

RHASS MAGAZINE

WINTER 2020

society

2010-2020



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ROYAL
HIGHLAND &
AGRICULTURAL
SOCIETY OF
SCOTLAND



Dear Members

Welcome to the winter edition of Society magazine.

I hope you are all well and are managing to cope with the continued effects that the Covid pandemic is having on our daily lives. Having said that, at the time of writing, despite stringent Tier 4 measures in a number of areas, the promise of a vaccination programme early in the New Year must give us cautious optimism that a return to near normality is not far away.

It will not have escaped your attention that this is a very much slimmed-down version of the magazine compared to our normal pre-Christmas edition. In the current continuing uncertain times, this reflects our commitment to making best-value decisions on all expenditure and the magazine is no exception to this.

The Board of Directors and staff have taken a significant number of far-reaching decisions to reduce expenditure where possible but still retain the ability to deliver a Royal Highland Show in 2021, and this is of the utmost priority when plotting our way through this rapidly changing landscape. Today's news generally consigns yesterday's decisions to history but nevertheless directors and staff are also working tirelessly to grasp every income opportunity that comes our way.

The Board of Directors and staff have taken a significant number of far-reaching decisions to reduce expenditure

The previous Society magazine had a stark message – Save Your Show – and in this issue, we will bring you up to date with the progress of the fundraising campaign and the longer term strategy to continue to ensure the work of RHASS going forward. Your support of our fundraising campaign has been fantastic and humbling and we are extremely grateful for that.

You, the members, continue to play a hugely important role and it is really encouraging that we have had a heartening response to our call for new members and from those who continue to remain members.

The magazine cover shows some of the people that RHASS has supported or celebrated over the last 10 years and is a visual reminder of the impact of the work of the Society. This, along with the Royal Highland Show, is a demonstration of the wide remit that we have and must continue to have. It is vital that we continue to be true to our charitable roots.

With regards to the RHS 2021, we continue to focus on delivering the very best event that we possibly can. We have reached

out to exhibitors, sponsors and visitors to understand what they determine to be the 'must have' elements of what will likely be a different Show to those we have staged previously. Having said that, the response to our surveys has been universally positive and the strong message is that we must carry on. To that end, tickets are already on sale for what is expected to be a sell-out Show.

As respected journalist Andrew Arbuckle wrote in the Scotsman recently " This major event has been going for more than two hundred years during which time it has survived plagues, floods, and animal disease and yet risen, phoenix like after major conflicts."

Please be assured RHASS Directors will leave no stone unturned to ensure the Show, and the Society, will continue to weather this latest storm and emerge stronger for it.

It only leaves me to thank members for their continued support and once again, your contribution to our fundraising efforts and to wish you well for what will be a quite different festive season. Here's hoping that 2021 will see us all turn the corner.

Bill Gray, Chairman

ROYAL HIGHLAND SHOW 2021



The cancellation of this year's Royal Highland Show served, if nothing, else to remind us of how important the four days at 'Ingliston' are to our membership and the wider farming community. Plans for the 180th RHS are well underway and we spoke to RHASS's Director of Operations, Mark Currie, and David Tenant, Livestock and Competitions Manager, to hear about their plans for next year's event.

What has been the focus for the team?

Without doubt it is about maintaining high levels of customer and exhibitor experience. The Royal Highland Show is a respected event with a reputation built over 180 years – we need to protect this at all costs. The quality of the visitor experience and the integrity of competition is what we will be measured on, so this cannot be compromised.

What has shaped your thinking when planning the 'must haves' for the 2021 Show?

We have surveyed all of our exhibitors, trade-stands and the general public and will be engaging with our members in the new year to ensure we incorporate all of their feedback into our planning.

Essentially people tell us they attend the Show primarily because we offer the best of Scotland's food and drink and unrivalled access to spectacular livestock and equestrian events. In the current landscape of COVID, additional measures and some changes to the design of the event will be necessary to ensure the event can go ahead and that people feel comfortable and safe when attending. We benefit from having the biggest and best open-air venue in Scotland and recent investment in the showground like the East Crossing Point has allowed us to plan with confidence.

