historic city, which is where the kings of France were crowned over the centuries.

The CSC is a week-long programme for the newly selected scholars, where the new scholars from all 7 of the Nuffield organisations assemble. The purpose of the CSC is to provide a forum for the new scholars, where they exchange experiences and knowledge and get an understanding of agriculture and trends across the world.

There were 75 scholars from Ireland, UK, Australia, NZ, Canada, France and the Netherlands, as well as international scholars from Brazil, India, China and Mozambique.

The CSC opens their minds, and gives them new perspectives and understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing agriculture in many other countries. The scholars receive presentations from high-level experts on a range of topics including policy, trade, communication, big data, innovation and leadership.

The scholars develop close friendships and networks with their fellow scholars from across the world. Understanding agriculture in other parts of the world is an important part of the week. One of the most frequent comments in the feedback of the CSC is “we did not realise that the issues we face in most countries are the same”.

One of the great advantages of the CSC (and the Global Focus Programme – GFP) is that the scholars come from a wide range of agricultural activities including dairy, arable, rice, wine, horticulture, fruit, fishing, sugarcane, sheep and many others. The benefit of this variety is that exposure to other sectors and sharing ideas / discussing issues, very often leads to discussion about solutions. It is encouraging to hear scholars sharing experiences in one sector, which provide an idea to solve an issue in a different sector.

There were 18 presentations from experts on their topics. Each presentation was followed by a short time for reflection. The scholars (in groups of 8) then discussed the presentation, and prepared observations and questions. By the time each group had put forward its point, the topic had been thoroughly analysed, and many new angles explored.

Among all the excellent presentations, there were 2 that scholars were excited about. One was on “the Future of Farming” by Edwin van Raalte – Business Manager with Rabobank. This covered consumer trends, technology advances, Moet & Chandon production at Mont Aigu, 137 fermentation tanks with 15m litres capacity
innovation, climate change and feeding the growing world population. The other presentation was “Why do we need to communicate and how to have an accurate communication” by Jean Pierre Beaudoin of Group i&e.

There were also visits to a very large Bio-ethanol production cluster using cereals and sugarbeet for fermentation. There was also a visit to the Moet & Chandon ultra modern production plant at Mont Aigu, near Epernay. This facility recently underwent a €150m expansion and now produces over 80m bottles of its well-known champagne each year. The champagne industry is very valuable to the economy of this part of France. The value of land which is allowed be used (under strict regulations) to grow grapes for champagne is €1m per hectare .... this is not a misprint !!! A farmer can make a good living from 2 hectares of vineyard in these areas.

The enthusiasm and positivity that was shown during the week energised everyone who took part. There was a realisation that each scholar can play an important part in improving agriculture and they have developed a very powerful network to assist them to achieve this. The CSC was an excellent start to the remaining 12-15 months of their scholarship.

At the end of the CSC the Irish Scholars joined the Australian and NZ scholars for a fascinating two-and-a-half days tour of the WW1 Battlefield sites of the Somme and Flanders. The bravery of those who fought, their hardships and the sheer scale of the losses made a deep impression. It was very poignant to stand on the very battlefields where such sacrifices were made by so many Irishmen and others, from all backgrounds and beliefs.

Next years CSC will be in Ireland. Plans are taking shape, and Chairman of the Organising Committee, Alo Mohan (2013 scholar), is determined to ensure that it will be a great experience for all the new scholars. The CSC will commence on Saturday 5th March 2016, and conclude the following Saturday, 12th March.

All of the 2015 Scholars at the CSC Banquet in the Mumm Champagne House Cellar in Reims
“Magic days” with Irish grassland farmers
By Guillaume Bernard, French Nuffield Scholar 2015

My name is Guillaume BERNARD and I am a Nuffield Scholar 2015 from France. I come from Normandy, an area famous for milk production, apple trees for cider and also for the green pastures and a rainy climate! As my topic is based on innovations in grass management on dairy farms, I decide to investigate it in several countries in the world. At the end of April, I began my study in Ireland: could it be different from NW France: of course not!

Numerous Irish Nuffield Scholars are dairy farmers like me, and so I decided to visit them and to look at grass management “through Irish eyes”. It started with Bill O’Keeffe (Conna), a new geek generation farmer from Cork, who taught me how to predict grass production thanks to a programme on his tablet computer, which plans the grass budget every week.

The visit to Moorepark Dairy Research Centre and the grassland research carried out by TEAGASC showed me how grass management is crucial for farmers. I was shown inside the “grass world” where new techniques of grass budgeting, such as the rotation planner and the wedge, are used by many dairy farmers.

I had the opportunity to measure grass with David Murphy and to participate in a rainy farm walk and to meet Brian Reidy and Kevin Moran’s discussion group where a lot of dairy topics are addressed: it was very interesting, with rich exchanges between farmers. I concluded that the main criteria to succeed in dairy farming are fertility, milk solids, stocking rate and the mastering of the costs of production. This is very different from French dairy farmers, who try to increase the production per cow and maintain a flat production during all the year.

