



Rothamsted International

Sharing Research Excellence ...

... for the benefit of rural economies in developing countries world-wide

10TH ANNIVERSARY NEWSLETTER ~ DECEMBER 2003

Focussing on RI Fellows

The year 2003 marks the 10th Anniversary of the inception of the Rothamsted International Charity and its Fellowship Scheme. The charity was launched in 1993 as part of Rothamsted's 150th Anniversary and to reaffirm the Institute's commitment to the development of global sustainable agriculture. On 21st May 2003 RI hosted an informal coffee morning and invited current Fellows, together with members of staff who have been long-term donors to the Charity. To mark this special occasion RI presented each guest with a globe on an engraved plinth. An event planned in July had to be cancelled because of staff shortages.



RI ANNIVERSARY GLOBES PRESENTATION:

21st May 2003, in the RI meeting room, Fisher Building

Left to Right:

Donors: Alf Keys, John Pickett, Stephen James, Karen Bowen, Martin Parry, John Stevenson, & Ian Denholm (far right)

RI Fellows: Sunday Ekesi, Zheng-xi Li, Marcos Resende.

(N.B. Current Fellows and staff Donors who were unable to attend the above presentation received Globes on separate occasions)

Acknowledgement to donors

Rothamsted International is very grateful to all its donors, whether members of staff, private individuals, businesses, Trust and Foundations, or other non-profit organisations.

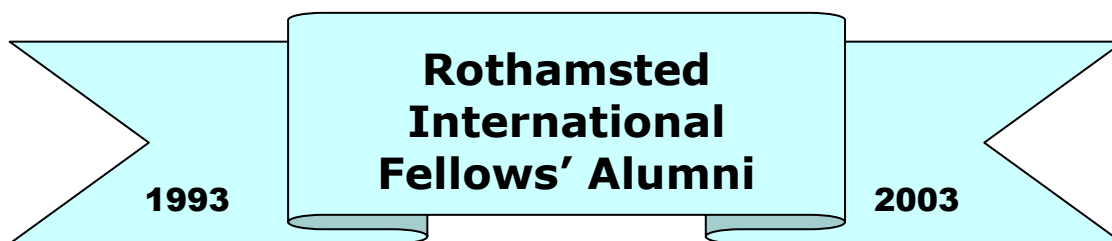
A full list of all donors to April 2002 is published on the inside back cover of the Fellowship Review. The Review document covers the 5-year period from 1997-2002 and is available on request.

Local Community Grant

This newsletter has been produced with the aid of a grant from Harpenden Town Council.

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Since the charity's inception in 1993, the Fellowship Scheme has been its biggest success and the focus of its fundraising. In the intervening 10 years there have been 91 Fellowships awarded, lasting for periods from three months to two years. Many previous Fellows have benefited greatly from their training at Rothamsted and the excellent collaborations formed with eminent research scientists.

Rothamsted International is very grateful for the help given by several volunteers recently, including Mrs Kathleen Howe, who helped to track down several ex-RI Fellows and find out what happened to them since their time at Rothamsted. We are delighted to print here snippets of their various replies.

Dr Soraya Leal-Bertioli, from Brazil, was one of the earliest RI Fellows. She was here for 2 years from October 1993. She recently wrote:

"I have fond memories of the time I spent at Rothamsted. I miss the people and the friendly atmosphere."

I am now a researcher at Cenargen, in Brasilia ... I have been working with molecular aspects of resistance in wild relatives of peanut. We have a lively and active group, our project is funded by Cenargen, the World Bank and the EU.

I am anxious for other researchers to have the opportunity to work at Rothamsted as I did."

* * *

Dr GVP Reddy from India, was at Rothamsted for 12 months to March 1996. In his Testimonial he wrote:

"My studies at Rothamsted will speed up the development of insect pathology research in India ... scientists at Rothamsted have been doing pioneering work in this field and so it is of great benefit to me to learn and work with these scientists."

* * *

Ms Martiza Munoz-Garcia, a Cuban, wrote of her work -

"The value of the Fellowship has been excellent. The results of my work will be of help to the National Quarantine Laboratory

in Cuba, enabling them to detect latent infections of P.solanacaerum in bananas and giving them knowledge about the natural resistance of some banana varieties in the region."

* * *



Dr Javed Zaki, from Karachi in Pakistan; worked with Prof Brian Kerry from Oct'95-Jan'97. He wrote:

"Nice to receive your email and happy to learn you are collecting info about ex-RI Fellows. I am very proud to have been a RI Fellow ... the training and research at Rothamsted had a great impact on my career."

After my return from the UK I was appointed Assistant Professor in the Dept of Botany at Karachi University. I have now been promoted to Associate Professor ... this is only due to my time at Rothamsted where I received confidence and which boosted up my research capabilities."

* * *

Dr Wei Wei from the Institute of Botany in Beijing was an RI Fellow for 12 months from April'00. He sent this message.

"I was in Rothamsted to work with Guy Poppy and Tanja Schuler on the non-target effect of transgenic oilseed rape."

I knew nothing about entomology before I came into the Dept ... not even understanding the word 'nematology'. I was really amazed when I stood before the cage and saw the smart behaviour of wasps attacking the insects. During my stay I realized the important relationship existing in nature and its crucial role on biosafety issues of GMOs. With the knowledge I gained at Rothamsted I now work on the role of transgenic cotton in the interaction between insects and their natural enemies. I have kept frequent correspondence with my colleagues and I appreciate all their help ... it gave me a warm feeling during my journey back home and great confidence to face my work and life in China."