What changes will we expect?

The biggest challenge is to manage numbers and the necessity for a robust track and trace protocol. The best way to overcome this is by introducing dedicated day tickets which means visitors will need to purchase an entry ticket and parking ticket for the day on which they plan to visit. Members will also need to register for their ticket this year and tell us what days they are planning to attend, you will be contacted directly with instructions on how to do this. Other measures will include managed avenues, more toilets and mandatory mask wearing in some areas on site. We have been working closely with our Local Authority Public Health partners to ensure we are achieving the highest standards of health and safety across all areas of the site.



**TICKETS ON SALE NOW FROM
ROYALHIGHLANDSHOW.ORG**



**ROYAL
HIGHLAND
SHOW 2021**
17 - 20 JUNE
PARTNER SINCE 1981
 **Royal Bank
of Scotland**

How will you run a Show with a reduced staff team?

Every year, the RHS relies on around 8,000 staff, contractors, volunteers, exhibitors and trade stands to make it the global spectacle it has become, and this year will be no different. Whilst, like many others, we have had to make some changes to our team's structure, the Directors made the decision to protect the show team as much as possible and we are therefore confident we will deliver another world class Show in 2021.

What is achievable in the enclosed spaces?

Scotland's Larder Live is a key attraction each year and we fully expect it to be the same for 2021. I would expect to see a reduced capacity inside the hall with wider avenues and we will be working closely with our partners in this area to ensure both visitors and trade-stands enjoy another successful event.

Additionally, we have looked at how we maximise the space in the livestock and equestrian areas with a focus on maintaining the highest level of competition. In tight areas we will look at 1m+ distancing which may mean wearing masks and one-way systems being introduced. Full safety details for each area of the Show will be released closer to June.

With RHS likely to be a sell-out event, will there be a virtual element to the 2021 Show?

The online presence of the Show this year will be greatly increased with an improved virtual offering for trade, shopping, competition and entertainment with the aim of extending the event beyond the four days of the physical Show. We are really excited about the potential this brings and we are busy finalising plans for the first ever Royal Highland Show app which will be launched in April 2021!

And finally what is your message to RHASS members?

I'd like to personally thank our Members for their continued support of the Royal Highland Show and assure them that we are planning on delivering a high-quality Show of livestock and trade in 2021. Whilst being a Member of RHASS goes way beyond attending the Show, we know it is a key part of supporting our charitable objectives and engaging with the wider RHASS community. With an expected limit on capacity, we urge our Members to renew their memberships now and purchase any additional tickets soon to ensure they are not left disappointed as we are likely to sell out this year.

MEMBERS ARE THE LIFE-BLOOD OF RHASS



As one of Scotland's oldest charities, your membership has meant more than ever to us this year and we thank you for your continued support.

WHAT YOUR MEMBERSHIP MEANS?

Putting on the Show is obviously one of the main ways in which we fulfil our charitable purpose to support and encourage the best of agriculture and we are determined to put on a Show to be proud of in 2021. But do you know that RHASS also provides support in a wide variety of other ways? These include:

- Financial and other support to key sector organisations such as RHET, SAYFC, the National Rural Mental Health Forum, the Moredun Foundation and RSABI
- Long service awards, recognising those men and women who have devoted their lives to agriculture and rural businesses
- Support for young people through education initiatives, grants and awards
- Supporting key activities and events in the rural calendar

We also manage the site at Ingliston, and in a normal year through our trading company, generate additional income to support our charitable objectives.

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

We have been very open about the financial challenges RHASS faces and we have taken significant steps to reduce the impact of the pandemic on our income, including:

- Undertaking a significant staffing restructure whilst protecting our core team who put on the Show
- Reducing costs across the whole RHASS group including voluntary pay cuts for the senior management team
- Taking advantage of various government grants and support schemes
- Launching our fundraising campaign to our membership and beyond
- Focusing on new, Covid-safe income streams at Ingliston

It is our aim to ensure we remain on a sustainable footing and are able to carry out our charitable purposes

for many years to come. We know that many of our members have also been impacted by this unprecedented situation and we are very grateful to all of you who have continued to support us throughout this most difficult year.

