

BORDER UNION AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY BICENTENARY BURSARY FUND

Report for the period from 1st October 2019 until 30th September 2020.

Background:

The Bicentenary Bursary Fund was established during the Society's 200th year in order to create a fund to help young people from the Society's area who wish to pursue a course of study or a learning opportunity that will advance their career but will also (very importantly) contribute to the wider rural economy of the Borders. It follows the Society's original motto: 'encouraging improvement'. The fund is invested through professional fund managers, under the control of the Society's trustees. The Awards Panel meets quarterly to consider applications made and, if appropriate, make an award. The maximum award is 50% of the costs of the study / trip / course. The Panel also keeps the terms and conditions of the scheme under constant review.

The Awards Panel this year has comprised: Luke Comins, Ian Fleming, James Joicey (chair), Jill McGregor, Jane Mitchell, Charlie Robertson, Douglas Stephen, Mary Thomson, Neil Thomson and Marshall Wilson. Mags Clark and Gordon Chisholm have also attended the meetings as observers.

A total of **three** applications were received in the early part of the Society's year, and awards were made to:

- Emma Bradbury, to attend the International Congress & Expo on Agriculture and Horticulture in Georgia (USA) (August 2020)
- Elin Lambie, to attend the Royal Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth's conference in Norfolk (June 2020)
- Shauna Murdie, to support costs of completing an online Advanced Certificate in Agribusiness under ACS Distance Education

The first two of these bursaries were subsequently frozen when the events were cancelled but the offer of support has been held open to both individuals in order to consider opportunities that arise in due course, at which point the costs of each will be reassessed.

Since the spring, there have been no enquiries for bursary support. This is perhaps understandable but at the same time regrettable. The minds of young people and farming families will surely have focused in recent months on how to embrace the many challenges of the future. Opportunities for study and further development – especially online – are numerous and can be beneficial to the advancement of a career or a business. We have reached out to firms of professional advisers – and continue to do so – as it is frequently they who are brought in to conversations at an early stage when strategies for the future of a business are being discussed.

Therefore this report must serve as an appeal to all BUAS members to remember that the Bicentenary Bursary Scheme is open to support any young(er) Borderer in developing his/her career or business, with the proviso that benefit accrues in some measure to the economy of the area covered by BUAS. Now is a good moment to prepare for the changes that lie ahead, whether that may lead to a Nuffield Scholarship or a more modest course of study. The Society asks that this message is broadcast as widely and as pro-actively as possible.

The Awards Panel keeps in touch with all previous award winners, some of whom were highlighted at the Border Union Show in 2019. Others will be highlighted in due course in BUAS newsletters.

We are very grateful to Agrimart for continuing to carry a notice of the Bursary Scheme three times a year on behalf of the Society.

James Joicey - November 2020