* * *

Dr Danuta Sosnowska, from Poland, was at Rothamsted for 6 months from March 2000. Her work with Prof Brian Kerry was very fruitful and they continue to publish joint papers. She provided this information:

"It was a pleasure to work at Rothamsted. I got lots of friends in England and still contact people in the Entomology Dept. I made big progress in my work here in the Institute of Plant

Protection in Poznan during my last three years due to my learning in Rothamsted (sic). I received a grant from Polish Committee for my research with root-knot nematodes."

Dr Anath Das, Senior Scientist at the Regional Plant Resource Centre in Orissa, India, worked with Bhupinder Khambay from Jan to July'99. His CV notes:

Dr Das was honoured with the Professor Hira Lal Chakravorty Award in Botany by the Indian Science Congress for his outstanding contributions in Botany.

Rothamsted Project Leaders provided additional information about Fellows who had worked with them.

Here is a glowing testament to the relationship between Dr Andrew Ferguson and his RI Fellow, **Dr Zdzislaw Klukowski**, from Poland, who worked here for one year from Feb'96:-

"We are still very much in touch with Zdzislaw who has remained a valued colleague and good friend. He has recently taken over leadership of entomological studies in oilseed rape at his University, a field of research in which he had not been involved before he came to Rothamsted.

We are joint authors of two significant, refereed papers and several conference papers relating to his Fellowship work. His RI Fellowship was the foundation of a continuing collaboration.

He is now a partner in an EU project with Prof. Ingrid Williams. He has also received national funding from KBN in Poland to support his programme of research.

Zdzislaw continues to use the skills he first acquired at Rothamsted, developing them innovatively and bringing additional biomathematical and taxonomic skills to bear.

We still see him at least once a year and are frequently in touch. He often says how much he enjoyed his time here."

Another piece of good news relating to a previous Fellow reached us by way of Rothamsted's own staff bulletin. In February 2003 the following article was published:-

Congratulations to **Dr Surya Prasad Pandey** on the award of his PhD by the University of Nottingham. Surya first visited Rothamsted in February 1999, as a Rothamsted International (RI) Fellow. His thesis is entitled "Opportunities for soil organic matter and nutrient management in the rice-wheat system of the Nepal Terai". The thesis draws on work started during his RI Fellowship year, which was further developed through a research project funded by the UK Department for International Development, in collaboration with CIMMYT and the Nepal Agriculture Research Council.

And finally ...

... an email from **Dr Zhengxi Li** who was at Rothamsted until last month:

"Time flies by! I have stayed here for a whole year, and I enjoy it very much. My stay here will not only strengthen my molecular techniques, but open a new world for my future career. It's Rothamsted International that has provided me the golden opportunity, so thank you all for your kind help and considerate arrangement during my stay here. I have met so many international friends, from whom I have learned so much, which will be a great asset in my life. Thank you again, and cordially welcome you to Beijing, especially during the 2008 Olympic Games. Contact me if you visit Beijing next time and I will help you find what genuine Chinese foods mean!"

... who could resist? See you all in Beijing in 2008!! (Editor)

Recent RI Fellows



Prof Sheng-yi Liu from the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Science (CAAS), in Wuhan, will be returning home on 22nd December 2003.

Dr Zhengxi Li, from the China Agricultural University (CAU) in Beijing, completed his project on the malaria vector and returned home in October 2003.



Dr Sunday Ekesi, a Nigerian, working with ICIPE in Kenya, spent 6 months at Rothamsted in 2003, supervised by Judy Pell. His project in PIE Division was supported by the Ernest Cook Trust

Dr Qudsia Tahseen, from Aligarh Muslim University in northern India, spent 9 months at Rothamsted to July 2003. She worked with Prof Brian Kerry in the Nematode Interactions Unit.



Dr Marcos Resende is from EMBRAPA Ministry of Agriculture in Colombo, Brazil. His specialist field is Quantitative Genetics and Biometrics. His project on Spatial Analysis is supervised by Prof Robin Thompson, in AEN. His 12-month Fellowship ends in March 2004.



Dr Bikram Singh was an RI Fellow from October 2002 to April 2003. He came from the Institute of Himalayan Bio-resource Technology (IHBT) in Northern India. His project in the Biochemistry Division was sponsored by a grant from the World Resource Foundation.

MEDICINAL PLANTS – The Bigger Picture

The Himalayas provide a vast range of niche habitats for a wealth of plant species well known for their aromatic, medicinal or therapeutic properties. Extracted components of these plants are of commercial significance to hill farmers, providing supplementary incomes. The gathering of these plants from the wild has contributed to some of them becoming endangered species.

Programmes to enable the cultivation of the plants are being developed by the Institute of Himalayan Bio-resource Technology.

Through a donation from the World Resource Foundation, Rothamsted International supported a multi-stakeholder workshop to facilitate work in this area in 2002. It has since supported the establishment of farmer demonstration plots and two Fellowships in this area. The research projects aim to develop analysis methods for the wide range of compounds present in the plant extracts. Wherever possible, the active compounds are isolated and characterised, with the aim of improving efficacy and consistency of the natural plant products. In so doing the research will aid in the protection of the plants from extinction, and secure the commercial value of the product for resource-poor hill farmers.

New Laboratories at Rothamsted Research

On 4th September 2003, the Chief Executive of BBSRC, Professor Julia Goodfellow, opened the new laboratory at Rothamsted. The Centenary Building was funded by BBSRC and named after the 100 years of research at our sister site of Long Ashton. A large number of dignitaries were also present, including several previous Directors of Rothamsted, to learn about this ground-breaking project. These beautiful state-of-the-art laboratories will provide modern facilities for both local and International Scientists for many years to come.



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Thank you for taking the time to read this Newsletter.
If you would like to make a donation to Rothamsted International charity, please contact us: -

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