2021 will be another challenging year but we are determined to put on a Show to be proud of in 2021 and to do that, first and foremost, we need the support of our members.

HOW YOU CAN HELP?

- **Renew your annual membership**
- **Consider becoming a life member***
- **Buy a Life membership for family members**
- **Support our Save Your Show fundraising campaign**
- **Leave a legacy in your will**

* Because of the pandemic, we postponed plans to increase life and term membership rates to align them with annual membership. Rates at the moment are therefore extremely good value.



MEET OUR MEMBER – Sarah Millar

We spoke to member Sarah Millar, Director of External Affairs at Quality Meat Scotland, about what RHASS membership means to her and why she invested in a life membership for her baby daughter, Grace, this year.

“Grace’s great grandfather, (my grandad), who is sadly no longer with us, was a RHASS Director for nearly 30 years so RHASS and the Royal Highland Show have always played a huge part in our family life. I met my now husband at the Show in 2014 and we had Grace at the start of lockdown. The thing I was most looking forward to doing on maternity leave was taking her to her first Highland Show. I was gutted when it was cancelled.

I say to my friends, joining RHASS is more than yearly tickets to the Highland Show, you are supporting a charity

RHASS has faced an unprecedented challenge this year and I wanted to do my bit to try and help. If the Show had gone ahead I would have spent much more than Grace’s life membership so it didn’t feel too extravagant.

I really hope Grace will grow to love the Show as much as we do and that she will make use of the opportunities that RHASS provide - whether it be getting a RHASS scholarship, or taking a travel opportunity to further her career. My dad (Grace’s grandad) gave her some Texel sheep when she was born so I personally hope ‘the Show will go on’ and maybe she will get to show them at the Highland one day!

I say to my friends thinking about joining RHASS is that it is more than yearly tickets to the Highland Show, you are supporting a charity with a wide remit and reach and without it our next generation will not have the opportunities we have been lucky enough to have.



RHASS AGM



RHASS AGM is planned for 28 April 2021. At this stage we don’t know whether we will be able to meet in person, however following this year’s virtual AGM, we are confident that we can once again run it successfully online. Please join us as this is a good opportunity to learn more about RHASS’ work and our future plans. Keep an eye on our website and social media, along with the Scottish Farmer, for updates nearer the time.

FUNDRAISING UPDATE



**SAVE
YOUR
SHOW**

In the autumn edition of *Society*, we appealed to the RHASS membership for financial support to help us secure the future of the Royal Highland Show.

The response to the appeal in just eleven weeks has been nothing short of amazing. We are delighted that, through the incredible generosity of our members and their readiness to help, we have received over 1500 gifts and more than £250,000 in donations.

There is still a long way to go to reach our appeal target of £2million but these early results augur well for success. We have received so many messages of support: from a young girl whose family visits the Show every year wanting to devote her Duke of Edinburgh challenge to Save Your Show, to life members who joined the Society over 70 years ago for the sum of £10, who wanted to contribute and say thank you. A number of members have donated more than once, while some have signed up for regular monthly or annual gifts.

To everyone who has supported Save Your Show with a gift, whatever the value, thank you. We are humbled by your generosity and your support, and grateful for your passion and commitment to the future of the Society and the Royal Highland Show.

The campaign will continue over the coming months, with a number of new activities planned to give our members and the wider Show-going public opportunities to support. In the coming weeks, we will be featuring your stories and images of Show days gone by on the Royal Highland Show website. If you would like to contribute to this feature please contact us at fundraising@rhass.org.uk.

We also plan to launch a monthly-giving programme in the New Year, offering those who wish the opportunity to donate a small regular sum, helping the Society to plan ahead with a regular income.