Maire McCarthy and John Buckley showed me some great West Cork farms and the beautiful landscape and sights of Kinsale harbour and the Beara Peninsula in glorious sunny weather. I also discovered the unforgettable taste of your famous Irish coffee.

Finally, with Sean Coughlan and Aidan Gleeson, I attended the Macra na Feirme Masquerade Ball, following their AGM in Loughrea, Co Galway where I danced on the floor with some Irish music till the end of the night.

If all the Irish farmers try to find “the magic day” for their grass management, personally I found “the magic stay” with unforgettable moments of discussions with Nuffield farmers with some tea, coffee or Irish beers! Thank you all Nuffield farmers for your welcome, I will never forget all these great moments.
In 2010 James Kerr was given the opportunity to go behind the doors of, statistically, the most successful sports team in the world, the New Zealand All Blacks. His quest to gain an insight into their high performance culture and his findings are described in his book “Legacy, 15 lessons in Leadership”. Kerr spoke with Sir Graham Henry and other key figures in the All Blacks’ World Cup success in an attempt to explain this success and how we might apply it to leading our own businesses and our own lives.

Character

The character of team members is described as vital. Our character decides our values and our values decide our character. Having the best form does not guarantee a place on the team because better people make better All Blacks so the continued development of team members is vital. In business and life we know the candidate with the best CV is not always the best person for the job. Character triumphs over talent.

Sweep the Sheds

Humility is seen as a vital part of a well-adjusted character. Humility allows ones character to grow and allows great leaders to connect with their values and the wider world. Kerr’s description of “Sweep the Sheds” brilliantly describes the value the All Blacks assign to humility. The date is the June 19th 2010, the All Blacks play Wales and win 42-7, after the journalists leave the room and the team debrief is complete two of the senior players pick up long handled brooms and sweep the sheds. They brush the mud and the gauze into small piles in the corner, the All Blacks clean up after themselves because no one looks after the All Blacks, the All Blacks look after themselves.

Go for the Gap

Life, business and success are never a linear curve and are instead subject to ebb and flow. Decline will follow success unless leaders are willing to adapt. Adaptation should not be a reaction but a continuous action. When on top of your game you change your game, you go for the gap.

Purpose and Responsibility

To build a successful team we need to begin with the Why? The way we feel about something is more important than what we think about it. People will invest more in a project or a position if they believe in it. People will not buy into what you do but why you do it and will follow their gut. If the why is clear the team will succeed. Leaders create leaders, although there may only be one All Black captain on the field they are fifteen leaders, they pass the ball. By creating a sense of shared responsibility and ownership individuals are then more willing to give themselves to a common cause, to pass the ball. This then allows for Whānau or being united not pulling against one another, because the strength of the wolf is the pack.
Pressure, Authenticity and Legacy

A lesson that All Blacks fans in particular are eager to learn, is how did Sir Graham Henry succeed in preventing the team from being one that would “choke” during the crucial final. This can be credited to the “red head/blue head” approach. To avoid their minds getting into that dangerous “red” area, players each have strategies to keep a cool blue head, shut everything else out and focus on the process and on the moment entirely. These maps and mantras allow players to apply the pressure rather than feel it. Authenticity of a true leader begins with honesty and integrity. Honesty allows us to have a true vision of ourselves and integrity gets the job done, because according to Kerr by being our word we make it happen. To leave a legacy is the ultimate aim in business and in life, to plant trees you will never see because this is your time.

Through his description of the 15 principles of leadership which work like the 15 players on a rugby team, Kerr shows that rugby like business and life is a game played primarily in the mind. Legacy is light reading, yet compelling reading. A must read.

Reviewed by:
Dr. Eilish Broderick,
Lecturer in Agricultural Science at Institute of Technology Tralee & Nuffield Scholar (2007).

Photos from post CSC tour of WW1 Battlefield sites

Ireland Peace Park—Messines Ridge, Flanders, Belgium

Ireland Peace Park- Memorial to casualties of the 36th Ulster, 10th Irish and 16th Irish Divisions - 69,947 killed, wounded or missing.
In the February Nuffield Ireland Newsletter, we reported on a series of industry briefings which took place in early February. On 22nd April, two further industry briefings took place.

The Scholars were hosted by Glanbia Ingredients Ireland (GII) at their HQ in Ballyraggett, by Jim Bergin, CEO of GII, and Liam Herlihy, Chairman of Glanbia Co-op and Glanbia plc. The scholars were joined by Nuffield scholars David Murphy (2011) and Mary Delaney (2014), both of whom are Glanbia suppliers.

The scholars were given an overview of the issues facing Glanbia and its suppliers. Communication with suppliers is crucial, so that they understand evolving issues such as sustainability and regulation and how this impacts on them and the business.

An outline was given of the corporate structure of Glanbia and the relationship between GII, the Co-op and the plc. GII is run with a co-op ethos, but with a plc discipline and strategy process. There has been a €235m investment programme in milk processing, which is almost complete, and this will be fully repaid by 2017.