As well as our members, we know that there are many thousands of others who visit the Show each year and for whom a summer with no Show is inconceivable. We will be appealing to them too, through a digital media campaign and Show channels, and to our many stakeholders - such as the Young Farmers, and other organisations with whom we work closely year in year out.

We value all of our supporters and we look forward to an opportunity to come together as soon as circumstances allow, to thank you for your generosity and to share with you the results of your support. We are working hard to plan for the 2021 Show, and we know you share our determination for it to go ahead. Without doubt it will look different in some ways, and we know that the Show's long-term future will continue to need your support beyond next year.

This is why we are committed to our fundraising for the longer term. As we look forward to the Show's 200th anniversary in 2022, we will do all in our power to secure this future, but we will need your support and that of others if we are to clear the hurdles put in place by the pandemic and its impact on our charity.

**If you would like to donate to the
Save Your Show appeal, visit
www.rhass.org.uk/saveyourshow**

**Or call 0131 335 6221
to donate by credit or debit card.**

**To speak with the fundraising
team, please call 0131 335 6214**



*To everyone who has supported
Save Your Show with a gift,
whatever the value, **thank you***

**WE HAVE RECEIVED OVER £250,000
IN DONATIONS TOWARDS OUR
APPEAL TARGET OF £2 MILLION**



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SCOTLAND



**SAVE
YOUR
SHOW**

rhass.org.uk/saveyourshow

**Save 200 years of Scotland's
agricultural heritage**

The future of the Royal Highland Show is under threat.
Will you join our community, and Save Your Show?
Donate now: rhass.org.uk/saveyourshow



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Please spread the word by posting this to a friend or family member



Pete Eccles
@MacEccles84



Brought a smile to my face!
Delighted to see @ScotlandRHShow initiative come to
life on receiving this handwritten postcard from the
very gentleman I hold responsible for my career to date
[#saveyourshow](#) [#200years](#) [#RoyalHighlandShow](#)
[#oldfriends](#) [#ThankYou](#) 🙏



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WE ARE OPEN FOR BUSINESS

We are still here!

Despite all the changes in the world, RHET is still working hard to ensure Scotland's young people have the opportunity to learn about food, farming and the working countryside by providing educational activities and resources for teachers. Although we are currently unable to deliver our face-to-face activities, our amazing RHET Network continues to pull together a variety of hands-on resources to keep the food and farming learning going as strong as ever.

Have you seen our new Early Years online resource? Why not head over to our website and have a look, there may be some ideas for activities to do with family over the festive season or some baking challenges you could do over an internet call.

Our national network of Countryside Initiative areas are still engaging with their local schools and some great activities include the recent Christmas Tree competitions, and work is underway for growing projects. Keep an eye on our website and the regional Facebook pages for more information about how you can get involved locally.





ADVENT CALENDAR

Throughout December, RHET will be highlighting some of the different foods produced locally that make Christmas special. Our online advent calendar covers everything from parsnips to turkey, looking at how the food is produced, nutrition and fun facts.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The delivery of RHET activities is reliant on the wonderful commitment and passion of our volunteers. If you have an interest in rural matters, food production, farming practices, growing, cooking or joining a committee, we would love to hear from you. There is no obligation to deliver a set number of talks or host a minimum number of visits and you will be fully supported by the regional RHET coordinator and local committee.

Please check rhet.org.uk/in-your-area/ or contact us via email rhetinfo@rhass.org.uk or via our social media channels.

SOIL'S ALIVE - children's storybook available to buy via justgiving.com/campaign/soilsalive. Book costs £10 (plus £4 P&P) and proceeds raised are donated to RHET, an excellent stocking filler!

EXPLORE THE WORLD UNDER YOUR FEET



ON SALE FROM 5TH DECEMBER
WITH ALL PROFITS SUPPORTING THE ROYAL HIGHLAND EDUCATION TRUST

WWW.RHET.ORG.UK

RHET

THANK YOU!

Thank you to Ann Redpath for generously sharing the proceeds from her Lockdown Lambing recipe book! These are still available, thanks to another print re-run, maybe even as a last-minute Christmas gift.

Email lockdownrecipebook@gmail.com
- books cost £10 plus £2 P&P

Sales so far have reached £12,000, which will be shared between The Difference at The Borders General Hospital and RHET.



Meet our Directors *... and consider becoming one!*



The Board of Directors of RHASS is made up of dedicated men and woman from across Scotland who together represent the membership and lead the Society forward.

Being a RHASS Director is without doubt a hugely worthwhile experience. For many it is an opportunity to give back to the sector, meet new people and learn from a forward-thinking organisation.

Training and support is provided for the role which encompasses much more than the four days of the Royal Highland Show. The Board is responsible for all activities undertaken across the Society, thereby playing an important role in ensuring the organisation delivers its charitable activities.

With opportunities to take part in meetings remotely through Zoom, it is hoped becoming a Director is more viable – particularly those who may consider travelling to Edinburgh a barrier to becoming involved.

RHASS recognises the value of diversity of experience and background

All RHASS members are entitled to stand for election as an Ordinary Director for the area in which they are resident and nominations are now open for Ordinary Directors for the term 2021-2025.

RHASS recognises the value of diversity of experience and background and we welcome applications from all members. If you would like to be sent a nomination form, or are interested in finding out more about becoming a Director of RHASS or the election process please contact the Society Secretary, Marie Livingstone, at mlivingstone@rhass.org.uk or the Honorary Secretary, Allan Murray, on 07831 355086.

The closing date for receipt of nominations is Tuesday 12th January 2021. In the event of there being two or more valid nominations in any area, voting papers will be sent to all members who are resident in that area.



Dennis Bridgeford

DIRECTOR INTERVIEW

Dennis Bridgeford, RHASS Director, Highland region

My family and I have always had a long history with the Show. We showed at the Highland in the 70s and even took home the Queen's Cup. Aside from cancellations for Foot & Mouth and Covid, I haven't missed a Show since I was 16!

I have been a Director for six years and it has been hugely rewarding experience. There is no doubt that it is a commitment in terms of time - I am 200 miles away from Edinburgh, but things like Zoom have made an amazing difference.

This year has been exceptionally challenging and we have had to take some really difficult decisions as a Board, which we have considered carefully and debated widely.

One example is fundraising, which is a difficult ask at any time, but more so just now. As Directors we are committed to protecting the future of the Show and the Society and I am honoured to be part of the directorship at such a significant time in RHASS's history.



Kath Dun

DIRECTOR INTERVIEW

Kath Dun, RHASS Director since July 2020 for Borders

My dad, Willie Sanderson, is a past Chairman of the Board of Directors and was the Chief Steward of Sheep of the Show for a number of years. Dad made me and my three sisters life members 30 years ago and this was one of the best gifts he could have given.

I have gained so much from my involvement with the Show including making lifelong friends through SAYFC competitions, to competing with North Country Cheviots with my husband. It's now our two children who are enjoying the whole experience that the Show brings to so many each year.

Being a farmer's daughter and wife and working as a farm vet myself in the Scottish Borders, I am very involved with agriculture and am always keen to support groups and associations where agriculture is at the forefront, including RHASS.

This is my first year as a Director and my duties are to work with the staff to ensure that we are delivering our charitable remit. 2020 has been a strange and difficult year for everyone and unfortunately this is the same for RHASS. In past years there has been sufficient income generated to allow funding to key sector organisations that RHASS is involved with such as RHET, bursaries and grants, long service awards, RSAB and SAYFC, to name just a few.

Sadly, through the loss of the Show and events, there has been very limited income in 2020 and so the mass appeal to the membership for help with donations has had to be put out there. I feel it has been my duty as a Director to support and promote this fundraising and have done as much as I can to raise funds for the Save Your Show appeal.

For anyone who is interested in working with a motivated team of individuals who have a common goal of promoting and celebrating agriculture and all things associated with it, I would recommend putting yourself up to be considered as a Director of RHASS.