GII expects to process 2bn litres of milk in 2015, and has 700 employees. They partner with some of the world’s leading food brands, mainly B2B. Their Core Values were outlined, as was their approach to the importance of sustainability. Their focus on developing nutritional platforms is to ensure that they add more value to their growing milk supply.

There was a very active discussion about the issues presented. The scholars gave their feedback on issues that they had experienced during their GFP travels, which led to further discussion.

In the afternoon, the scholars were hosted by Paul Nolan, Group Development Manager of Dawn Meats, at their Head Office in Waterford. He gave the background to how the meat processing industry evolved since the 1960’s.

He went on to explain how Dawn Meats developed from its beginnings in 1980 to where it is now. This has spanned the period of active EU supports through intervention purchases and export refunds to the current position where the focus is on customers and retailers.

Issues such as portion size, packaging, sustainability and carcase grades were explained and discussed. The scholars learned a huge amount during the presentation. This was followed by a tour of the boning facility. Here the boning process was explained. The different cuts of meats were shown, and the impact that different grades of carcase has on the various cuts, and how this affects the value of the carcase.

The two briefings were hugely helpful to the scholars, and gave them a deeper understanding about two of our major players in the dairy and beef processing industries. They had the opportunity to meet the key people in these businesses and get their views directly. It also introduced Nuffield to these companies, so that they will understand what Nuffield is aiming to achieve.
Travels for the 2015 Scholars

Three of the 2015 scholars (Kevin Moran, John Buckley and Joe Burke) went on their GFP, immediately following the CSC. Kevin travelled with 5 Australian, one French and one NZ scholar to the UK, France, USA (Pennsylvania and Washington DC), Germany, Czech Republic, Poland, Kenya and South Africa. John and Joe travelled to UK, France, USA (Washington DC & California), Mexico, Brazil and New Zealand. They got an opportunity to see how the leading innovative businesses in these countries have addressed their particular challenges, such as drought, skills shortages among workers, distance from markets, infrastructure deficits, technical deficits and seized opportunities. They saw world class crop breeding businesses in South Africa and Mexico.

Kevin’s GFP saw the largest tractor manufacturing site in Europe (John Deere) as well as major dairy and tillage farming operations. They got an insight into how these farms address staffing issues, effluent management, regulatory issues, access to land and financing of their businesses.

The variety of countries which were visited also gave an insight into cultural, lifestyle, climatic and infrastructure in many countries. The 2 GFP groups linked up for part of their visits to Washington DC. They had meetings with the Under Secretary for Agriculture at the USDA, and representative of farm and industry organisations, were briefed on Trade and policy issues. They had dinner at the Naval Observatory, with host and guest speaker Rear Admiral Craig Faller who spoke about his experiences on leadership. The GFP groups had the opportunity to meet so many influential business and representative groups and learn, as well as to give their perspective on farming and trade issues.

The GFP visit to Brazil was one of many highlights. John and Joe were impressed with the scale and potential of Brazil across a wide range of activities. They finished in NZ, they saw a variety of businesses across sectors. They met business people, running successful businesses, who were prepared to share their approach and philosophy. Each of our GFP participants felt that this experience was hugely worthwhile, and the learned so much about global agricultural issues.

Maire McCarthy (Japan GFP), Brian Rushe and Aidan Gleeson (both China GFP) departed for Australia for the pre GFP briefing which takes place on 2nd June. This is the beginning of their 6 weeks travel.
REMINDER — DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The Nuffield Ireland Conference will be held on Friday 16th Oct 2015 in the Castleknock Hotel.

The Nuffield UK Conference will be held in Belfast on 25th—27th November 2015.

A Global Focus Programme (China group) will visit Ireland from 8th to 14th July. Their itinerary in Ireland is organized by our 2015 scholars. They will visit Dublin, Tipperary, Cork, Galway and Roscommon.

Scholar News

Maeve O’Keeffe (2015 scholar) appeared as a guest on the “Saturday Night Show” the prime time RTE TV programme, speaking about farming. Maeve subsequently auctioned her stunning pink skirt to raise awareness about Organ Donation. See Maeve’s Flipagram about the auction on https://d3jpf0e8alwcn.cloudfront.net/bbe2d36ece41be00bd17e6fba71ba158db6345681_1163354251_1431711772143.mp4

Joe Leonard (2014 scholar) was featured on the front cover of Teagasc’s “Todays Farm” March/April edition, and the article was on the topic of Managing Stress.

Karen Brosnan (2013 scholar) addressed the Nuffield Northern Ireland Spring conference in April.

Mike Brady (2004 scholar) was a judge in the dairy section of the Zurich Irish Independent Farmer of the Year Awards 2015 in May.

Dan Steele (2015 scholar NZ) visited Ireland in March.

Satwant Singh (2015 scholar NZ) also visited in March.

Guillaume Bernard (2015 scholar France) visited in early May.

Illtud Dunsford (2015 scholar UK) visited in May.

We are grateful for the significant support of our Sponsors