QUADRANT ONE UNVEILED

We were delighted to receive the keys to our new Members' building earlier this year and bitterly disappointed it could not be showcased at the 'Highland'.

When the Royal Highland Show settled at Ingliston in 1960, the MacRobert Pavilion was gifted to members. Over the next 50 years, the MacRobert became a place for members to meet old friends, connect with new ones, celebrate success and above all find reassurance, a sense of belonging and shared purpose. Quadrant One is now a new meeting place for a new time – a place to celebrate, connect, collaborate and innovate.

While an important purpose of the building will be the focus of the Members' area during the Show, outside of those four days we intend for it to be a hub where the next generation can learn, collaborate and foster innovation. It is also hoped it will be a place for celebrating the milestones of life – weddings, birthdays and private celebrations when we are once again allowed to do so.

With a prime location right next to Edinburgh International Airport and a 280-acre site with top-class event facilities, this venue is also perfect for all manner of business events.

A number of recognition opportunities are still available for those wishing to support the capital funding campaign for the new members' pavilion.

For more information, please visit:

rhass.org.uk/getting-involved/quadrant-one/
or call Jo Andrews on 07718 424 111

We cannot wait to put Quadrant One on display in all its glory at the 2021 Highland Show

TO BOOK THIS VENUE CALL
0131 335 6200 OR 0131 335 6273

The reduced team quickly developed short, medium and long-term strategies to cope with the impact of COVID

Two years ago, in my last word I wrote of change being constant and living in unprecedented and changing times, well on reflection and compared to the year that has just passed, what an understatement that was!

No one could have predicted the impact a truly global pandemic would have on our society, our daily lives, or indeed RHASS. The 2020 Royal Highland Show was cancelled and the pandemic has had a devastating impact on our wider, diversified business.

The Society has a track record of innovation and, as Bill notes in his introduction, survival. I am truly grateful for the support and goodwill that the Scottish Agri community has shown through the year, whether supporting the virtual elements at "show time" or by signing up as life members or donating significantly to our Save Your Show campaign. The response has been hugely humbling and knowing that what we do matters spurs us on in difficult days.

Earlier in the year, during the recordings of our OnFarm podcasts, we heard from members and businesses in their own words on why the Show, and Society, matter to them. This podcast was one of our earliest reactions to the show cancellation and a change in direction to ensure we remain true to our charitable work and our Members.

Changes were coming thick and fast at the time and the reduced team quickly developed short, medium and long-term strategies to cope with the impact of COVID and to prepare to restart our key activities when permissible, protecting the business in the long term.

While there have been many lows, there have also been highs. We have been successful in protecting our future, and have made significant savings in the operation of our 300-acre site, in restructuring the team and in gaining new income opportunities, like a Royal Mail sorting depot, that would have previously been seen as unthinkable.

We have continued to ensure the Ingliston showground and site are ready for anything and the investments made ahead of COVID will ensure we are well placed to deliver events safely in future and amid a changed landscape.



I acknowledge this is an unsettling time for everyone and hope to assure our Members that we are doing everything possible to protect the Society and their interests, while ensuring we are best placed to deliver the best Show possible. We continue to work with Government at all levels helping them shape and develop policy and guidance for what great events look like.

We can only do that with a professional and experienced team who have successfully developed the Royal Highland Centre and Royal Highland Show into one of the best event organisations, and event, around. That gives us the confidence and capacity to plan a show for our members and to continue to develop our charitable activities.

With your help, we will see each other again at the Royal Highland Show and thereby continue the great work of our forebears in securing the health and success of all things food, farming and rural in Scotland.

Alan Laidlaw, Chief Executive

This is farming

As a farming entrepreneur,
Fiona would love more young
women to follow her lead.
Must be the shepherd in her.

With our industry specialists,
we're proud to help women
in agriculture thrive.

#ThisIsFarming

Fiona Turnbull, Fruix Farm

Partner of the Royal
Highland Show since 1981



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